THE THEME OF POWER IN GEORGE ORWELL'S POST-WAR NOVELS : *ANIMAL FARM* AND *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **THE THEME OF POWER IN GEORGE ORWELL'S POST-WAR NOVELS: *ANIMAL FARM* AND *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*** is a record of bona fide research carried out by **Mr. V. J. Sebastian**, under my supervision and guidance.

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DECLARATION

I do hereby affirm that the dissertation entitled **THE THEME OF POWER IN GEORGE ORWELL'S POST-WAR NOVELS: *ANIMAL FARM* AND *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*** has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reviewing his practice as a writer, George Orwell claimed that he did his best writing when inspired by a political purpose. The initial impetus came from "a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice,"[1] a lie to be exposed or something to be drawn attention to. Every instance of injustice he saw around him was invariably traced to its roots in underlying power relations. He acquired his distinctive political outlook from direct encounter with power structures operating within the capitalist social order, within the Empire and in the wider arena of power politics and ideological warfare.

As a writer of fiction, Orwell made no secret of his didactic intentions. Apropos of Charles Dickens, he wrote:

> (E)very writer, especially every novelist, *has* a 'message,' whether he admits it or not and the minutest details of his work are influenced by it. All art *is* propaganda.[2]

Orwell had an urgent message to deliver to a world in which power of one kind or another was used to deprive men of their rights. And that message took the form of an insistent warning against forces that made for exploitation and oppression in relations between classes, between nations, and between the ruler and the ruled within the country. A society of free and equal men was what he strove for. In defining his political objectives he cast his net widely: he wanted to campaign against "every form of dominion of man over man."[3]

Orwell's first published novel, *Burmese Days* (1934) as well as the last two, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is centrally concerned with the operations of political power. Of the remaining three novels, *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935) deals with the power of religious faith on human lives. *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936) and *Coming up for Air* (1939) concentrate on social and economic forces and the political structure that sustains them. The second of these two novels, set in the England of the inter-war years, does invoke in its closing pages the terror of totalitarian power engulfing the country.

It has been said, and rightly so, that the typical Orwellian hero is a victim.[4] The narrative is structured to project the individual's helpless entrapment in a social environment which he perceives as a system of constraints and privations. As the story develops, powerful social and political forces are felt to exert a steady pressure upon the characters' lives, edging them inexorably towards defeat, failure and compromise. It is important to realise that this is not the conventional story of the individual pitted against Fate or the irony of circumstances. Orwell's heroes are not fighting against impersonal forces of nature or history but against various forms of institutional exploitation and oppression.

It might be said that the novel as a genre is heavily context dependent, the realistic novel especially so. Power relations being omnipresent, novels might be expected to deal with them if they are at all realistic. However, Orwell's preoccupation with power stems directly from his distinctive political consciousness and has, therefore, an altogether different emphasis. He is little

interested in the exploration of character and the inner states such as one finds in the psychological novel of the twenties. His characters are not engaged in an agonized quest for personal identity. For him, personal identity consists in relationships, not in inwardness. His love stories, even when developed at some length, are seen to founder, not on complications of emotional adjustment, or a problem of communication, but on issues of poverty, snobbery or a perversion of the religious or political ideal. Relations between his characters are vitiated by the dominant power relations within society.

A study of Orwell's post-war novels might profitably start from the sociological angle, with an examination of the author's critique of society and politics. His thinking on power, its forms and operations, is neither very original nor systematic. At first his method was empirical, starting with a specific social, political situation, and proceeding to power relations within that situation. Later, when he came to define his political position more clearly, he began to relate his observations to his larger questions of social and political theory. The Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 in which he took part as a member of an anarchist militia confirmed his faith in socialism at the same time as it turned his attention to the rising tide of totalitarian power mania. He was intrigued and puzzled by the spread of power worship among the intelligentsia, in popular literature, and in more or less subtlized forms even in education and sports. He set himself to explore the impulse to power as a fundamental human drive, a motive from which not even the revolutionary socialist could claim complete immunity. He saw no other way of explaining the internecine conflicts on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War or the emergence of fascist and Stalinist dictatorships. If he satirised Stalinism more than fascism it was because, after the defeat of

the fascists, the Communist regime offered the worst example of totalitarianism in Europe. He did not spare the fascists either. During the war years it was the fascists who drew his critical fire most. What he was attacking in either case was the exercise of arbitrary power over every aspect of individual life; it did not matter whether the regime called itself right or left. Orwell himself defined the new direction of his thinking succinctly: "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism, as I understand it."[5] *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-four* reflect in their thematic concerns this phase of Orwell's political development.

In this study it is proposed to examine the theme of power in Orwell's post-war novels: *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The species of power satirised in these novels is absolute despotism's total control over individual lives. The study concentrates on the exposure of power in its complementary aspects of motive and consequence. Love of power is projected as the ulterior motive of all political activity. It expresses itself in an exaltation of brutality and unscrupulousness. The narratives also explore the connection between power and ideology and the intellectual's particular susceptibility to sadistic power hunger. Both novels bear the mark of post-war disillusionment with ideology, leader-worship and military adventurism. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in particular, is strongly reminiscent of the super power rivalry of the cold war era, with the nuclear threat in the offing.

It is hoped to show that in these satires Orwell has struck out a line of thought characteristically his own. Cruelty and wickedness as attributes of

modern power are Orwell's substitution for the hedonism of Huxley's *Brave New World*. Concern with the motives of political behaviour broadens the base of narrative treatment and takes the issue of power beyond politics to a psychological and moral frame of action. A direct consequence of this is to call in question the presumed adequacy of an externalist account of human behaviour and, hence, of a political solution of social questions based on this hypothesis. In his essay on Dickens, Orwell distinguished two lines of approach to social and political issues. There is the moralist approach which focuses on the individual, concedes his rights as a free moral agent and seeks to influence his behaviour by an appeal to his sense of moral right and wrong. Opposed to this is the Marxian revolutionary line which regards moral consciousness as a function of the material conditions of life. On this view, human nature is not a constant and can be radically changed by changes in social structure. As a socialist Orwell might be expected to eschew the moral approach and embrace the Marxian line. In fact, however, his attitude is curiously noncommittal. He holds the balance even between the two competing views, remarking that, while the debate goes on, the problem of power remains unsolved:

> The moralist and the revolutionary are constantly undermining one another. Marx exploded a hundred tons of dynamite beneath the moralist position, and we are still living in the echo of that tremendous crash. But already, somewhere or other, the sappers are at work and fresh dynamite is being stamped in place to blow Marx at the moon. Then Marx, or somebody like him, will come back with yet more dynamite, and so the process continues, to an

> end we cannot yet foresee. The central problem--how to prevent power from being abused--remains unsolved.[6]

Orwell was well aware of the limitations of the Marxian approach to the psychology of power. In his review article "Prophecies of Fascism" he charges Marxian socialists with failing to predict the rise of fascism, while imaginative writers like Jack London showed an astonishing prescience in divining future trends in capitalism. According to Orwell, the Marxian interpretation of history is exclusively "mechanistic": theorists of this school take into account only external factors--social, economic and political conditions--in interpreting human behaviour. And so, even after Hitler had risen to power, they failed to see the danger he posed and went on attacking Western democracies as the real enemy. London would not have made this mistake. Despite being a Marxist himself, London was able to enter imaginatively into the motives of power-hungry men because he had a fascist streak in himself:

> His instincts would have warned him that Hitler was dangerous. He knew that economic laws do not operate in the same way as the law of gravity, that they can be held up for long periods by people who, like Hitler, believe in their own destiny.[7]

Again, in one of his regular columns for the *Tribune*, Orwell points out that the Socialist movement has not given much thought to the influence of religious belief on human behaviour. The western conception of good and evil, he argues, is based on a belief in personal immortality; decay of this belief in modern times has had the effect of putting a high premium on success here on earth:

> There is little doubt that the modern cult of power worship is bound up with the modern man's feeling that life here and now is the only life there is. If death ends everything, it becomes much harder to believe that you can be in the right even if you are defeated.[8]

It is argued in this study that the problem of power in Orwell's post-war novels can only be understood in the light of his criticism of an exclusively mechanistic explanation of human behaviour. As Orwell develops it, the theme of power is bound up with questions of the rationale of revolutionary politics, the mechanistic interpretation of human behaviour, the reduction of politics to the pursuit of power, the adequacy of the political solution and so on. All these issues are bound to influence the way one reads these narratives and interprets their message. There has been much discussion of the deeper import of Orwell's satires. Are they to be interpreted as warnings or as prophecies? How may one account for the paradox of the author, a declared socialist, celebrating the triumph of irrational forces in politics? To be sure, Orwell denied any defeatist outcome in his narratives. However, a strong case might be made out for reading his 'fables' as a lament on the fate of revolutions. In attempting to warn against the totalitarian menace facing the world, Orwell seems to have overshot the mark and made the impending danger appear almost insurmountable by the sheer force of his conception. This, it is argued in this study, is due to a certain ambivalence in his understanding of the power urge itself, an ambivalence between the moral, psychological and mechanistic conceptions of the dynamic of power. As a socialist it was his conviction that the abuse of power could be effectively checked provided the masses are vigilant enough to detect

authoritarian tendencies in their leaders and act quickly and decisively. He claimed to have written his satires not as prophecies of future trends but as warnings against possible abuse of power by totalitarian regimes, if allowed to develop unchecked. However, to most readers, the total impact of these satires is anything but reassuring. To them, these fictions appear to communicate a loss of faith in revolutionary action and in political institutions. Thus, *Animal Farm* is supposed to be a political satire which seeks to retain faith in revolution while warning against the emergence of power-hungry leaders. However, the novel lends itself readily to interpretation in moral terms with a pronounced defeatist bias. Similarly, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is intended as a parody of the intellectual implications of totalitarianism, yet, not a few readers have seen in it a total surrender to irrational forces operating in politics. Clearly, therefore, to try to impose a unitary interpretation on these texts would be to overlook serious ambiguities of meaning and structure. Orwell was too conscientious an artist not to sense and respond to the complexity of his subject matter. His brilliant imaginative projections admit of deeper intuitions into the enigma of the power impulse, of sufficient force to constitute a fairly marked subtext which challenges, at times even subverts, his avowed satiric intentions.

Bernard Crick who made a thoroughgoing study of Orwell's life and work concludes that there actually has been no failure of faith in his beliefs and values: "[Orwell's] values had not changed, but he held them in a mood of realistic sadness. His beliefs were not dead; far from it; but he found that they no longer led him directly into action."[9] Following William Empson's lead, Crick suggests that the ambiguity of the text in the last two novels arises from the allegorical

and satiric modes employed. However, even so perceptive a critic as Crick is obliged to concede that there are loose ends in the thematic development of Nineteen Eighty-Four:

> Are we meant to think that O'Brien in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has revealed a secret that the Inner Party stand for nothing except possession of power? Or are we meant to think that such a belief is absurd and part of the 'satire' he was to call it of the book?[10]

Crick suggests that Orwell never quite resolved the question whether love of power divorced from ideology could sustain a despotic system.

What this amounts to is a crucial gap in Orwell's thinking on the phenomenon of power. He is at a loss to explain the prevalence in modern man of the lust for power as a major motivating force. He confessed this in one of his regular contributions to the *Tribune*. Reflecting on the day's calamities reported by the newspaper, nearly all of them man-made disasters arising from war and imperialist rivalry among nations, he concludes that "... political behaviour is largely non-rational, that the world is suffering from some kind of mental disease which must be diagnosed before it can be cured."[11] If, as is commonly supposed, what one wants is to be comfortable, why, he asks, should we go and spoil our happiness by fighting and killing since the resources for happiness are far greater today than ever before? We have, by and large, tamed the forces of nature, have enough wealth to distribute equitably and have liberated ourselves from superstitious fears. And yet we must needs expend our energies in trying to grab territories, markets and raw materials from one another, and deny political freedoms, even the freedom to think one's own thoughts. The curious irony is

"that human beings only started fighting one another in earnest when there was no longer anything to fight about."[12] And why is this so? Orwell finds the Marxist theory of economic motives insufficient to account for the behaviour of present-day rulers: "The desire for pure power seems to be much more dominant than the desire for wealth."[13] This lust for power is generally taken for granted as a natural instinct. But why should we accept it as biologically necessary like the desire for food? And how explain the predominance in modern man of the impulse to bully others? Orwell goes on: "If we could answer that question--seldom asked, never followed up--there might occasionally be a bit of good news on the front page of your morning paper."[14]

Much the same point was made in an essay on pornography and violence, "Raffles and Miss Blandish", published in 1944. Raffles was a gentleman crook, figuring in the crime thrillers of the nineteenth century. He has no religious beliefs but still observes the rules of a traditional code of decency and behaviour. "No Orchids for Miss Blandish," the modern crime novel, marks a distinct change in the moral atmosphere; it shows that the old moral inhibitions have gone; further, the author openly seeks to attract readers by dishing out violence, cruelty and sadism. This leads Orwell to reflect on the ubiquity and multifariousness of the power impulse in modern culture:

> (T)he interconnection between sadism, masochism, success worship, power worship, nationalism and totalitarianism is a huge subject whose edges have barely been scratched, and even to mention it is considered somewhat indelicate.[15]

Here, Orwell considerably extends his conceptual range with bold speculations on the manifestations of the power complex in such apparently innocuous activities as the enjoyment of pornography and the cult of social success. What he finds particularly alarming in all this is that "the cult of power tends to be mixed up with a love of cruelty and wickedness *for their own sakes.*"[16]

As in the *Tribune* essay, Orwell is baffled by the apparent gratuitousness of cruelty and violence ("cruelty and wickedness for their own sakes") and some of this bafflement carries over into the treatment of the power drive in his post-war novels. His characteristic response is to make the power impulse into an inscrutable subversive force operating in and through revolutionary politics. It will be argued in the following pages that the ambiguity of the text in these novels is not, as has been made out, inherent in the particular narrative modes employed but rather that it is an ambiguity germane to the theme itself — the essential mystery of human motivation with regard to power and domination.

In elucidating the conception of power in Orwell's post-war novels, use has been made of Bertrand Russell's sociological theory as set out in *Power: A New Social Analysis*.[17] In 1939 Orwell wrote a review of this book in which he praised Russell's analysis of various types of power and fully endorsed his concern in checking the abuse of power but wondered whether Russell was not a bit too optimistic in hoping that civilized societies will sooner or later get rid of their tyrants.[18]

The main thesis of Russell's social analysis is that the primary motivating force in individuals and communities is the desire for power, and not, economic

factors as the Marxists would have it. Russell defines power as "the production of intended effects."[19] He excludes from his analysis one type of power as irrelevant to his study: this is power over dead matter and non-human forms of life. However, he cautions the reader "that the chief cause of change in the modern world is the increased power over matter that we owe to science."[20] Russell then turns to power relations that obtain in human communities. He suggests different ways of classifying the power being exercised over human beings: by the manner of influencing individuals, or by the type of organizations involved; the power of individuals and the power of organizations. Of these, the classification most suited to Orwell's sociology and the one he cites approvingly in his review is that into types of organisations involved — oligarchical, dictatorial, priestly power and so on. The power exercised by these organisations may be further distinguished, from a psychological point of view, into three kinds: (i) Traditional (ii) Revolutionary and (iii) Naked power.

Traditional power is based on customary beliefs and assent deriving from them. It can depend upon popular opinion to a much greater degree than is possible for revolutionary or naked power. Because of its relative security it may avoid active tyranny. However, just because an ancient institution has the sanction of immemorial custom, the injustices perpetrated under it can be more glaring than might be the case under a new form of government which hoped to win popular support. Examples of traditional power are kingly power, priestly power etc.

Where power is not based on tradition or assent, it becomes naked power. It "results mainly from the power-loving impulses of individuals or groups and

wins from its subjects only submission through fear, not active participation."[21] The "nakedness" of power is relative to which side one is on. To a heretic the power of the Church is naked, but not to the believer. Naked power is usually military, and may take the form either of internal tyranny or of foreign conquest.

Power is revolutionary when it commands the willing assent of the majority or a large minority of the population as happened in the case of the American War of Independence, the French and Russian Revolutions, and the Reformation within the Catholic Church. Revolutionary power "depends upon a large group united by a new creed, programme, or sentiment, such as Protestantism, Communism or desire for national independence."[22]

Where revolutionary power decays through the corruption or power hunger of its wielders, it may turn itself into naked power to maintain its hold on the people.

The advantage of Russell's approach is that it is non-ideological. It takes the desire for power as a more fundamental human drive than either Freudian libido or the economic self-interest of Marxian sociology. It admits of moral and psychological factors in explaining the operations of the power impulse. Russell himself has warned against regarding the economic factor as the primary motivating force in the social sciences. He points out that, the desire for wealth "when separated from power and glory is finite and can be fully satisfied by a moderate competence."[23] When they have secured a moderate degree of comfort, both individuals and communities will seek power rather than wealth. Not to have seen this has been the mistake of both orthodox and Marxist

economics and this has led to misunderstanding of recent developments in politics and society:

> This error in orthodox and Marxist economics is not merely theoretical, but is of the greatest practical importance, and has caused some of the principal events of recent times to be misunderstood. It is only by realising that love of power is the cause of the activities that are important in social affairs that history, whether ancient or modern, can be rightly interpreted.[24]

By "the principal events of recent times" Russell may be understood to mean the rise of fascism and Stalinism in Europe in which case it is worth comparing his criticism of the Marxist approach with Orwell's in "Prophecies of Fascism".

It has been the purpose of this chapter to indicate in broad outline the scope of the proposed study. Chapter II traces the evolution of the power motif in Orwell's pre-war novels and non-fictional writings. The aim is to sketch in the larger thematic context of the satire on revolutionary power in the post-war novels. Chapters III and IV offer analytic studies of the power models represented by the political 'fables'. This is followed by a brief review of the critical debate over issues relating to the problem of power. Chapter V discusses a major development in Orwell's thinking on power. This is the growing importance he attached in his later years to the play of irrational forces in politics which, he felt, could not be accounted for by a mechanistic explanation of human motivation and action. The concluding chapter restates the problem of power as Orwell's main theme in his last two novels, the development of the problem

beyond ideology, and the shift of emphasis from the politics of power to "the real-politik of the inner mind."[25] Desire for power is recognised as a more fundamental drive than desire for wealth. Characterization of Orwell's political outlook as tragic pessimism, anarchism and so on is critically evaluated.

Notes

[1] George Orwell, "Why I Write," *George Orwell: The Penguin Essays of George Orwell*, ed. Bernard Crick (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994) 5. This work is hereafter referred to as *The Penguin Essays*.

[2] "Charles Dickens," *The Penguin Essays* 67.

[3] George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 130.

[4] John Atkins, *George Orwell: A Literary Study* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1971) 119, and Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, *The Unknown Orwell* (London: Constable, 1972) xiv.

[5] "Why I Write," *The Penguin Essays* 5.

[6] "Charles Dickens," *The Penguin Essays* 48.

[7] George Orwell, "Prophecies of Fascism," *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Secker and Warburg, 1969) 31. All further citations from these volumes are referred to as *CEJL*.

[8] "As I Please," *CEJL*, III 103.

[9] Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1981) 378.

[10] Crick, 332.

[11] "As I Please," *CEJL* IV 249.

[12] "As I Please," 249.

[13] "As I Please," 249.

[14] "As I Please," 249.

[15] "Raffles and Miss Blandish," *The Penguin Essays* 266.

[16] "Raffles and Miss Blandish," 266.

[17] Bertrand Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis* (1938; London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1985).

[18] Review of *Power: A New Social Analysis* *CEJL*, I 375-76.

[19] Russell 25.

[20] Russell 28.

[21] Russell 29.

[22] Russell 28.

[23] Russell 9.

[24] Russell 9.

[25] Orwell's phrase to describe the psychological realism in Henry Miller's novels. See "Inside the Whale," *The Penguin Essays* 104.

EVOLUTION OF THE THEME OF POWER: THE PRE-WAR NOVELS, POLITICAL JOURNALISM AND DOCUMENTARY ESSAYS

V. J. Sebastian “The theme of power in George Orwell's post-war novels : animal farm and nineteen eighty-four ” Thesis. Department of English , University of Calicut, 2001

CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF THE THEME OF POWER : THE PRE-WAR NOVELS, POLITICAL JOURNALISM AND DOCUMENTARY ESSAYS

It was not until the Spanish War of 1936-39 that Orwell made a definite commitment to democratic socialism.[1] Up to that time his political opinions centred on a deep resentment against all sorts of power structures, sympathy for the victims of an oppressive social system, the poor, the unemployed, the tramps and the beggars, the victims of imperialism in the colonies, of the authoritarian educational practices in schools. He was inclined to characterise this earlier political stance as that of a 'Tory anarchist.'[2] Neither his Toryism nor his anarchism was a well thought-out position. They merely indicate the general direction of his thinking at the time. His political outlook, such as it was, was quite innocent of socialist assumptions while the anarchist label underlined an ingrained opposition to all sorts of institutional despotisms. Democratic socialism, which he embraced in the late thirties and maintained till his death, was as far as he could go towards accommodating the conflicting claims of freedom and social organisation. Within this political development, we might distinguish three distinct phases in Orwell's perceptions of power relations and his responses to them. First, there is the Tory anarchist phase which called forth a characteristically libertarian, anti-authoritarian response. Then, in the socialist phase he affirmed his faith in revolutionary power as a positive force for social transformation. However, as totalitarian systems came up in many parts of Europe and even the much lauded socialist experiment in Russia began to

degenerate into an exercise of naked power, his confident rhetoric gave place on occasion to troubled reflections on the psychology of the power impulse, and on the supposed invulnerability of democratic institutions. In this third phase, he grew sceptical of the survival of humanist values, of the power of truth to prevail against the organised mendacity of dictatorial regimes.[3]

In this chapter, an attempt is made to trace the evolution of the idea of power and authority in Orwell's pre-war writings--novels, reviews, speculative and documentary essays--in order to make clear the importance that the author attached to this theme in his political thinking even before he made it the leitmotif of the two great masterpieces of political satire: *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It will be seen that the mind that created these satires had had its formation over a long period of reading, reflection and direct experience of the workings of authoritarian and despotic systems.

The survey might begin with an examination of Orwell's experiences at school of which he gave a vivid and detailed account in his long autobiographical essay, "Such, Such Were the Joys ...."[4] The title, borrowed from Blake, sets the tone of the whole essay, ironic and bitterly resentful of an educational practice which was supposed to foster sane and humane values in the formation of the adolescent mind. Instead, in Orwell's experience of it, the preparatory school he went to at the age of eight turned out to be a replica in miniature of the carceral society of Foucaldian theory[5]--an inhuman system of rewards and punishments, aimed at creating conspicuous 'social' successes. The essay was published in 1947, three years before Orwell's death. Allowing for some touching up of detail

and heightening of tone with the advantage of hindsight, the essay might be taken as a fairly accurate account of the boy's experiences at school.

At St. Cyprian's, Eastbourne, Orwell had his first encounter with authoritarian power configurations in religion, education, and in the insidious influence of class power as it expressed itself in the practice of snobbery and privilege. His early home life had not altogether been happy. He saw little of his father who had been away working as an official in the East India Service. When eventually he came to live with them, Orwell grew to dislike him as an elderly gruff-voiced man who always said "Don't". Yet he basked in the protective love and care of his mother. He reflects on his sudden removal from this ambience of love and care:

> Your home might be far from perfect, but at least it was a place ruled by love rather than by fear, where you did not have to be perpetually on your guard against the people surrounding you. At eight years old you were suddenly taken out of this warm nest and flung into a world of force and fraud and secrecy, like a goldfish into a tank full of pike. Against no matter what degree of bullying you had no redress. (433)

His first memory of life at school is of the cruel treatment meted out to him for bed-wetting; social humiliation was followed by corporal punishment in which authority became merely the mask of violence. Later in the essay, he recalls the horrible humiliation inflicted on a young girl for an identical offence.

The primary objective of this school was to prepare students to take the entrance examination for admission to one of the public schools, preferably Eton. For this, the students were driven hard; they were encouraged to mug up

lessons in history and the classics and repeat them mechanically. The motive was chiefly commercial, to increase the school's prestige and thereby its intake of upper class boys who would be willing to pay the required fees. Corporal punishment was all too common and could not be questioned. Further, a system of rewards and punishments was devised to ensure conformity to the standards and objectives set by the school. Orwell notices the debasement of character that results from this kind of regimentation. 'Bingo,' the headmaster's wife, was adept at applying the carrot and stick policy. To win her favour, the boys would go to any lengths in the practice of hypocrisy and flattery. In their heart of hearts, of course, they hated her and she knew it. However, they had to suck up to her. With Bingo, the sycophant felt helpless "as a snake before a snake-charmer" (435).

With this enforced system of instruction there went a deliberate policy of underfeeding which was thought to do good to the student, a policy influenced no doubt by commercial motives. The effect of all this, Orwell felt, was to enslave the body and mind and kill the joy of life.

The school's moral code was supposed to be Christian. Ironically in the one instance in which Christian ethics was openly invoked, the effect was to create a tormenting sense of guilt over what might have been treated as manifestations of adolescent sexuality. Moreover, the great ideal set before the student was that of social success. Orwell is quick to point out the incompatibility between the Christian ideal and the cult of social success: "Broadly, you were bidden to be a Christian, and a social success, which is impossible" (440). As it turned out, love and compassion went by the board; in their place, competitiveness and one-upmanship were encouraged. Boys who bullied others

or generally imposed their will upon them were thought to have "guts" and "character". Orwell himself had been bullied once by one such character and made to suffer agonies of fear and humiliation.

In sportsmanship, too, a similar ideal was cultivated. The emphasis was on strength, beauty and athletic skills even if this meant a brutalising of the healthy impulses and social virtues. Football was looked on as the "manly" game which, Orwell felt, was not played "for pleasure" but as "a species of fighting". It was a game in which "large boisterous, nobbly boys" knocked down and trampled on slightly smaller boys. And he goes on:

> That was the pattern of school life — a continuous triumph of the strong over the weak. Virtue consisted in winning: it consisted in being bigger, stronger, handsomer, richer, more popular, more elegant, more unscrupulous than other people--in dominating them, bullying them, making them suffer pain, making them look foolish, getting the better of them in every way. Life was hierarchical and whatever happened was right. There were the strong, who deserved to win and always did win, and there were the weak, who deserved to lose, and always did lose, everlastingly. (443)

Upon a lower middle class boy like Orwell, a more insidious pressure was exerted by the prevalence of what might be called class power, by the practice of snobbery and class privilege. There were three 'castes' in the school: a minority with an aristocratic or millionaire background, the suburban rich, and a few underlings from the lower middle class. Orwell found himself in the lowest of the three castes. Those of the highest class, of course, received preferential

treatment. They were even treated with a certain degree of deference by the authorities. They were not caned or snubbed in public; they had money to spare for gifts and other extras. The others were put in their place when they broke the 'rules'. Their intellectual failure would be interpreted as a moral failure, a betrayal of the social aspirations of their parents, and so they would be tormented with guilt ever afterwards.

The various codes presented to Orwell at the prep school--religious, moral, social and intellectual--seemed to him to be so many instruments of power enthroned, "armies of unalterable law" (444) against which he was made to feel small, helpless and worthless. It did not occur to him at the time that these laws were indeed alterable, that "the weak have the right to make a different set of rules for themselves" (446). He did not question the prevailing standards, because he knew of no other. He never rebelled intellectually, but only emotionally. That he could not accept the system subjectively was clear from the start:

> And yet from a very early age I was aware of the impossibility of any *subjective* conformity. Always at the centre of my heart the inner self seemed to be awake, pointing out the difference between the moral objection and the psychological *fact*. (443-4)

Orwell left the prep school and went on to Eton. Here he indulged his passion for freedom by ignoring the prescribed course of study and the ideal of social success which it was supposed to lead to. He read widely, consulting only his own preferences in this; consequently, he fared badly in the examinations and was ranked low. From St.Cyprian's he had carried over a hatred of authority and it is this trait in him that is recalled by several of his contemporaries: "The

memories of five contemporaries are that Blair was 'against authority' but did not then claim to be a socialist. He used socialist ideas, on occasion but as a way of annoying authority, not standing behind them solidly for the cause."[6] It was said that Orwell's Election to the college inaugurated a libertarian phase in relations between senior and junior students.

Two of the books Orwell would have been reading while at Eton were: H.G.Wells's *The Island of Dr.Moreau* and Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, both of which supplied him with images and themes of absolute power, later to be used in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The animal slaves in Wells's novel are in the hands of a man who assumes the ambiguous role of surgeon-maker-torturer, whose power to torture or save them from pain is absolute. The 'boss' in London's novel tells the captured revolutionaries the bleak secret that O'Brien is later to reveal to Winston: the secret of the mysterious fascination of power.

On leaving Eton, Orwell enlisted in the Indian Imperial Police and went to Burma in 1922. Here he served as Assistant Inspector of Police at several posts and stayed on till 1927. By a curious irony the anti-authoritarian from Eton now found himself invested with imperial power to keep 'law and order' in a subject nation. He now had the chance to observe the Empire, that is, naked power, at work, from within the Establishment. And the result was, of course, most depressing and so he had no choice but to resign. In an article he wrote for a small French radical journal, Orwell explained the motives and strategies of the British Raj.[7] He describes the power exercised over the Indian provinces including Burma as "necessarily depotic" because a certain amount of naked force is required to hold down a population of several millions. But such despotism is

well concealed behind a mask of democracy. Members of the educated or semi-educated classes are chosen to run internal affairs. In this way potential revolutionaries are accommodated and the risk of revolution averted. The Burmese, like some of the Indian provinces, have a parliament, but a parliament without real power. And yet the British Raj is not unpopular. The English have constructed roads, canals, schools and hospitals largely for their own benefit; but the subjects have benefited from them. The Burmese are simple peasants, content to be left free to till their lands. They are too backward yet to entertain nationalist aspirations. Meanwhile, contact with the West has created among the Orientals a new need, not known before, for manufactured goods. The imperialists get their raw materials from the natives--wood, oil, rice, cotton and mineral deposits--process them and sell them to the natives at a huge profit. They not only exploit the country's resources but prevent the growth of indigenous trade and industry.

Orwell gave a fictional version of these facts in his first novel *Burmese Days* (1934) which grew out of his five years' service with the Imperial Police in Burma.

The novel has a complicated plot centred around the career of an Englishman John Flory, who works in Burma as a timber merchant. Himself a part of the Imperial Establishment, Flory grows increasingly disenchanted with the ideas and attitudes of his compatriots whom he meets in the exclusive European Club. His own attitude to the natives is ambivalent. He knows he is there to make money. Yet he does not despise the Orientals. In fact he goes out to meet and mingle with them, has learnt their language and enjoys watching their festivities. Back home, he had been bullied and despised, much as Orwell

himself had been at St. Cyprian's, by his peers at school. A blue birthmark on his cheek has damned him physically and he knows it. At the club, he is the odd man out because he is friendly with the Burmans and does not go along with the others in their blatant imperialist motives. He is disgusted by the coarseness of their minds, their contempt for the natives, their cruelty and greed. Guilt and loneliness drive him to debauchery, to drink and sex. Desperately he turns to a kindly Indian doctor, Veeraswamy, for company and conversation. With Veeraswamy, Flory unburdens his thoughts on imperialism, exposing his countrymen's motives and bitterly reviles them for not owning up to their selfish motives. The doctor, an inveterate anglophile, counters this with a passionate defence of the whiteman's superior culture and the good things the Empire has brought to the country.

Veeraswamy has incurred the displeasure of a thoroughly unscrupulous Burman, U Po Kyin, a local magistrate. This man sets to work to ruin the career of the Indian doctor because the good doctor will not aid him in his machinations. He spreads scandals and writes seditious articles in the *Burmese Patriot*, purporting to come from Veeraswamy. The doctor is utterly helpless against his wicked designs. The only way to silence the Burman is for the doctor to get admitted to the prestigious European Club. Recently an order has come from the Commissioner suggesting that a native be inducted into the Club, and the racists and die-hard imperialists in the Club are up in arms against this move. Veeraswamy merely wants to be admitted nominally for the sake of the protection membership would give him against the wicked designs of a man like U Po Kyin. He does not want to attend the Club, he tells Flory. Flory is willing to nominate his friend but is well aware of the storm of protest this might raise.

Meanwhile, Flory himself gets entangled in a love affair with a young English lady named Elizabeth who has arrived to join her aunt, Mrs.Lackersteen. Both aunt and niece are thorough snobs and have only contempt for the natives. As their relationship develops, Flory discovers Elizabeth's real nature. She despises Flory's intellectual culture, resents his familiarity with the Burmans. Flory feels drawn to her more from loneliness than any romantic feeling. Together they go on hunting expeditions and Flory hopes that he can overcome his inferiority due to the ugly birthmark by his skill in riding and hunting. Elizabeth appears to have grown fond of him when Captain Verrall, a dashing young man of wealth and rank, arrives. Mrs.Lackersteen cleverly steers her young ward towards the more handsome and apparently more eligible bachelor. Elizabeth transfers her affection to Verrall, goes out riding with him. Their romance is shortlived; Verrall leaves the place abruptly to take up an assignment elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Ellis, a racist, strikes a Burmese boy across his face and blinds him. There is a riot. The club is besieged by a crowd of enraged Burmans. Flory makes a heroic escape, swims down the river to inform the police and the siege is lifted. With Verrall gone, Mrs.Lackersteen allows Elizabeth to go back to Flory. The wedding is fixed. But the 'crocodile', U Po Kyin, strikes at the weakest spot with deadly effectiveness. Just when the marriage ceremony is about to begin, he sends in Flory's Burmese mistress who accuses Flory of throwing her over for another woman. Flory is disgraced. Elizabeth will have nothing to do with him. Flory accepts defeat and shoots himself. Veeraswamy is demoted, and the crocodile receives a civil decoration.

Although John Flory's life occupies the foreground of the narrative, its meaning, or rather 'meaninglessness' is fully understood only in terms of the

corrupting effects of power on its wielders[8] just as much as on its victims. Everyone seems to be after power and privilege; Flory and his friend Veeraswamy are victims of the ruthless self-seeking Burman who is forever sucking up to his English masters for personal benefit. Men like him are useful to the Empire and are therefore docorated for 'meritorious' service. He sells himself and his people to the foreign ruler to further his interests. He will inspire a revolt among his people and then put it down in order to merit a reward. As for the ruling class of white men, the story presents some of the worst specimens of the imperialist type: arrogant, contemptuous and ruthlessly selfish. There is Ellis, for instance, with his pathological hatred of the natives, 'niggers' as he calls them. He vehemently opposes election of a native to the Club. "We don't want to see any black hides in this Club."[9] He believes that giving way to them in small things has been the ruin of the Empire:

> No natives in this Club! It's by constantly giving over small things like that that we've ruined the Empire. This country is only rotten with sedition because we've been too soft with them. The only possible policy is to treat 'em like the dirt they are ... We've got to hang together and say "We are the masters, and you beggars" — Ellis pressed his small thumb down as though flattening a grub — "You beggars keep your place!" (29)

Mrs.Lackersteen laments that the native servants are getting too lazy; the white employer no longer has any authority over them because of "the dreadful reforms and the insolence they learn from the newspapers" (26). She adds in a revealing comment: "In some ways they are getting almost as bad as the lower

classes at home" (26). (It is pertinent to note that Orwell is to develop this connection between imperialism abroad and class domination and expoitation at home in *The Road to Wigan Pier*). Mr.Macgregor, the President of the Club, the more moderate of the lot in imperialist sentiment, agrees, calling the lower classes at home worse than the natives and comments on the change coming over the subject peoples: " ... I am afraid there is no doubt that the democratic spirit is creeping in, even here" (27). Mrs.Lackersteen recalls that before the war, things were different. Servants were so nice and respectful! They salaamed you most gracefully! And wages were small too: "I remember when we paid our butler only twelve rupees a month and really that man loved us like a dog" (27). Mrs.Lackersteen's simile – "loved us like a dog" – sums it all up as far as the corrupting effect of power is concerned; it shows the servitude and utter debasement of spirit in the native, while the unconscious irony in her profoundly witty epigram reflects back upon Mrs.Lackersteen's own lack of humanity, that is, her animality, in enjoying this servitude and abasement of a fellow human.

On the subject of servant's manners Mr.Macgregor chimes in with Mrs.Lackersteen's remarks. He remembers that in the past if a butler was disrespectful he could send him along to the jail with a chit saying "Please give the bearer fifteen lashes" (27). But not any more! Westfield's complaint is that the 'beggars' have no guts, won't fight back: "According to him nothing save a full-sized rebellion and the consequent reign of martial law could save the Empire from decay" (30). Ellis warms to the idea and suggests that what Dyer did at Amritsar is the proper way to deal with the natives.

Disgusted with this "evil-minded drivel," (31) Flory takes his leave on some pretext and seeks out Veeraswamy's company. Here the roles are

reversed. It is now the Englishman's turn to expose the wickedness of his countryman while the doctor is at pains to defend them. Veeraswamy calls the English "the salt of the earth" (36). He reels off the names of the great administrators — Clive, Warren Hastings, Dalhousie and others--and invokes "the great things they have done" (36). How noble a type is the English gentleman! How glorious their loyalty to one another! Beneath their rough exterior, says the doctor, they have a heart of gold. Flory rejects the doctor's view outright. As he sees it, there is only a spurious good fellowship between the English and the subject peoples. It's founded on nothing more secure than 'booze'. He is not being seditious, he explains to the bewildered doctor. He is only being honest. He knows he is there to make money like everyone else. All he objects to is "the slimy whiteman's burden humbug" (37). He hates having to pretend that he is there to uplift his poor black brothers instead of to rob them:

> It corrupts us, it corrupts us in ways you can't imagine. There's an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves night and day. It's at the bottom of half our beastliness to the natives. (37)

The doctor protests that there is no way the Englishmen's dealings could be made out to be a 'theft'. Flory explains:

> It's so simple. The official holds the Burman down while the businessman goes through his pockets. Do you suppose my firm, for instance, would get its timber contracts if the country weren't in the hands of the British? Or the other timber firms, or the oil companies, or the miners and planters and traders? The

> British Empire is simply a device for giving trade monopolies to the English. (38)

The doctor is not convinced. Could the Burmans develop their resources as the English can? Could they build ships, railways, machinery and roads? To this Flory replies that the English have never taught the natives any trades for fear of competition. They have only trained them for the work of lower class clerks. They have wiped out several flourishing indigenous industries. What about oriental apathy and superstition, the doctor asks. At least the British have brought law and order, British Justice and the Pax Britannica. "Pox Britannica" retorts Flory, and adds: "Of course we keep the peace in India, in our own interest ..." (40) As for modernising Burma with schools and hospitals and the penal code, all of which the doctor counts among the blessings of the Raj, Flory would see the whole "civilising" process as inevitably leading to the destruction of the Burmese national culture: "We are only rubbing our dirt onto them" (40). All this "uprush of modern progress," (40) as the doctor calls it, would turn rural and agrarian Burma into a drab, monotonous urban wasteland.[10]

It is not difficult to see that Flory is Orwell's spokesman in this tirade against the Empire. While Flory sought refuge from a nagging sense of guilt and failure in suicide, Orwell decided that he would get out of this imperialist racket, go back home and rouse a nation's conscience against injustice and exploitation wherever these existed, between nations or between social classes within a nation. And his weapon in this fight was to be the word, not the sword.

Back home from Burma, Orwell decided to devote himself to the writing career. He went to Paris to pursue his literary ambitions. Here he supported

himself by giving English lessons and writing for the Paris press. His English lessons having come to an end, Orwell had to scrape a living with the little money he had put by. He soon found himself reduced to utter poverty when he was robbed of even his meagre earnings. Orwell now had his first experience of extreme destitution. He sought out the cheapest lodgings, where he nearly starved to death before finding a job as a dish-washer in a hotel. He worked hard at his job for the best part of the day coming home thoroughly exhausted. He got a slightly 'higher' job as a kitchen hand in another hotel, but unable to endure the strain any longer, he resigned and returned to London where he had been offered a job as private tutor. He had a couple of months to go before starting on this new job. And so he decided to explore the living conditions of the underclass of English society. Changing into a tramp's rags he went into a cheap lodging house in the poorest quarter of London. He saw that conditions in London were just as bad, perhaps even worse, for the poorest of the poor, as they were in Paris. They slept holed up in the most wretched conditions; and half starving they would tramp from doss-house to doss-house, when they couldn't afford a room in the digs. Often they slept in the open in freezing cold weather, earned a few pence by begging or lived off charity. In London and Paris, Orwell noticed that the poor were reduced to desperate shifts--pawning their clothes, begging and stealing merely to keep alive.

Out of his experience in the underworld of London and Paris, Orwell drew the material for his first book to be published *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and essays such as "The Spike", "Clink", "How the Poor Die" etc. He did not descend to the depths out of an idle uncommitted curiosity. He was a social moralist all the time, if not a full fledged socialist yet. He went down among the

poor partly to inform himself of their conditions, partly to expiate a sense of collective guilt arising from his Burmese experience. Although through most of the book, Orwell is concerned with reporting accurately and vividly what he saw and experienced, he does not quite leave it at that. He goes on to reflect on the social significance of poverty and destitution.[11] Why are so many people marginalised, thrown on the streets, or made to work like pack animals apparently to assure comfort and luxury to the privileged classes? Why is it that even the working class in England look down upon the tramps and beggars as social vermin? Those thousands of people, university degree holders among them, slaving in Parisian hotels, are doing no very useful work. Their working hours could be considerably reduced without loss of comfort or luxury to the rich customer. The smartest restaurant, observes Orwell, could not provide as clean and healthy a meal as one might find in a private house. The very idea of luxury is questionable. The rickshaw puller in India is sweating his guts out only because some people think it vulgar to walk. Why then are the poor made to work for long hours at a useless job for a pittance? They are made to work so hard because the privileged classes live in permanent fear of popular uprising against them. So keep their nose to the grindstone so that they won't have time to reflect on their condition, much less rebel against it. Orwell imagines the rich man who happens to be intellectually honest explaining his motives in this way:

> We know that poverty is unpleasant; in fact, since it is so remote, we rather enjoy harrowing ourselves with the thought of its unpleasantness. But don't expect us to do anything about it. We are sorry for you lower classes, just as we are sorry for a cat with

> the mange, but we will fight like devils against any improvement of your condition. We feel that you are much safer as you are. (120)

It is this class antagonism and the vested interests that keep it going that Orwell wants to expose. The species of power that is in question is economic power backed by the state's coercive power. In a liberal democracy such as England and France, it enjoys legitimacy with the vast majority of people, including the working class and the liberal intelligentsia. Among the victims themselves, only an educated intelligent tramp like Bozo may see it as the operation of naked power and nurse a secret futile hatred of the system.

A Clergyman's Daughter (1935) is the only one of Orwell's novels that does not deal with an overtly political theme. Its theme is the power of faith in some transcendent ground of meaning and value, the loss of that faith, and the desperate need for that faith. Thus the novel has a tripartite structure: in the first part, the heroine is shown ordering her life and disciplining her passions on the basis of her religious faith; in the second, she is wandering lost and lonely in an alien world, having lost faith; in the third and final part, she returns to her old routine but a changed woman, doing the things she used to do but without a sustaining faith, with a nagging sense of the ultimate futility of all choices and actions.

Dorothy Hare, daughter of Revd. Charles Hare, has dedicated herself to the religious life, for the love of God in the service of man. She is killing herself living up to the high standards she has set herself, skivvying for a selfish, penny-pinching father, struggling to make ends meet, plagued by creditors and the thought of unpaid bills. She fills every minute of her waking life with the most exacting labour of selfless love, visiting the sick, the aged and the lonely when

she is not busy attending to church services or arranging school plays, making the costumes herself, or otherwise engaged in the burdensome tasks of housekeeping. When there is the slightest hint of a slackening of interest or resolve, she goads herself on with a pin-prick, literally pricking herself with a hat-pin. She touches new heights of religious fervour and self-mortfication by doing just those things she does not want to do, namely, taking a cold bath because she dislikes it, drinking from a chalice that she knows has been wetted by a person she dislikes and so on and so forth. All this and more she did, and most willingly because of the power she derived from faith in an absolute order of meaning and value. However, in time, the inevitable happens; she collapses from sheer exhaustion and worry over mounting arrears of debt to which her father is wholly insensitive. She suffers amnesia after which she is discovered wandering the country in the company of tramps and beggars. She is completely perplexed about what has happened. Invited by some vagabonds to join a hop-picking expedition, she joins them out of sheer necessity to earn a living. Meanwhile, the tabloids publish accounts of her disappearance with vicious insinuations of immoral conduct. Her father refuses to answer her letters in which she tries to clear her name of imputed guilt. She is thrown on the streets with beggars and tramps, sleeps in the open in bitterly cold weather, living on charity all the time. Through all these trials of body and mind she preserves a scrupulous integrity and virtue. In the end she is rescued by a wealthy relation who finds her a job in a private school. The school is owned by a mean grasping woman called Mrs.Creevy. The instruction provided is of a mindless, soul-destroying sort. Although she has by now lost her faith, Dorothy applies herself to the new job with characteristic devotion and energy, for she knows her continuance in the job

depends on the results achieved. She attempts some bold innovations to which the children respond eagerly and with genuine interest. Just when she is about to make a real break-through, the parents revolt: they object to the "immorality" in the lessons from Shakespeare, to "the unpleasant" truths in the nation's history. Their children's minds are not to be polluted! Mrs.Creevy, of course, endorses these views, for, as she puts it, "It's the fees I'am after, not developing the children's minds."[12] Accordingly, she tells Dorothy to give up her newfangled notions and concentrate more on the practical aspects of teaching. Before long, Dorothy is sacked in favour of some one more suited to the school's 'ideals'! This time, it is Warburton, an old acquaintance of Dorothy's, that comes to her rescue. He arrives to tell Dorothy that she can now go back to her parish, her name having been cleared of all suspicion of misconduct. A hedonist and 'immoralist', Warburton has designs on Dorothy. Now that she has lost her faith, he feels that she ought not to object to a proposal of marriage. Dorothy declines the proffered union of two non-believers and the hedonist solution for loss of faith. Warburton paints a most depressing picture of her prospects, of living out a sordid life as one of "the old maids of England". However, Dorothy is not to be persuaded by anything he could say to urge his case.

Back home, Dorothy decides to immerse herself in the old routine, but without any kind of support from metaphysical, religious faith to underprop it. Of course, she does not want material comfort, no! Poverty she can endure, drudgery and loneliness, too. "It is the things that happen in your heart that matter.... No, it was something far more fundamental than poverty, loneliness and drudgery; it was the deadly emptiness that she had discovered at the heart

of things" (314-5). She feels compelled to look for an ultimate meaning and purpose in life:

> She began to meditate upon the nature of life. You emerged from the womb, you lived sixty or seventy years, and then you died and rotted. And in every detail of your life, if no ultimate purpose redeemed it, there was a quality of greyness, of desolation, that could never be described, but which you could feel like a physical pang at your heart. Life, if the grave really ends it, is monstrous and dreadful. No use trying to argue it away. (315)

Dorothy realises all too clearly that, although beliefs and thoughts change and faith itself vanishes, the need for faith remains the same as before because there is some inner part of the soul that does not change. And the tragedy of it all is that there is no real solution to the problem. There is no possible substitute for faith: "no pagan acceptance of life as sufficient to itself, no pantheistic cheer-up stuff, no pseudo-religion of "progress" with visions of utopias and ant-heaps of steel and concrete" (316). And so, sitting at her desk once more with brown paper and glue, trying to make costumes for the school play, she finds that she is having "to stiffen her courage and remake the whole structure of her mind" (314-315)[13] or else go on doing what she does, without passion, without inspiration.

In his next novel, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, (1936) Orwell returns to more familiar territory, to social and political themes. Its hero, Gordon Comstock declares war upon the money god, vows to get on without the help of the money code, devoting himself wholly to the pursuit of art and the cultivation of intimate personal relationships. In the end, however, he finds that art cannot flourish in a

ruthlessly exploitative, philistine culture, and that even romantic love cannot long survive against such simple considerations as having to make a living and set up a family. Unlike Dorothy, Gordon does realize that material circumstance is of the utmost consequence and cannot be denied in pursuit of the integrity of the autonomous individual.

The Comstock family has, for generations past, lived by the money-code; however its fortunes have steadily dwindled over the years. The family has now pinned its hopes on the young Gordon Comstock who is thought to have the energy and ability to retrieve the family's fortunes. Gordon is working in an advertising company and several of his advertising slogans have caught on: "Hike all day on a slab of Vitamalt", "Corner Table enjoys his meal with Bovex" etc.[14] Now when he looks at these ad-posters again, he is filled with a deep hatred of the system that promotes these deceptions. The grinning face of the man drinking Bovex is supposed to be "Modern man as his masters want him to be. A docile little porker sitting in the money-sty, drinking Bovex" (21). Disgusted with his own complicity in the commercial racket, Gordon hands in his resignation although he has been assured of a promotion for his skill in copywriting. He will devote himself to the pursuit of the literary art, uncorrupted by the money motive. He takes up a poorly paid job as a bookshop assistant. He watches the people coming into the shop, people of all classes, and studies their motives. There are the upper class ladies who merely want to show off their pretence of superior culture; there is the fashionable youth who browses among high-brow works but leaves without buying any. Then there is the shy sensitive young man who actually buys his book and leaves almost apologising for his intrusion. The

lower classes mostly buy cheap works of fiction. Occasionally, a visitor may have no other motive than to pinch one of the books when he can lay hands on it. There might also come into the shop bedraggled old beggars with a dirty pile of cheap second-hand books which they hope to sell. One such beggar woman comes into Gordon's shop with her pile of books, but is turned away. As she goes out grumbling to join her husband and as the two of them shuffle away "beetle-like in the long grey over-coats that hid everything except their feet", Gordon reflects: "The throw-outs of the money-god. All over London, by tens of thousands, draggled old beasts of that description, creeping like unclean beetles to the grave" (23).

Gazing out at the street, Gordon watches the streams of traffic that sail by. He connects the graceless lives of the men in their sleek limousine with the emptiness of the grinning faces in the ad-posters. Behind both is "a frightful emptiness, a secret despair ... the great death-wish of the modern world" (23). Presently he has a vision of "enemy aeroplanes flying over London" (23) pounding their targets with tons of TNT, reducing to rubble the proud towers of this beastly culture.

Gordon shares with his rich young friend Ravelston, editor of Antichrist and left wing revolutionary, the secret hope that the coming war will do the work for them, put an end to this system of callous exploitation. Gordon is no political activist. There is no programme or policy of revolutionary action to be carried through. He can only look on in helpless fury and rage against a system he is unable to change. His own solution has been to withdraw into the private world of love and art and shield it against the corruption of the materialistic ethos.

Gordon has already published a book of poems and is now hard at work, trying to write an ambitious long poem "London Pleasures". Meanwhile, his girl, Rosemary, visits him in his lodgings and is shocked by the wretchedness of his condition. He can hardly earn enough for the two of them. When they go out together, Rosemary refuses to have sex with him, because she cannot afford to have a baby. She insists that he take proper precautions. Gordon realises with a shock that the money-code is too real to be brushed aside. In one of his poems he pays a reluctant tribute to the all-powerful money-god who "lays the sleek, estranging shield between the lover and his bride" (186).

When Gordon receives a windfall — a cheque from the "Californian Review" for one of his poems — he is elated and invites Ravelston and Rosemary out to dinner. The drunken orgy that follows lands him in gaol. He loses his job and is sheltered for a while by Ravelston. Finally, he moves out into a wretched quarter of the city and ekes out a living by working in a second-hand bookshop. Rosemary visits him, and tries vainly to persuade him to accept the job at the advertising company. He refuses. To prove her love, she gives herself to him in his wretchedness, becoming his mistress.

The change in Gordon's outlook is to come with the prospect of fatherhood. Rosemary has given herself to him in selfless love. Now to leave her in the lurch, with a baby and no money, would be monstrously indecent of him. "The money-god", he reflects, "is so cunning. If he only baited his traps with yachts and racehorses, tarts and champagne, how easy it would be to dodge him. It is when he gets at you through your sense of decency that he finds you helpless" (283). And so, he throws in the towel, at last, and decides to take up the job with the New Albion: "His long and lonely war had ended in ignominious

defeat ... He was coming back to the fold, repentant" (290). And he does so with a sense of relief: "(H)e was aware that he was only fulfilling his destiny" (290). He knows that he would have done the same even if Rosemary and the baby had not been there : "For it was what, in his secret heart, he had desired" (291). Once he has taken his first step, he will soon enough forget the senseless war of the past two years against the all-powerful money-god and even prosper in the new life as though nothing had happened:

> Quite quickly, now that he had taken the first step, he would develop the cynical, blinkered business mentality. He would forget his fine disgusts, cease to rage against the tyranny of money--cease to be aware of it even--cease to squirm at the ads for Bovex and Breakfast Crisps. He would sell his soul so utterly that he would forget that it had ever been his (291-2).

And in doing so, Gordon considers that he is merely repeating the destiny of every one: "Everyone rebels against the money-code, and everyone sooner or later surrenders" (292). The novel ends with Gordon greeting the aspidistra as the symbol of vitality and domesticity as exemplified in the life of the lower classes.

The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) may well be considered a sequel to *Down and Out.* Having explored life in the underworld of London and Paris, Orwell descends again into the lower depths to investigate the tragedy of unemployment and poverty. In either case, the diagnosis is the iniquity of class power which perpetuates exploitation of vast masses of men by the minority that owns land and capital.

The book divides into two parts: the first provides striking vignettes of working class life in the industrial north of England, of people working in the cotton mills and coal mines, their admirable vitality, generosity, decency and powers of endurance, as well as the dirt and squalor of their material circumstances; the second part addresses the question of socialism as it is currently being advocated, its essential validity as the social philosophy of the future.

The book opens with a description of the loathsome lodging house where the Brookers live surrounded by the dirt and squalor, so characteristic of working class homes in the north — the crumpled up balls of slimy paper, the ricketty bed, the man buttering the bread with fingers straight from the chamber-pot! This is followed by the striking close-up of the young woman kneeling at the waste-pipe in the freezing cold, poking in it with a stick. Her stricken face showed the agony of a trapped human being, painfully aware of her dreadful destiny. The children of these miserable people are hardly the sort to lead a revolution; they have little sense of urgency or initiative.

From a description of the filth and squalor of working class lives, Orwell proceeds to the superior virtues of the working man which place him a cut above the disdainful middle class. The miners perform work far beyond the powers of their social superiors; moreover, their work is essential to the very survival of a civilisation founded on coal. As an intellectual, Orwell feels inferior in sheer productive power to a coal-miner. The Spartan discipline of the coal-pit serves to create not monsters, but heroes, the Titans of industrialism worthy of our homage.

However, the working classes are partly to blame for their abject condition. They eagerly snatch at the palliatives offered by their exploiters. They go in for cheap luxuries, the wireless, football pools, the cinema which divert their attention from the iniquity of their social condition.

In part two, Orwell deals with the paradox why socialism is rejected by the very people whom it seeks to save. Surely there must be something wrong with the way socialism is presented by the middle class intellectual. Orwell detects this in the inability of the bourgeois intellectual to identify with the working class even to the point of dress, speech and behaviour. The bourgeois wants to remain in a class apart even while preaching socialism. Orwell does not spare himself in this indictment. In his Burmese days, he was able to quickly identify with the Burman he exploited. And he had come away from his Burmese experience with the resolve to oppose all forms of exploitation: "I felt that I had got to escape not merely from imperialism but from every form of man's dominion over man".[15] And yet, when it came to dealing with the lower classes in his own country, he realised how difficult it was to overcome class prejudice. His solution was to go down among the down and out himself and live as one among them.

The fact is that the middle class intellectual, like Galsworthy, is not sincere in his advocacy of socialism. He is not willing to part with his power and privilege. And yet, it will not do to force the pace of social change; to do so would only intensify class antagonism. Genuine social change must come naturally in evolutionary fashion. Another problem with socialism as it is currently preached is its exclusive emphasis on material values, to the neglect of spiritual and aesthetic values. Yet another charge Orwell brings against latter-day

theorists of socialism is that they tend to see mechanisation as an end in itself. It is all right to reduce drudgery with the help of machinery. But if allowed to grow unchecked, machine civilisation might abolish humanity along with drudgery, making skill obsolete, creative effort unnecessary, heroism anachronistic.

Orwell concludes by saying that the only choice for modern man is between socialism and fascism. The liberal programme is mere humbug. The need of the hour is to humanise socialism so that it might salvage what is valuable in Christianity, patriotism, the military virtues, art and literature.

Homage to Catalonia (1938) Orwell's next great work of political journalism, marks a turning point in his development as a socialist. He had gone to Spain to fight on the republican side against the fascists. As the war dragged on, a bitter internecine squabble had flared up between the Communists and the anarchist – POUM militias. There were irreconcilable differences between the two parties: "The Communist's emphasis is always on centralism and efficiency, the anarchist's on liberty and equality."[16] About the war aims too, their perceptions were quite different. While the Communists said: "We must win the war before we can talk of Revolution,' the anarchists said: "We must go forward or we shall go back.' In other words, while the Communists' main aim was to defeat the fascists first with the support of the liberals and, only afterwards, to set up a workers' state, the anarchists wanted to go straight ahead with the revolutionary programme even while fighting the fascists. Orwell found the communist position sound policy and supported them even though he was fighting alongside the anarchists at the Aragon front. He only turned against the Communists when they began suppressing the anarchists by branding them as fascist spies. What

infuriated Orwell most was the callous cynicism behind this which reminded him of the purges and trials under the Stalinist regime. This was Orwell's first experience of the naked power struggle often taking place within totalitarian regimes, and of the totalitarian tactic of dealing with it by means of false accusations and deliberately orchestrated propaganda at home and abroad.

The war had its positive impact on Orwell, too. Rather than estranging him from the socialist cause, the Spanish war confirmed him in his faith. This is because in the first few months of the war at the Aragon front, he had a direct experience of the socialist ideal translated into practical terms. He "was among tens of thousands of people, ... mainly of working class origin, all living at the same level and mingling on terms of equality. In theory it was perfect equality, and even in practice it was not far from it" (111). It was a society in which ordinary class-divisions and the normal motives of civilised life — snobbishness, money-grubbing, fear of the boss — had ceased to exist. Although it could not last long, the experience was "something strange and valuable" and made the truth of socialism incontrovertible.

Orwell proceeds to give vivid accounts of his experiences at the Aragon front: the boredom, heat, cold, dirt, lice, privation and occasional danger from a sniper's bullet. But it is the political lesson that he has carried away from the war which has since fixed the direction of his political thinking.

On his first visit to Barcelona, Orwell had noticed the same egalitarian spirit prevailing as he was to experience later at the front — no bootlicking, no cap-touching, everybody addressing each other as "comrade" in genuine comradeship. On a subsequent visit on leave from the front, he saw that a deep change had come over the town. The old division of society into rich and poor

was reasserting itself. On his third visit, he witnessed the infamous street riot in which the Communists were trying to wrest power from the anarchists. To the war itself there was a general indifference among the people because of a feeling that the revolutionary hope had been betrayed. Voluntary enlistment had fallen low and conscription had begun within six months of the outbreak of the war.

The progress of Orwell's account of the war is marked by a growing realisation of a revolutionary hope betrayed largely due to the inter-party feuds within the forces opposed to the fascists. Orwell's own life was in danger as he was liable to be identified with the anarchists and hence with the so-called fascist spies. He reflects with evident appreciation on the regime of libel laws and habeas corpus and the right to political dissent prevailing in England. Several of his own friends had been in gaol by now and some of them had died in prison. The lessons he learned from the Spanish war in the workings of revolutionary power and deterioration of revolutionary power into naked power have gone into the making of his last two novels.

Coming Up for Air, the last in the series of the pre-war novels, was published in 1939, at the outbreak of the war. It captures the mood of anguish and alarm that pervaded the minds of sensitive men all over Europe at the threat of a totalitarian take-over of the state and the consequent loss of cherished freedoms. The theme of the novel is change, and the struggle to adapt to changing conditions both in the physical environment and in social political organization. Both these changes are expressions of human power: change in material conditions brought about by industrial capitalism and change in the political set-up brought about by the use of naked force. While the former is accepted as a historical necessity, although it means abandoning the dream of a

rural, agrarian arcadia, the latter is perceived as neither necessary nor desirable and hence to be resisted with every resource available. The novel's hero, George Bowling is caught up in the throes of these changes and is struggling to come up for air, to breathe once again in the pure air of a world freed from commercial greed and the dictator's hunger for power.

Orwell does establish a connection between the greed for wealth of those who own land and capital and the hunger of those who hold the reins of political power. The capitalist knows how to cheat you out of your money, how to take your freedom from you without your knowing it.[17] The houses of Ellesmere Road where George lives are never owned by those who pay for them. It is only a leasehold, never a freehold. The property is part of a huge racket known as Hesperides Estate, the property of the Cheerful Credit Building Society. They charge a profit on land, building materials, construction, all of which is owned by the Society itself. And they reserve the right to build over any open ground belonging to them and shut you in. What is worse, everyone of these dupes cheated out of their money and not seeing through the clever swindle will go and fight and die on the battlefield to uphold the system!

> We are all bought, and what's more we're bought with our own money. Everyone of those poor down-trodden bastards sweating his guts out to pay twice the proper price for a brick doll's house that's called Belle Vue because there's no view and the bell doesn't ring — everyone of those poor suckers would die on the field of battle to save his country from Bolshevism. (13)

The condition of the lower middle class employee like George (who is an insurance agent working in London) is far worse than that of a working class labourer: "The prole suffers physically, but he's a free man when he isn't working" (11). A navvy is not sacked from his job. But the middle class employee is kept on the run for fear of being sacked. The girls working in the chain stores are regularly bullied, abused and cursed by the shop floor manager for minor lapses or merely to increase their efficiency. The hefty young man with enormous forearms sucks up to the customer in the most servile fashion:

> The thing you can see in his face is mortal dread that you might report him for impertinence and get him sacked. Besides, how's he to know you aren't one of the narks the company sends around? Fear. We swim in it. It's our element. Everyone that isn't scared stiff of losing his job is scared stiff of war, or Fascism or Communism or something. (15-6)

It is quite possible that the shop floor assistant who lectured the girl might himself be far more scared for his job than the girl was.

George has a windfall of seventeen pounds he has won on a horse and he plans to spend a weekend at Lower Binfield, the little Oxfordshire village where he grew up as a boy. He would so love to be back in rural Binfield after having been so long confined in the dull drab metropolitan suburb. Memories crowd into his mind of boyhood days in the village — the little shop run by his father, the mother drudging patiently in the kitchen through the day, the simple but wholesome country meals, the country walks, the fishing in the ponds and canals, the narrow roads, the market-place with the horse-trough at the square. He would particularly like to fish in the deep pond hidden under the poplars behind

the large Binfield house. However, on arriving at Lower Binfield, George is appalled to see the change that has come over the place. All the old landmarks, except Binfield house, are gone or transformed beyond recognition. The pond behind Binfield House has been drained and converted into a rubbish dump! A neat little town has come up where the village once stood! It is a loss that hurts and George reflects on it. There are certain hobbies that one might give up with the passage of time, but certain childhood memories and hobbies one might still cling to with a fondness others might regard as silly. For George, there is that peculiar fondness he feels for fishing; he associates his feeling for fishing with the particular civilisation he grew up in and which is now on its way out:

> As soon as you think of fishing you think of things that don't belong to the modern world. The very idea of sitting all day under a willow tree beside a quite pool — and being able to find a quiet pool to sit beside — belongs to the time before the radio, before aeroplanes, before Hitler. (76)

The new civilisation that is taking the place of the old one is of a kind that puts a high premium on 'pep, punch, grit, sand': "... it was the spirit of the time. Get on! Make Good! If you see a man down, jump on his guts before he gets up again." (136)

From a predatory instinct thriving on commercial greed it is an easy transition to the lust for world domination. The difference is one of degree, not of kind. Even now the bombers are screaming overhead. The nation is in the grip of war hysteria. George goes to attend a meeting organised by the anti-fascist camp. The speaker holds forth on the threat of a fascist invasion and the need to fight back with all the resources at one's disposal. The speech sounded like

downright propaganda, an exhortation to hate and retaliate in kind. It seemed the speaker could go on for hours hammering in the same simple message: "Hate, hate, hate. Let's all get together and have a good hate. Over and over" (165). And as he speaks, George has a picture of the man smashing fascist faces with a spanner and thinking it all right because it was fascist faces he smashed. George is horrified to think of the aftermath of war rather than of war itself: the abject prostration before the leader, the detectives watching you while you sleep, the hate world, and the slogan world.

George's response to the impending crisis is not to seek a vain refuge in nostalgia, nor to pretend, as does his scholar friend Porteus, that nothing ever changes, which is mere evasion of the issue. He would rather pin his hopes on the vitality and resilience of the mass of ordinary men and women that make up the lower classes. They will, given the right leadership, rise to the occasion and resist the imposition of a murderous creed and re-assert the traditional values of common sense, decency and liberty.

Shorter Essays and Reviews (1931-1947)

The shorter essays and reviews of Orwell appearing over a period of two decades show evidence of a continuing preoccupation with the psycho-social aspects of power, the leitmotif of his major works since 1937. Some of the crucial texts — Review of Betrand Russell's *Power: A New Social Analysis* (1939), "As I Please" in *Tribune* (1944), "Prophecies of Fascism" (1940), "As I Please" in *Tribune* (1946), "Charles Dickens" (1939), "Raffles and Miss Blandish" (1944) — have already been discussed in Chapter one. Several others--notably "James

Burnham and the Managerial Revolution" (1946), "Literature and Totalitarianism" (1941), "Wells, Hitler and the World State" (1941), Review of *We* by E.I. Zamiatin (1946), "The Prevention of Literature" (1946), "Writers and Leviathan" (1948) will be discussed at appropriate places in later chapters. Here it is proposed to look at those pieces which do not call for extended comment but are of interest in indicating the diverse angles from which Orwell approached his theme and the converging viewpoints in his thinking on the phenomenon of power.

The first of these is "A Hanging" (1931) which describes a judicial execution that took place in Burma during the Raj. In the context of British rule, it does acquire political overtones. The legitimacy of this exercise of power may well be questioned. However, Orwell views the event quite apart from its political context. This exercise of power, this taking of a healthy human life is an act that is wrong in absolute terms: "When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide."[18]

In "Shooting an Elephant" (1936) the political overtones are clearly there. At the start of the essay, Orwell places the act of shooting the animal in its political context. He is an officer in the Imperial Police. His position is that of an exploiter, one who must keep law and order so that the work of exploitation may go on. When called upon to shoot an elephant that has run amok the roles are reversed. The animal having calmed down, there is no need to shoot it any more. Yet he must shoot it! He is a puppet manipulated by the crowd he is supposed to rule: "Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd — seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in

reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind."[19] He is obliged to act the part of the sahib which his position as tyrant imposes on him.

Writing on the content and style of popular magazines produced for the younger generation ("Boys' Weeklies" (1939)), Orwell notices the emergence in the postwar boys' papers of a tendency to bully-worship and the cult of violence. There goes with it the development of the leader-principle, the emergence of "some single all-powerful character who dominates everyone about him and whose usual method of solving any problem is a sock on the jaw." In the American magazines read by youths in England the description of violence and brutality is much the more realistic which Orwell takes to be symptomatic of a brutalisation of instincts consequent upon the loss of a religious, moral tradition:

> In the Yank Mags you get real blood-lust, really gory descriptions of the all-in, jump-on-his-testicles style of fighting, written in a jargon that has been perfected by people who brood endlessly on violence. A paper like *Fight Stories*, for instance, would have very little appeal except to sadists and masochists.[20]

It is worth comparing this essay with "Raffles and Miss Blandish" discussed earlier for the recurring concern in Orwell's writing with the social and psychological roots of the prevailing culture of violence.

In his long socialist pamphlet, "The Lion and the Unicorn" (1940), Orwell mentions the average English man's resistance to a collectivist ethic, to his being numbered, labelled and conscripted into a regimented crowd. He is jealous of his liberty and individuality. In this connection Orwell introduces a theme which is to

recur through much of his writings: the differing responses of the common man and the intellectual to the politics of power and domination. The common man, he points out, still retains an unconscious allegiance to the Christian values of compassion and charity. The intellectual has lost this and has replaced it with a cult of success and brutal power: "The power-worship which is the new religion of Europe, and which has infected the English intelligentsia, has never touched the common people. They have never caught up with the power politics."[21] The left-wing intellectual has never been and never expects to be in a position of power and so is quite irresponsible in his attack on the existing order. In preaching violent revolution and a social ethic, he betrays "the emotional shallowness of people who live in a world of ideas and have little contact with physical reality" (155). The common man, uncorrupted by ideology, still believes in justice, liberty and objective truth. The English as a nation can never quite submit to "the totalitarian idea that there is no such thing as law, there is only power."[22]

The idea that there is no law, there is only power, is, according to Orwell, a fascist notion characteristic of modern times. It is to be distinguished from the nineteenth century imperialist outlook and exercise of arbitrary power. He makes this point in his essay "Rudyard Kipling" (1942) where he defends Kipling against the charge of fascism. Kipling was a jingo; however his support of imperial power was tempered by belief in a religious morality. To the post-Hitler mind, there is no power that can set limits to human pride and ambition:

> No one in our time believes in any sanction greater than military power; no one believes that it is possible to overcome force except by greater force. There is no 'law', there is only power. I am not

> saying that this is a true belief, merely that it is the belief which all men do actually hold. Those who pretend otherwise are either intellectual cowards or power-worshippers under a thin disguise or have simply not caught up with the age they are living in.[23]

In "Notes on Nationalism" (1945) Orwell traces the connection between nationalism and power-worship. He begins by making a distinction between patriotism and nationalism. The former is a devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life which one prefers above all others but which one has no wish to force on others. Nationalism, on the other hand, is a blind, uncritical, fanatical loyalty to a single nation or other unit. It acknowledges no duty other than that of advancing the interests of this nation or cause. While patriotism is a common man's devotion, nationalism is a product of ideology, of intellectual cultivation. It enables one to indulge a desire for power under the attractive guise of a common cause:

> Nationalism ... is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality.[24]

The nationalist broods on struggle, victory, defeat and humiliation in which his side invariably wins. He is willing to deny objective truth and rewrite history in order to place his party or cause on the winning side:

> Nationalism is power-hunger tempered by self-deception. Every nationalist is capable of the most flagrant dishonesty, but he is also

> --since he is also conscious of serving something bigger than himself--unshakeably certain of being in the right.[25]

The practice of sports is generally thought to create goodwill between nations. However, Orwell takes an unusual line in "The Sporting Spirit" (1945) and argues that international sports as practised today are a mimic warfare: "Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules, and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting."[26] He feels that international sports are vitiated by competitive prestige bred by narrow-minded nationalism:

> There cannot be much doubt that the whole thing is bound up with the rise of nationalism--that is, with the lunatic modern habit of identifying oneself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige.[27]

Orwell notes the connection between the modern cult of sports and financial interests, between the sedentary confined life of urban communities and the need to work off surplus energy or sadistic impulses. He remarks that it is the violently combative sports that have spread the widest. In their power to attract vast crowds and rouse savage passions, Orwell no doubt sees yet another expression of the modern aggressive combative ethos which has nothing to do with the old sporting spirit.

"Some Thoughts on the Common Toad" (1946) is eloquent of the author's love of nature and powers of observation. He raises the question whether it is romantic, sentimental silliness in a socialist of the machine age to cultivate an interest in such things as flowers and animals. Oughtn't he to dream rather of

cities of gleaming white concrete and glittering steel and glass? He wonders what is the goal of the machine civilization unless it is to save labour and leave men enough time and energy to enjoy the simple things of life, to cultivate a love of such things as trees, fishes and butterflies. Steel and concrete confine men in closed spaces and kill the joy and vigour of life in natural surroundings. The surplus energy so dammed up would vent itself in violent ways. Those who preach the virtues of the machine age make "it a little surer that human beings will have no outlet for their surplus energy except in hatred and leader worship."[28]

The essay, "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool" (1947) is an attempt to explain the psychology behind Tolstoy's scathing attack on Shakespeare's play. It is Orwell's view that Tolstoy identified himself unconsciously with Lear; like Shakespeare's hero he too had renounced all power, wealth and privilege. And like Lear, he still retained a love of power which would express itself in a spiritual bullying born of arrogant self-righteousness. The power that such a man seeks to exercise over others is very like the emotional pressure exerted by an affectionate mother upon her child:

> Tolstoy renounced wealth, fame and privilege, he abjured violence in all its forms and was ready to suffer for doing so; but it is not easy to believe that he abjured the principle of coercion, or at least the desire to coerce others. There are families in which the father will say to his child 'You'll get a thick ear if you do that again' while the mother, her eyes brimming over with tears, will take the child in her arms and murmer lovingly, 'Now, darling, is it kind to Mummy to do that?' And who would maintain that the second

> method is less tyrannous than the first? The distinction that really matters is not between violence and non-violence but between having and not having the appetite for power.[29]

The above survey of Orwell's non-fictional writings and pre-war novels indicates a long absorption with problems of power, its diverse manifestations and its roots in socio-economic conditions and individual psychology. When he came to treat of total power in his last two novels, it was only natural that every one of these ideas should be worked into the texture of the narrative since total power involves domination over every aspect of individual and social life, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

ANIMAL FARM

V. J. Sebastian “The theme of power in George Orwell's post-war novels : animal farm and nineteen eighty-four ” Thesis. Department of English , University of Calicut, 2001

CHAPTER III

ANIMAL FARM

Animal Farm, written in 1943 and published in 1945, is the great political parable of our times. It tells the all too familiar story of revolutionary power turning into naked power at the hands of the leaders of the revolution. In telling it, Orwell's aim was to expose the 'Soviet Myth'[1], namely, Soviet Russia's claim to have achieved the socialist revolution, a myth assiduously propagated by left-wing intellectuals in the capitalist West. Writers like Koestler and Orwell felt a compelling need to demolish this myth, to tell the plain truth that instead of liberty, equality and fraternity, what Soviet Communism had achieved under Stalinist totalitarianism was forced labour, deportations, concentration camps, purges and millions of deaths from famine in the collectivised farms. Orwell himself had experienced a brief reign of terror in Barcelona and narrowly escaped arrest for his part in the civil war. He had been fighting alongside the POUM whom the Communists branded as fascists and subjected to the same treatment as Stalin had meted out to the old guards of the Bolshevik revolution. Rather than close ranks against the common enemy, the Spanish Communists, acting under Soviet guidance, chose to put the Republican cause at risk in order to suppress the anarchists who had risked their lives in the fight against fascists. They wanted to destroy the anarchists because these latter were perceived as rivals in the bid for power in the country. But what horrified Orwell most was the charge that the anarchists were traitors to the Republican cause fighting on the side of the fascists! Orwell had gone to Spain with great expectations but came away shocked, outraged and embittered by what he saw there : "The Spanish

is not likely to return. What I do point out is that its disappearance has left a big hole, and that we ought to take notice of the fact." (*CEJL*, III, 103).

[14] Orwell, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1978)21.

[15] Orwell,*The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Penguin,1962) 130.

[16] Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1980) 64.

[17] See, Orwell, *Coming up for Air* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1979)11-12.

[18] "A Hanging," *The Penguin Essays*, 16.

[19] "Shooting an Elephant," *The Penguin Essays*, 22.

[20] "Boys' Weeklies," *The Penguin Essays*, 92-93.

[21] "The Lion and the Unicorn," *The Penguin Essays*, 141.

[22] "The Lion and the Unicorn," *The Penguin Essays*, 144.

[23] "Rudyard Kipling," *The Penguin Essays*, 205.

[24] "Notes on Nationalism," *The Penguin Essays*, 300-1.

[25] "Notes on Nationalism," *The Penguin Essays*, 301.

[26] "The Sporting Spirit," *The Penguin Essays*, 323.

[27] "The Sporting Spirit," *The Penguin Essays*, 323.

[28] "Some Thoughts on the Common Toad," *The Penguin Essays*, 363.

[29] "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool," *The Penguin Essays*, 414.

War (should) be kept always in mind as an object lesson in the folly and meanness of power politics," Orwell wrote in the *Observer*.[2] Both *Homage to Catalonia* and *Animal Farm* record in their different modes this personal odyssey from hope to betrayal of hope.

Although the Spanish experience provided the immediate inspiration to writing the story, the theme was one that had long exercised his mind. He tells his readers in the preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm*, that he had seen, as early as 1930, clear signs of the Soviet Union turning into a hierarchical society in which the rulers had no more reason to give up their power than any other ruling class. However, few in England were willing to accept the truth about Stalinism partly because, being long accustomed to the liberal traditions of the West, the workers and the intelligentsia had gained no proper understanding of totalitarianism. For this reason, too, they were incapable of asserting the true nature of the Nazi regime in Germany, even after the fascist ideology had plunged Europe in the most disastrous war known to history. It is worth remarking that some of the features of the fascist dictatorship--its lying propaganda, its denial of objective truth and rewriting of history – have found their way into the allegory Orwell came to write against the backdrop of this war.[3]

Orwell wanted to construct a story that would make his political message readily intelligible and communicable. Yet he had no very clear idea of the specific form this story was to take until, one day, he "saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn." It struck him "that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit

animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat."[4] He proceeded to analyse Marx's theory from the animals' point of view.

As David Lodge has pointed out in *The Modes of Modern Writing*, it was not uncommon for committed writers of Orwell's generation to write in the allegorical mode, variously termed in contemporary criticism as 'fable', 'myth', 'parable', for it enabled them to exploit the imaginative resources of the metaphoric mode while staying close to an essentially realistic (metonymic) type of narrative: "Allegory is a metaphorical device, of course, but its exploitation of similarity is very rigidly controlled in the interests of a didactic message and it can be easily combined with an essentially metonymic type of narrative."[5]

In practice, however, attempts to combine the two modes of writing have not always been successful. Where successful, the work gained in imaginative power at the expense of the realistic (ideological) content. Conversely, the less successful type of work was of the kind that tended to stress the political message at the expense of the fable:

> [The allegorised myth or fantasy] was one appealing way of making the metaphorical imagination historically responsible. In practice, the most successful efforts in this direction were ideologically ambiguous, while the felt obligation to deliver a politically 'orthodox' message was apt to deprive the fable of imaginative life.[6]

Animal Farm clearly belongs to the more successful kind of allegorized narrative; like *Gulliver's Travels*, it will be read and enjoyed long after its political point is forgotten.

Reviewing his aims and methods as a writer, Orwell wrote: "*Animal Farm* was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole."[7] Orwell had hoped that his 'political purpose' would gain in rhetorical force and clarity through its analogical elaboration and retain a sufficient degree of verisimilitude to deliver an authentic view of the nature of political change.

In what follows, it is hoped to show that Orwell's attempt "to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole", his attempt to construct a political satire in terms of a beast fable, has created an allegorized narrative that is ideologically ambiguous, capable of being interpreted in a manner contrary to his meaning and intention. It is argued that this ambiguity, arising from a deeper ambivalence in the author's approach to his theme, is reflected in a failure to adapt the conventions of the beast fable to the requirements of political and psychological realism.

Before going into this question it is necessary, first, to trace in detail the attempt made to integrate the political motif with the conventions of the beast fable.

The theory of revolution

Orwell's fable is about a farmyard Rebellion in which the animals, long tyrannised by their human masters, rise in revolt, drive out their oppressors and establish an animal republic. This barnyard revolution is made to conform to the pattern of the great Russian Revolution; it is launched by old Major, a composite figure representing Marx and Lenin, with a well-defined ideology. Its aim is to tear down a traditional power structure, which is perceived as a relation of

exploitation and domination. It seeks to replace the old system with a new social order. The new power that will rise in place of the old will have a revolutionary legitimacy, because it is the expression of the collective will and it will remain legitimate as long as it commands the allegiance of its followers.

Major has had a dream of a golden age and this confers a sort of prophetic mandate on his mission. He calls his comrades together and explains to them the miserable conditions of animal existence, their subjection and exploitation by man, the ideals and goals they must set before themselves, and the need for radical action to achieve their aims.

Old Major's theory of revolt is unexceptionable and it is easy to see in its detailed argument well known Marxist themes rehearsed in zoomorphic terms.[8] Within the overarching theme of ruthless exploitation of the working class by the non-working capitalists, Major's speech introduces several concepts that one readily recognises as specifically Marxian. There is, for instance, the notion of an artificially created scarcity of life-sustaining resources, the scarcity resulting from the exploitative structure of society. ("The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food in abundance to an enormously greater number of animals than now inhabit it)"[9]; the specific form of this exploitation is the theft of 'surplus value' ("(N)early the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us ..." (18)), the animals being "given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies" (18). There is the argument against parasitism, against the 'bourgeois' practice of living on unearned income ("Man is the only creature that consumes without producing" (19); there is the theme of the alienation of the worker from the productive forces ("Our labour tills the soil, our dung

fertilizes it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin" (19)); there is the commodification of the products of labour: the surplus eggs produced by the hens "have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men" (19). However, there is one respect in which the productive relation between Jones and his farm animals is worse than any Marx could have conceived: The animals are not just wage-slaves; they are Jones's property just as much as his land and capital. He owns their bodies as well and does what he pleases with them once they have outlived their usefulness as workers: "... No animal escapes the cruel knife in the end" (20). The superannuated beasts end up as commodities on the market affording yet another source of profit for Jones and his men. In brief, as Major puts it, "the life of an animal is misery and slavery" (18). Between man and animals, between the exploiter and the exploited, there is bound to be intense 'class antagonism': "Man is the only real enemy we have" (19). It follows from this that the revolutionary task for the animals is to 'expropriate' the exploiter: "Remove man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever" (19).

Having established the rationale of the Rebellion, Major now launches into a passionate exhortation to revolutionary action. He cannot say when the Rebellion will come; and yet, of its 'dialectical inevitability' he has little doubt. It is the historic mission of his comrades to work to achieve the ideal envisaged; nor shall they allow themselves to be led astray by the devious argument that "Man and animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others" (20). The class antagonism, Major reminds his comrades, is real and irreconcilable. The comrades should close their ranks against their common enemy, Man. Their watchword should be: "All men are

enemies. All animals are comrades" (21); "whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings is a friend" (21).

So far, Major has concentrated on the subversive aspect of revolution, on the demolition of an established orthodoxy. He now proceeds to set up in its place a new ideology of which the cornerstone is the notion of the freedom and equality of all animals: "All animals are equal" (22). He warns his comrades that "in fighting against man, [they] must not come to resemble him" (21).

> No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money or engage in trade ... No animal must ever tyrannise over his own kind... No animal must ever kill any other animal. (21)

Every revolutionary programme needs its utopia, its conception of a golden age to come, which might be used to inspire action and devotion to the ideals put forward. Marxist theory involved, in addition to its closely reasoned social analysis and interpretation of history, a strong visionary component in its utopian conception of a Communist millennium in which the state will wither away, and the government of men will give place to the administration of things, a society in which men, freed from class antagonisms, will rule themselves in wisdom and virtue. Old Major's dream fills this role in his revolutionary programme. It is "a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished" (22). He expresses the idea in a song he had known in his younger days, a song called 'Beasts of England' which speaks "Of the golden future time" (23). It speaks of a time when all forms of slavery and oppression will have vanished and the animals shall range freely over the fruitful fields of England, of a time when

the animals shall at last come into their inheritance and possess riches beyond their wildest imaginings.

The Leaders of the Revolution

Neither Moses nor Marx was able to enter the Promised Land they pointed the way to. Nor will Old Major either. Three nights after his speech he dies. Two young boars, Napoleon and Snowball, representing Stalin and Trotsky respectively, are to carry forward the revolutionary programme. The pigs appear to be the natural choice for leadership, for they are generally recognised as the cleverest of the animals. Napoleon is not much of a talker but he has a way of getting things done the way he wants it. Snowball is a more lively character, cleverer in speech and more inventive than his companion though he is no match for him in cunning and strategems. They are ably assisted in propaganda work by a porker named Squealer, a glib talker of immense persuasive powers, capable like Goebbels, his historical counterpart, of the most blatant distortion of facts.

In removing Old Major from the scene and giving the leadership of the Rebellion to Napoleon and Snowball, Orwell has made alterations in the historical parallel that are important to his story. His theme is power politics, the rivalry between Stalin and Trotsky. And so Lenin's leadership has had to be dropped from his scheme. It is worth noting, too, that while Stalin's role in the Revolution is hardly ever mentioned in early Soviet histories, he is given equal prominence in the story with Trotsky and carefully distinguished from him.

Political education

It was Marx's view that "the emancipation of the working class is the work of the working class itself."[10] This followed necessarily from his theory of economic materialism which maintained that the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat must arise from fully developed capitalist relations of production. A bourgeois revolution must precede the socialist revolution and must run its course for the characteristic proletarian mentality to develop. Only a proletariat made politically aware in this way can carry through an effective social revolution. No amount of exhortation or force could hurry the pace of the development. Orthodox Marxists had based their distinction of 'scientific' from 'utopian' socialism on this theory.

In a major departure from this orthodox position accepted by Marxists in the West, Lenin proposed the creation of a socialist ideology by a party of revolutionary intellectuals who would instruct the proletariat in their historical mission. For he believed that, left to themselves, the working class would only acquire a trade union consciousness; socialism had to be brought to them from the outside by middle-class intellectuals. The nucleus of the party should be an inner group of professional revolutionists, absolutely and fanatically devoted to the revolution, rigidly disciplined and tightly organized; they would operate as a conspiratorial underground, engaged in extra-legal activities in order to seize power by force. Lenin's view of party organisation and ideological indoctrination was strongly opposed by the Mensheviks. They wanted the proletariat to be organised in open political activity as in the West and gain and maintain power without destroying the institutions of political democracy. In the end Lenin's

party won and his theory paved the way for the eventual displacement of proletarian dictatorship by a dictatorship of the Party:

> Few political philosophies have given to intellectuals a role as world-shaking, and none has assigned to the proletariat so small a share in the proletarian revolution. Quite obviously ... Lenin's theory of the party and its ideology, propounded in 1902, pre-figured very accurately the meaning of the proletarian dictatorship.[11]

For years Orwell carried on a running battle with left-wing intellectuals for their willingness to condone violence and terror practised in the name of ideology, their willingness to suppress facts and falsify history to suit the exigencies of power politics. They, more than the working masses, advocated violence in dealing with class enemies; they professed a contempt for the working man's code of honour and decency. It was not for nothing that Orwell cast the pigs in the role of intellectuals in his story of a revolution betrayed.

As so it is that the intelligentsia of Animal Farm have taken upon themselves the task of teaching and organising their comrades after Old Major's death. The three agitators — Napoleon, Snowball and Squealer — undertake the campaign of 'political education'. To facilitate their task they have worked out Old Major's pronouncements into a fully elaborated system of thought to which they have given the name of Animalism. For several nights in the next three months, secret meetings are arranged in the barn for the leaders to expound the principles of Animalism to the less intelligent members of their class. At first they meet with much stupidity and apathy. The pigs have a hard time overcoming the

barriers of ignorance and prejudice. They discover that several of their benighted comrades, long accustomed to selfish and servile habits of thought, simply cannot understand the logic of revolution. It must be said in fairness to these 'lower class' comrades that one of their questions has long puzzled more competent minds than theirs. It turns on a crucial point in the debate between the voluntarist and determinist interpretation of Marxian dialectics; "If this Rebellion is to happen anyway, what difference does it make whether we work for it or not? (26)". The stupidest questions come from Mollie, the white mare who represents the indolent and ease-loving White Russians. Snowball has little difficulty in dealing with her selfishness and vanity, her fear of being deprived by the revolution of sugar and ribbons. The religious fictions propagated by Moses, the raven (representing Russian Orthodox Church) prove much harder to combat. Although he is hated for being a loafer, his fiction of the Sugarcandy Mountain beyond the clouds — a mysterious country where animals go after death, a land abounding in clover, lump sugar and linseed cake — has had many takers among the less enlightened comrades. The two carthorses, Boxer and Clover, have implicit faith in the pigs as teachers and in the soundness of their doctrine. They have attended every meeting and are keen to pass on to others what they have learned.

The Rebellion

Before long, the animals find themselves plunged into the great Rebellion they have been preparing for. Having been left unfed for a whole day, they break in the door of the store-room and begin to help themselves from the bins. Jones and his men descend on them, whips in hand, and start lashing out in all

directions. However, the animals, instead of running away, fling themselves on the men, kicking and butting them from all sides. Frightened out of their wits, the humans take to their heels with the animals in hot pursuit. Meanwhile, Mrs.Jones makes her escape followed by Moses. The animals chase the men out of the farm and close the five barred gate behind them. The great Rebellion has been won!

The Rebellion in Orwell's story is presented as a spontaneous mass reaction in a 'revolutionary' situation. It makes no mention of the role of the leaders. To have made the animals 'politically aware' is certainly their work. Beyond this they are not seen playing any role in the Rebellion themselves. Under Stalin's rule, the history of the Revolution was rewritten to obfuscate Trotsky's role and place Stalin alongside Lenin. Orwell's narrative gives to neither contestant in the ensuing power struggle any advantage on this score.

> Old Major's song spoke of a time when, with the Revolution won,
>
> Rings shall vanish from our noses,
>
> and the harness from our back,
>
> Bit and spur shall rust forever,
>
> Cruel whips no more shall crack. (23)

Or, in the ringing words of the Manifesto, the workers of the world will smash the chains of their enslavement and enter upon a new age of freedom and equality. For the Beasts of England, now is the time to redeem the pledge. They fetch from the harness room all those bonds with which their human masters had enslaved them — reins, bits, halters, knives and so forth. Some of these they throw down the well, the rest they throw on to the bonfire in the yard. They rush to the top of a knoll and gaze on the ploughland, the hayfield, the orchard, the

pool, the spinney in the clear morning light; it would seem that "the golden future time" has at last arrived, that from now on, "the fruitful fields of England / Shall be trod by beasts alone" (23).

A visit to the farmhouse reveals the unbelievable luxury with which the human masters had surrounded themselves. The animals resolve unanimously never to live in the house.

Now that Jones and his men are gone, Napoleon and Snowball, assisted by Squealer, take over the management of the farm. Almost the first thing they do is to change the name of the farm to 'Animal Farm'. Next they paint in great white letters on the wall of the barn the Seven Commandments of Animalism, "the unalterable law by which all the animals on Animal Farm must live for ever after" (32).

The animals are now their own masters and if they are going to work harder than ever, they know that no one can take the fruits of their labour from them. The transfer of power to the pigs has been accepted as a matter of course. No one seems to grudge them their right to lead and organise their comrades and manage the farm. However, shortly after the unalterable laws have been inscribed high up on the wall, something happens which has a vaguely unsettling effect on the more perceptive of the 'lower' animals. The cows have yielded five buckets of creamy frothing milk. Napoleon promptly takes possession of them, dropping a broad hint that the hens and those others of the animals who have taken an interest in the milk need bother no more about it but had better busy themselves with their work in the hayfield.

A New Ruling Class

As the narrative moves on to the post-revolutionary phase, the focus shifts to the emergence of a new ruling class, and the incipient factionalism within this class with all that this implies for the hopes raised by the great Rebellion. Before the revolution, the pigs and the lower animals were brothers by class, brothers in oppression and slavery. Acquisition of power has introduced a division among them, a division between ruler and ruled. The pigs have themselves become rulers and are now exposed to the temptations that wielders of power are liable to. An important consequence of the change in their role and function has been to widen the gap between mental and manual workers: "The pigs did not actually work, but directed and supervised the others. With their superior knowledge it was natural that they should assume the leadership" (35).

Soon enough it becomes clear that the pigs are not disposed to exercise their power in the spirit of comradely solidarity. They set about acquiring more and more power and privileges for themselves. They move into the harness room, claiming their special privilege as brainworkers. They occupy themselves with mastering technical skills with the help of books brought out of the farmhouse. They claim the whole crop of apples, windfall included, for their exclusive use. At the meeting all resolutions are put forward and debated by the pigs. The others only know how to vote! The pigs are adept at intellectual manipulation. They use their superior intelligence to smooth out knotty points of doctrine and rationalise failures. Thus the absurdly reductive slogan 'Four legs good, two legs bad' is made to fit the case of the two-legged birds by a sophistical play on distinctions and definitions:

> A bird's wing, comrades, he said, is an organ of propulsion and not of manipulation. It should therefore be regarded as a leg. The distinguishing mark of Man is the hand, the instrument with which he does all his mischief. (41)

Similarly, when the pigs claim exclusive right to milk and apples, they know how to justify it on 'purely' rational grounds and obviate the faintest suspicion of selfishness on their part:

> Milk and apples (this has been proved by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brainworkers. The whole management and organisation of this farm depend on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. (42)

It is easy to see in this kind of argument a clever parody of the dialectical 'pea and thimble' trick used to justify any policy or course of action which seems to be expedient for the moment.

Should 'rational' argument fail to convince, Squealer, the propaganda chief, knows how to work on irrational fears and assumptions. "Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, Jones would come back! Surely, comrades", cried Squealer almost pleadingly, skipping from side to side and whisking his tail, "surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?" (42). Orwell's specific target here is the familiar Soviet tactic of citing 'capitalist encirclement' to justify harsh measures and setbacks to policy. Every totalitarian regime needs an external

enemy to bolster itself up in power and to explain away embarrassing questions of policy and performance.

Orwell attached great importance to the episode of the 'milk and apples' as marking the turning point in the story. He suggests that if the animals had asserted themselves at this point, they might have saved the Revolution. This episode is meant to represent the Kronstadt naval rebellion of 1921, when, driven to despair by three years of war Communism, the garrison at Kronstadt mutinied, but was ruthlessly put down.

Incipient Power Struggle

As the work of organising the newly founded farm gets under way, the role and behaviour of the two leaders – Napoleon and Snowball – are further distinguished and contrasted. Snowball has grandiose plans for increasing efficiency through better organisation of workers and by inculcating the lessons of the Rebellion. Napoleon professes little interest in his schemes; but he does take away nine young puppies from their mothers declaring that he will teach them himself. It is also noticed that at the meeting Napoleon and Snowball can never agree on a plan or policy, however harmless it might be. If there was no hint of personal rivalry between them before the Rebellion, their relationship has undergone a distinct change once power has been won. They seem unable to work in comradely collaboration any more. Napoleon, in particular, is inclined to deride the work of his ebullient and enterprising comrade. Their oppositional attitudes give unmistakable signs of an incipient power struggle. And as each pushes through his schemes in a spirit of jealous rivalry, the future of the Rebellion seems threatened from within no less than from without.

For the simple, devoted, hardworking animals the Rebellion appears to have wrought little change in their condition. To the rival leaders they are mere pawns in the political game. In exploiting them and securing their allegiance they seem to be of one mind. And so the 'lower orders' have to work as hard as ever. Only, now they are working for themselves and not for any parasitical human masters. Boxer is the type of the loyal, devoted worker who has implicit faith in the good intentions of the leader: his motto is: "I will work harder". Alone among the comrades Benjamin, the donkey, entertains no illusions. He will not shirk work, but he will not, unlike Boxer, put in extra work. He is much too worldly-wise to put his trust in the Rebellion.

A New Orthodoxy

Meanwhile, Animalism is well on the way to establishing itself as the new orthodoxy; new symbols and rituals are created to formalize allegiance to the faith. Every Sunday there is the hoisting of the flag in the farmhouse garden, a flag marked with a hoof and a horn, symbolic of animal solidarity. There is the ritual chanting of the principles of Animalism, conveniently reduced for the benefit of its blind, uncomprehending adherents to the simple formula: "Four legs good, two legs bad."

World Revolution

In orthodox Communist theory, the final victory of the proletarian revolution in any one country was predicated on the success of worldwide revolution. Accordingly, the Comintern was formed to promote revolution in countries outside Russia. In practice, this meant that Soviet Russia had to pursue

a dual policy towards foreign countries. While maintaining diplomatic and trade relations with these countries, it was also necessary to foment revolutions there and to work to overthrow those governments. As an ardent champion of world revolution, Trotsky opposed Stalin on the ground that the latter advocated the doctrine of 'socialism in one country'. Orwell has worked these aspects of Soviet history into his satire. The idea of world revolution he uses reductively, to ironic and comic effect. At first it is the delightful mock heroic wit and effect that comes through strongly: flights of pigeons are sent out every day to mingle with their comrades on neighbouring farms and to foment revolution; the words and ideals of 'Beasts of England' catch on; a wave of rebelliousness sweeps over the countryside: "Bulls which had always been tractable suddenly turned savage, sheep broke down hedges and devoured the clover, cows kicked the pail over, hunters refused their fences and shot their riders on to the other side" (46).

Hearing in the song "a prophecy of their future doom," the human masters take punitive action, but the singing goes on:

> Any animal caught singing it, was given a flogging on the spot. And yet the song was irrepressible. The blackbirds whistled it in the hedges, the pigeons cooed it in the elms, it got into the din of the smithies and the tune of the church bells. (46)

Later, however, an ironic touch is added to these ambitious plans when the focus shifts from disinterested pursuit of revolutionary goals to the compulsions of power politics. 'World revolution' now becomes one of the issues on which Napoleon and Snowball find it convenient to disagree. Later, still, after the expulsion of Snowball, the ideal is retained but merely as a ruse, a ploy in the

hands of a cunning self-seeking despot to be employed, as occasion serves, to further his ambitions.

The Counter-Revolution

Animal Farm faces the first real challenge to its hard-won freedom with the counter-revolution mounted by Jones and his men which allegorizes the allied invasion of 1918 upon Soviet Russia. The outcome of this conflict in both history and allegory serves to underline once again the ascendency of the cause of Revolution over the forces of reaction. In Orwell's story the Battle of the Cowshed needs to be viewed in relation to the impending power struggle between Napoleon and Snowball. It is a battle organised and led by Snowball; he emerges as 'Animal hero, First Class'. Napoleon is conspicuously absent from the scene. And yet, in the bizarre drama of 'expropriations' and 'appropriations' to be stage-managed by Napoleon, Snowball will be robbed of his personal victory in the Battle of the Cowshed as he will be robbed of yet another of his grand projects, the windmill, later in the story.

The counter-revolution having been beaten back, Animal Farm is now faced with the threat of internal dissension. The crisis has its roots in the personal rivalry of Napoleon and Snowball in their bid for supreme leadership. It is carried on behind a facade of disputes over policy and programme.

The expulsion of Snowball

Until Napoleon precipitates the crisis by calling out his 'secret' police, the struggle for power leaves intact the power-sharing arrangement in which even the humbler working animals have a say. The pigs may decide policy; but they

have to get their decisions ratified by a majority vote at the Meeting. Snowball is willing to abide by the rules of the game, preferring to gain support by the power of the spoken word; he has concrete plans and proposals for improving production; and he is able to put across his case forcefully. Napoleon has no plans; he is not a talker; he contents himself with dismissing Snowball's plans as useless. To counteract Snowball's rhetoric, he has recourse to devious and disruptive tactics. He contrives the support of the sheep who oblige him by a loud bleating of 'Four legs good, two legs bad'.

Two issues prove particularly contentious for Napoleon and Snowball as they had for their historical counterparts. Snowball is for rapid industrialisation and worldwide revolution. Napoleon comes down on the side of improvement in agricultural production and 'revolution in one country'. In Orwell's narrative it is the issue of the windmill (industrialisation) that precipitates the crisis; the two sides in the dispute are neatly summed up in the slogans: "Vote for Snowball and the three-day week," "Vote for Napoleon and the full manger" (55).

Revolution betrayed

Napoleon's highhanded intervention in ending the dispute marks the turning point in the fortunes of the revolution on Animal Farm--the transformation of revolutionary power into absolute power. Having driven out Snowball, Napoleon abolishes the only power-sharing arrangement there is: the Meeting at which resolutions are put forward, debated and voted on. From now on, he and his trusted lieutenants will make all the decisions; the animals will, as usual, assemble on Sundays, salute the flag, sing the anthem and receive their orders for the week's work. A new ritual is added to the old ones; the skull of Old

Major is disinterred and set up on a stump at the foot of the flagstaff, beside the gun that had been left behind by the counter-revolutionaries. The animals are expected to file past the skull in a reverent manner after the hoisting of the flag. By this gesture Napoleon intends to claim rightful inheritance of Major's prophetic mandate! In fact, by a curious irony, he had announced dissolution of the Meeting from the raised portion of the floor where Major had previously stood to deliver his speech.

With the ouster of Snowball and the suppression of the Meeting, the autarchy of Napoleon is firmly established. Under the new dispensation Animal Farm takes on features closely resembling those of fascist and Communist dictatorships in social and political organisation. As in a fascist state, the social organisation of the animals shows a three-part structure: the Leader, the elite and the masses.[12] Corresponding to this on the political plane is the totalitarian power structure: the Leader, the Party, (to be identified with the elite on the social plane) ideology, secret police and propaganda. As can be seen the political and the social structures overlap at the level of the Leader and the Elite (Party). The masses which form the base of the social pyramid are excluded from the political process. For their part, the mass of the lower animals do not want political power but only social equality. This makes the vast political super-structure--the Leader, Party and their instruments of persuasion and coercion: ideology, propaganda and secret police — top-heavy and otiose. It has lost its function but exists to serve its own interests at the expense of the masses. As Orwell puts it, "A society becomes totalitarian when its structure becomes

flagrantly artificial: that is, when its ruling class has lost its function but succeeds in clinging to power by force or fraud."[13]

We might now look at the ways in which these aspects of total power have been realised in terms of the allegory.

(a) The Leader

In his essay "Boys' Weeklies" Orwell noted with alarm the emergence of the leader - principle in modern Boys' papers. He associated it with the cult of violence and bully-worship made popular by fascist politics and certain types of crime thrillers. The Leader of Boys' Weeklies is a superman of immense physical strength who dominates everyone about him, a tough guy who solves every problem with a sock on the jaw. In "Looking Back on the Spanish War," the Leader appears as a figure more powerful than God himself, because he can deny objective truth and make his opinion prevail:

> If the Leader says of such and such an event 'It never happened' — well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five — well, two and two are five. This prospect frightens me much more than bombs — and after our experiences of the last few years that is not a frivolous statement.[14]

The above essay was written in 1942. Three years before, in his review of Bertrand Russell's *Power*, Orwell challenged Russell's view that modern tyrannies such as Hitler's must come to an end because tyrannies in the past have all collapsed sooner or later and the same fate must befall modern regimes as well. Orwell questions the very basis of this reasoning, namely, that sanity and good

sense will prevail over brutal power and the huge system of organized lying that sustains it. He goes on: "It is possible that we are descending into an age in which two and two will make five when the Leader says so."[15]

There is an unmistakable allusion in these repeated references to the Leader to Il Duce (The Leader – Mussolini) and Herr Fuehrer (The Leader – Hitler). In Nazi theory, the masses are the vast numbers of ordinary folk who cannot think and act on their own but are capable of enormous resources of instinct and will. They provide the weight and force of any popular movement. They are distinguished from the elite, a natural aristocracy, the leading and ruling class that provide intelligence and direction. At the head of the elite is the Leader "in whose name everything is done, who is said to be "responsible" for all, but whose acts can nowhere be called in question. The relation of Leader to folk was essentially mystical or irrational."[16] In Soviet history, Stalin takes the place of Hitler and Mussolini. Although he retained the title of Comrade, and maintained a façade of democratic institutions, his word was law and "he was always right."

Napoleon is Orwell's version of the fascist–Stalinist Leader. He is endowed with an inscrutable will to power. Not a gifted talker, he provides himself with the unanswerable argument of force, destroys collective leadership and representative institutions and enthrones himself as undisputed ruler. Even Boxer, in physical strength far superior to the Leader and his pack of hounds, is under his 'charismatic' power. When Napoleon utters a falsehood, a loyal, devoted follower like Boxer feels compelled to accept it as truth, denying the evidence of his senses "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right" (60).

Napoleon carries out a ruthless purge to stamp out the faintest opposition to his rule; he makes systematic use of terror and violence to forestall further threats of resistance.

In obvious reference to the personality cult and sycophancy that grew up around the figure of the Russian dictator after the purges, the narrative develops the theme of Napoleon's glorification, his translation to the status of a cult figure, at once feared and revered. This is a metamorphosis actively promoted by Napoleon himself. Of late he has awarded himself two medals – Animal Hero, First Class and Animal Hero, Second Class. From being a 'Comrade' (a title that stresses equality and fellowship) he has graduated to 'Our Leader'. The sinister associations of 'Fuehrer', the German for 'Leader', cannot be missed. Napoleon as 'Leader' is progressively being distanced from and elevated above the common comrade by a cultivated mystique of pre-eminence. His public appearances grow rarer and rarer; all orders are issued through Squealer. At his rare appearances, there is much pomp and ceremony; a young black cockerel marching in front, acting as his 'trumpeter'; the retinue of fierce growling dogs, at once the source of his power and a sign of his imperious will. With these growling dogs about him, Napoleon is virtually unapproachable to the common herd. Even in the farmhouse, with members of his own caste, he likes to emphasize his dignity and distinction: he occupies separate quarters, takes his meals alone, with two dogs to wait upon him, and always eats from the Crown Derby Dinner Service. It is also announced that the gun will be fired every year on Napoleon's birthday, in addition to the anniversaries of the Rebellion and the Battle of the Cowshed.

In addition to 'Our Leader', Napoleon has many other titles bestowed on him. To admiring pigs he is 'Father of All Animals', 'Terror of Mankind', 'Protector

of the Sheepfold', 'Ducklings' Friend' and the like. Squealer turns sycophant in his speeches, speaking with tears rolling down his cheeks, of Napoleon's wisdom and love and goodness, especially his love for those ignorant and miserable comrades living on other farms. Everything that goes well is now ascribed to Napoleon's benign influence: "You would often hear one hen remark to another 'Under the guidance of our Leader, Comrade Napoleon, I have laid five eggs in six days'; or two cows enjoying a drink at the pool, would exclaim, 'Thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, how excellent this water tastes!' " (90). Minimus composes an encomium, titled 'Comrade Napoleon' which so pleases Napoleon that he orders it to be inscribed on the wall of the barn. The verses are surmounted by a portrait of Napoleon in profile executed by Squealer.

Side by side with the deification of Napoleon, the demonisation of Snowball, too, proceeds apace. It is revealed that three hens came forward and confessed that, instigated by Snowball, they had entered into a plot to kill Napoleon. They were executed, and fresh precautions were taken for Napoleon's safety. Four dogs now guard his bed at night, one at each corner and a young pig named Pinkey is to taste all his food before he eats it. Since Napoleon can make no mistake even in farm policy, who but Snowball should bear the blame if weeds grow up along with wheat?

> (I)t was discovered that on one of his nocturnal visits Snowball had mixed weed seeds with the seed corn. A gander who had been privy to the plot, had confessed his guilt to Squealer and immediately committed suicide by swallowing deadly nightshade berries. (93)

The Leader's pride suffers a temporary setback in the sale of timber to the fascist Frederick. Napoleon believes he has pulled off a clever deal. The pigs are in ecstasies over their Leader's cunning; his greatest stroke is to have insisted on payment by cash, not cheque, for he trusts nobody. Napoleon shows off his prize – crisp bank notes piled on a china dish – at a special meeting called for the purpose, himself reclining beside it in regal style, the lower caste animals filing past, wondering at the pile. Napoleon is planning to buy machinery for the windmill with the money. However, Frederick is too clever for Napoleon. He has paid for the timber in forged notes. But before the discomfiture has had time to sink in, Napoleon rouses his followers to vengeance and soon they are baying in a pack at the enemy. The Leader is not now the fool that he made himself out to be but the victim of a fascist swindle!

Since everything is done in the Leader's name, Napoleon feels entitled to give his name to the windmill the project of which he had opposed at first but later stolen from his opponent and made his own. When it is blown up by Frederick, Napoleon creates a new decoration, the Order of the Green Banner, in commemoration of the battle and promptly awards it to himself. He can make and unmake laws. He sets aside the rule against drink, gets drunk to celebrate a defeat, and alarmed at the effects of drink issues a decree against it with death penalty for violation. While the "law" is still in force, he sets about cultivating barley and teaching himself the art of distilling. Since the entire 'economy' is owned by the 'state', Napoleon's decision to appropriate the paddock for cultivating barley is not to be questioned although it was to have been set apart as pasture for superannuated comrades.

When Animal Farm is proclaimed a Republic, Napoleon is unanimously elected its President, there being only one candidate. His greatest stroke as Leader is to undo by presidential fiat the entire work of the revolution at his final rapprochement with the human enemy.

(b) The Party (Elite)

The course of the Russian Revolution and post-revolution was to show that political equality had to go the way of economic equality. The crucial factor here was the emergence of the Party as the instrument of the Proletarian dictatorship. In theory, the Party is the vanguard of the proletariat; its role is to teach, organise, and act as a mediator between the masses and the government, to act as a force for integration of different sections of society. In carrying forward the proletarian revolution, the Party claimed the right to purge itself of factional fights and present to the world 'the unity of will' of the working class. From the days of Lenin on, great emphasis was placed on the role of a centralised and disciplined Party, 'a narrow party' as opposed to an 'open' one. Thus the ground was prepared for the emergence of a new ruling class which tended to concentrate power and privilege in its own hands until in the days of Stalin, the dictatorship of the proletariat became a dictatorship of the Party monolith with the dictator himself holding the reins of power.[17]

Orwell's satire on the Party–Elite is seriously handicapped by the initial premiss that the pigs have a *natural* superiority over other animals by virtue of their superior intelligence. This makes them into a ruling caste and not just a ruling class. The barrier is insurmountable by ruler and ruled by the terms of the fiction. In examining the work for publication, T.S.Eliot found this a most serious

flaw in the political satire. The pigs are born to rule and the lower animals readily grant them their 'birthright'. In the circumstances all that can be asked of the pigs is that they exercise their superior intelligence in the interests of the community which, obviously, they are not prepared to do. Once the initial premiss is granted, it is only possible to criticise the rulers of Animal Farm on moral grounds, and not strictly on political grounds. Even in the early days of the Revolution, the proceedings at the Meeting, one is told, were little more than a symbolic concession to the ideal of equality. And so, it must be admitted that the Communist ideal of doing away with the difference between brainworkers and manual workers could not possibly apply to Orwell's fiction.

Napoleon's seizure of power is followed by a further differentiation of the brainworkers in class and rank. At meetings in the barn, the animals no longer sit together as they used to. The pigs now occupy the raised portion of the floor: Napoleon, Squealer and Minimus (a new favourite credited with poetic powers) sit in front with the dogs in a semicircle round them and the other pigs sitting behind. The 'lower' animals sit facing them in the hall.

While the masses are driven hard with more work and less food, the one class whose fortunes are definitely improving, despite all shortages of food and the ever-growing work schedule, is the class of pigs. They move into the farmhouse and establish themselves there. Naturally the rest of the animals are having to make an adjustment in what they believe to be the official policy in this matter. This they are able to do with a little help from Snowball who assures them that there never was any ban on the use of the farmhouse. Besides, pigs being the brains of the farm, no one could grudge them their requirement of a quiet place to work in. Moreover, it is certainly more suited to the dignity of the

Leader (Napoleon – Stalin now identified with the fascist Fuehrer, Hitler) to live in the farmhouse than in a sty. But what worries the animals even more is the fact that the pigs have taken to sleeping in beds. Boxer is disposed to dismiss these qualms with the maxim: "Napoleon is always right;" but the others are not so easily persuaded.

The ruling elite is able to stretch a point of law and cultivate certain refined habits. The rest of the animals are able to guess as much when a warm, rich scent is wafted across the yard from the little brew-house beyond the kitchen. It is announced that all the barley is to be reserved for exclusive use of the pigs. Every pig is to receive a pint of beer daily, with half a gallon for Napoleon which is always served to him in the Crown Derby soup tureen.

Further differentiation in rank and privilege follows. Napoleon is to take personal care of the piglets. Until a school is built for them they will be brought up in the farmhouse kitchen. They have the privilege of playing in the farmhouse garden but are discouraged from mingling with the young of the lower castes. Around this time it is decreed that if a pig and any other animal meet on the path, the other animal must stand aside; and that all pigs of whatever degree are to have the privilege of wearing ribbons on their tails on Sundays.

While material conditions on the farm steadily improve, little of this improvement reaches the animals who work hard to bring it about. Only the pigs and the dogs — the party-elite and the secret police — are benefited. Squealer justifies the preferential treatment accorded to the pigs on the ground that their work of organising and managing has grown harder. They now have to expend enormous labours on things called 'files', 'reports', 'minutes', and 'memoranda', which are burnt in the furnace as soon as they have been written out!

The principles of Animalism are suitably altered to enhance the power and privilege of the elite until at last they become "more equal" than others. In the end they appear in the role of human masters, standing up on hind legs, whips in hand, giving orders and supervising work.

(c) Ideology

Totalitarian ideologies claim to provide "a total conception of life"[18], involving theories of human nature, history and politics. The professed aim is to remake man and his world in line with a preferred ideal. In actual fact, however, inculcation of the ideology becomes a means of legitimising the exercise of total power. Loyalty to the nation or cause, discipline, hard work, and readiness for heroic self-sacrifice are vigorously urged as duties owed to the state: "Totalitarian ideologies emphasize citizens' duties toward the state, not rights against it."[19]

Old Major's manifesto set forth the ideals to be striven after and identified the enemy to be fought against. The Rebellion was won on this platform. With Napoleon's seizure of power, this revolutionary project has been derailed. The ideology is retained as a legitimation device while draining it of content and value. Relying more on terror and violence than principle Napoleon feels able to flout it with impunity.

A retreat from principle is never admitted as such but merely explained away. A good example is the explanation offered for doing business with humans: it is not done for profit but to buy essential goods and machinery for the windmill. Never to have dealings with men, never to engage in trade, or touch money, was the resolution agreed on at the overthrow of human tyranny.

Against these qualms feebly voiced by a few young pigs, Napoleon directs his battery of growling dogs and bleating sheep, and, of course, Squealer's theoretical explanations. This time it consists of the simple denial that there never was any such injunction against trade. The animals have no recorded evidence to oppose to this denial. The Seven Commandments are conveniently vague on these points.

And so with the progressive repudiation of the Seven Commandments. Since an ideology like Marxism has its sacred texts and unquestionable dogmas, every dilution of principle has to be accounted for as a temporary expedient or no real repudiation at all. In the latter case, the deviation is by a tortuous derivation brought into line with dogma. The Seven Commandments are racked to fit the Procrustean bed of "dialectical" explanation. An escape clause is surreptitiously added: "No animal shall sleep in a bed" becomes "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets". Similarly, the Commandment against executions has the words 'without cause' added to it; that against drink is modified to read: "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess". Since the State holds a monopoly of all documents and records there is no way of checking the accuracy of a suspiciously worded doctrine. There simply is no authorized version except the one that happens to be current. As Orwell put it in "Literature and Totalitarianism", though totalitarianism fixes thought, it does not control it. In "Looking Back on the Spanish War" he speaks of a "shifting phantasmagoric world in which black may be white tomorrow and yesterday's weather can be changed by decree."[20]

Should any animal raise the faintest doubt about the authenticity of the new doctrine, he has little chance of carrying his point against the dialectical

subtlety of Squealer's explanations. For instance, in the case about beds, Squealer denies there ever was any ruling against beds. And what is a bed but a place to sleep in? Even a pile of straw is a bed in this sense of the term. The injunction, then, is only against the use of sheets. The pigs are sleeping between blankets, not sheets. That the pigs need a good rest after so much heavy brainwork no one can deny, unless, of course, he wants Jones back. When the matter has been so well explained, it would be mean on the part of the animals not to see the point. Indeed, having been thus enlightened, the animals show little surprise on being told that the pigs will henceforth be getting up an hour later than other animals.

Ideology can be used to great advantage when it is convenient to profess it. Having overcome the scruple about trade, Napoleon is planning to expand business with his neighbours. There happens to be a pile of timber stacked in the yard which might bring in a good profit. Napoleon is unable to decide who to sell it to. As soon as he plans to sell it to Pilkington, Snowball is rumoured to be hiding on his farm; but when he inclines in favour of Frederick, then Snowball is said to be at Pinchfield.

Napoleon drives a hard bargain over the sale of the timber. He makes some astute moves playing one customer off against another, now favouring the capitalist Pilkington, now the fascist Frederick. To raise the stakes, he does not scruple to mix a little revolutionary politics with business; he would reject Pilkington's offer saying Snowball is hiding on his farm, and, then, when Frederick makes a bid, turns him down citing the same reason. Much to their astonishment, the animals learn that Napoleon has sold the timber to the fascist enemy, pulling a fast one on his capitalist rival. Their astonishment turns to admiration when

they are told that during the seeming friendship with Pilkington, Napoleon has been secretly negotiating with Frederick. The pretence of friendship was merely a ruse to raise the price!

Napoleon delivers a coup de grace to Animalism by reducing it to "All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others." This is accompanied by the transformation of pigs into 'men' and a suitable modification of the sheep's slogan which now becomes: "Four legs good, two legs better." At the banquet with his human neighbours Napoleon laughs away as mere nonsense the notion of animals' hostility to man, denounces the boar who started it all and shows his guests how well he can hold down the lower orders. Animal Farm gets its old name back; the flag showing the hoof and the horn is scrapped.

(d) Propaganda

A totalitarian regime controls all channels of communication. It keeps up a steady barrage of propaganda to explain official policies and programmes, to cover up failures and denigrate enemies of the regime. No rival versions of reality are allowed to exist.

After his violent seizure of power Napoleon is obliged to redeploy the propaganda machine to give his authoritarian rule a spurious legitimacy. He needs to redefine doctrine, reinvent history, deny objective facts and create new symbols, rituals and slogans. This task is entrusted to Squealer whose proven powers of 'persuasion' are now to be employed in the service of Comrade Napoleon. Squealer is a representative character reminding one of the Programme Chief of not only Stalin but of Hitler as well — the classical figure of Goebbels who averred that if you tell a lie a hundred times it will become truth.

Squealer is sent round to explain why Napoleon has found it necessary to put an end to the old decision-making mechanism. Squealer assures his comrades that Napoleon has done so out of necessity, not choice. No one believes more firmly than he in the equality of all animals. But left to themselves, the lower animals might make the wrong decisions as they very nearly did in the case of the windmill proposed by Snowball who, says Squealer, is no better than a criminal. To Boxer who recalls Snowball's gallant role in the Battle of the Cowshed, Squealer replies that loyalty and obedience are more important than bravery. He hints at the possibility of "rewriting" this bit of history which will show that Snowball's part in the Battle "was much exaggerated" (60). Under the new dispensation the value prized above all else is 'discipline' which, in this context, might be construed to mean 'servility'. And so he drums in the message with the unanswerable argument about Jones making a comeback:

> Discipline, comrades, iron discipline! That is the watchword for today. One false step, and our enemies would be upon us. Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back? (60). Squealer has carried his point. Voicing the general feeling, Boxer replies: "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right." To his private motto of "I will work harder", he now adds the maxim: "Comrade Napoleon is always right." (60)

Under Stalin's dictatorship even party stalwarts like Bukharin, Zinoviev, and Kamanev were compelled to make confessions in the words Boxer uses to declare his faith.[21]

With supreme contempt for consistency, matched only by Stalin's in emulating Trotsky after driving him out, Napoleon announces that the windmill is to be built, after all. To set the record straight, Squealer offers some explanations. Prompted, no doubt, by his master, Squealer shows that he can outdo himself in reinventing the past. Napoleon, he confides, has never in fact been opposed to the windmill. On the contrary, it was he who had advocated it in the first place. Snowball had stolen the plan from among Napoleon's papers. If he seemed to oppose the plan at the Meeting it was mere tactics, a mere ruse "to get rid of Snowball, who was a dangerous character and a bad influence" (62). Squealer's 'persuasive' skills enforced by growls of anger from the dogs, settle the point for the animals even though they are a little puzzled to know what the word 'tactics' means.

The epithets chosen to describe Snowball—— 'dangerous character and bad influence', 'criminal'—— are not without their significance. It is a calculated move in a deliberate campaign of vilification aimed at discrediting Snowball and turning him into a scapegoat whose 'machinations' can be invoked to justify every kind of failure or atrocity that might be perpetrated by the system.

Soviet propaganda harped on the danger to the State from capitalist encirclement and the treacherous acts of Trotsky who had gone into exile abroad. In Orwell's narrative this theme provides some brilliant strokes of political polemic. Snowball is the evil genius that has been hounded out of the farm; but he continues to haunt the scene like a vicious, indestructible power and presence. It is learnt that Snowball is not merely prowling about the borders of Animal Farm, he is making nightly incursions to foment trouble. With more and more of these stories coming out, alarm and panic spread among the animals.

In their distraught imagination, Snowball has assumed the character of a sinister force, invisible yet pervasive, working his mischiefs under cover of darkness: "He stole the corn, he upset the milk-pails, he broke the eggs, he trampled the seedbeds, he gnawed the bark off the fruit trees" (78). So pervasive is his evil influence that it is now customary to attribute to him any damage or loss incurred on the farm:

> If a window was broken or a drain was blocked up, someone was certain to say that Snowball had come in the night and done it, and when the key of the store-shed was lost, the whole farm was convinced that Snowball had thrown it down the well... The cows declared unanimously that Snowball crept into their stalls and milked them in their sleep. (78)

Napoleon conducts an investigation into Snowball's activities in the presence of all the animals. At every step he stops and sniffs the ground and claims to know by the smell, traces of Snowball's footsteps all over the farm. Worse is to come yet. Squealer reports that Snowball has sold himself to Frederick who is planning to attack the farm. Snowball is to act as his guide! Squealer now goes on to disclose a fact that has recently come to light from documents Snowball had left behind him. It was believed until now that Snowball's rebellion against Animal Farm was motivated by vanity and ambition. It is now known that he was actually in league with Jones from the very start! He was Jones's agent all the time! Actually, he tried to get the animals defeated in the Battle of the Cowshed! The animals are quite stupefied by the revelation. It goes against all that they remember so vividly in the battle: Snowball charging ahead of them, rallying and encouraging them, throwing the whole weight of his

body against Jones, braving his pellets. Boxer, in particular, finds it so hard to believe the new version. He recalls that they had given him the decoration of 'Animal Hero, First Class.' This, says Squealer, was a mistake on their part. He insists that Snowball was actually trying to lure them into a trap. The idea was to give the signal for retreat at a critical moment. He very nearly succeeded. But just then Napoleon sprang forward, with a cry of 'Death to Humanity' and sank his teeth in Jones's leg. Boxer is still unconvinced, but Squealer invokes the authority of Napoleon for his version and that settles the matter for Boxer: "Ah, that is different!" said Boxer. "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right" (81).

Squealer applauds Boxer's faith in Comrade Napoleon but makes it clear that he is not pleased with the latter's earlier reservations about the official version. Turning to go, he remarks with ominous intent: "I warn every animal on this farm to keep his eyes very wide open. For we have reason to think that some of Snowball's secret agents are lurking among us at this moment" (81).

There is to be no let-up in the denigration campaign against Snowball. The animals are told that Snowball never in fact received the order of 'Animal Hero, First Class.' If they believed otherwise, they had merely been deceived by a legend Snowball had spread sometime after the Battle of the Cowshed. In fact, far from being honoured with this title, he was censured for cowardice! Some animals who are bewildered by this revelation are soon convinced by Squealer of the unreliability of their memories.

In pulling off his deal with the fascist Frederick, Napoleon makes clever use of propaganda. He puts out the rumour that Frederick is intending to attack Animal Farm, being furiously jealous of the progress made on the windmill

project. More and more rumours are churned out from Napoleon's propaganda machine: rumours of atrocities committed against animal comrades on Frederick's farm, of flogging an old horse to death, starving his cows, burning a dog to death in the furnace, making cockerels fight with splinters of blades tied to their spurs. So successful are these stories that the comrades of Animal Farm want to rush to the defence of their 'fellows' but are only restrained by Squealer who tells them to trust to the wisdom of their Leader's strategies. And then, one day, Napoleon appears at a meeting to announce that he never contemplated selling the timber to Frederick, that he considers it beneath his dignity to do business with a scoundrel of that description. The pigeons who are still sent out are forbidden to enter Foxwood; they are ordered to shift their operations to Pinchfield with a suitable change of slogan from 'Death to Humanity' to 'Death to Frederick'. And yet, the deal is concluded with Frederick, after all. Of course, this calls for some revision of past history and it is promptly given. Napoleon tells his comrades that the story of Frederick planning to attack Animal Farm is completely untrue. Similarly, the stories of their comrades being tortured on Pinchfield are greatly exaggerated. These fictions have been circulated by Snowball and his agents. In fact, it is known that Snowball is living on Foxwood farm in considerable luxury and has been there for years past! All relations with Foxwood have been broken off; insulting messages have been sent to Pilkington. The pigeons are told to avoid Pinchfield farm and change their slogan from 'Death to Frederick' to 'Death to Pilkington'.

After the disastrous Battle of the Windmill, Squealer is having to explain the need for a celebration. There is the sound of a gun going off in the yard. Squealer explains that the gun is fired to celebrate victory. What victory? asks

Boxer. Squealer expresses surprise that Boxer should not see the obvious, that they have won back every inch that was theirs. But that, says Boxer with his plain horse sense, only means that they now have what they had before; this, to him, is certainly no cause for celebration. But with the crass insensitivity of a class that is cushioned against every hardship, Squealer makes nothing of Boxer's regrets. What if the windmill is gone? he asks. They could always rebuild it, indeed several more if they chose. Although Squealer was unaccountably missing on the scene of battle, he more than makes up for it by a propaganda exercise that converts a defeat into victory well worth celebrating!

With the guns firing seven times, the green flag flying, and Napoleon making speeches, even the dispirited ones are persuaded to think that the heavy losses they sustained are in fact a gain. The dead are given a solemn burial, Napoleon himself leading the 'cortege'. Two days are given over to celebrations. There are songs, speeches and more firing of the gun. The animals are given a little extra in addition to the meagre rations, to celebrate the victory.

The historical background of these episodes may now be looked into. Orwell brings together several aspects of Soviet foreign policy here, its policy regarding trade and relations with fascist and capitalist powers. By the mid-twenties, the capitalist countries of the West and the Soviet Union had come to accept each other as a political reality. Although engaging in trade was anathema in Communist theory, the need to industrialise rapidly compelled the Soviet Union to do business with the West. On the theoretical front the attack against bourgeois democracies went on; even when Hitler came to power, the main target of Communist propaganda was Western democracies. Stalin concluded a secret pact with Hitler in 1939 and did nothing to help the war against fascism. It

was only when Russia itself was attacked in 1941, here allegorised as the Battle of the Windmill, that Soviet foreign policy turned against the Nazis. Orwell's satire scores several direct hits at these dizzying tergiversations of policy and the continual re-adjustment of doctrine that this called forth, the steady barrage of propaganda campaign against enemies, both real and imaginary, down to the little detail of the characteristic intellectual exercise that converts every defeat into a victory for the proletariat.

Under Stalin's rule, the wage differentials growing steadily between workers and party managers, the principle of economic equality proved to be a great embarrassment. The problem was solved by denouncing the idea as petty bourgeois deviationism. Similarly, when conditions grow worse for the working animals, Squealer makes his round proving to everyone that strict equality in rations would be contrary to the principles of Animalism. After all, he points out, the animals are better off now than in Jones's day. Only there has been a slight 're-adjustment' (his favourite word for reduction) of rations. He has little difficulty in proving the great progress made under Napoleon's rule; the animals have no very clear recollection of life in the old days. All they know is that life now is harsh and dreary, that they are groaning under a burden of work. When corn or hay or roots have to be sold, the shortage is passed on to the hard-working animals. The pigs, if anything, are fattening.

After Squealer's position on equality has been made known, the logical next step is only to be expected. It is expressed with 'unanswerable' logic: Some animals are more equal than others.

(e) Secret Police

Terror is a logical extension of propaganda since totalitarian arguments themselves function as a kind of intellectual blackjack. The secret police function as extra-legal enforcers of policies and programmes. They look out for possible signs of dissent and forestall open expressions of dissidence by detaining and punishing the guilty. By a systematic use of terror and violence it is intended to instil fear and universal suspicion in all subjects.

Bent upon seizing power, Napoleon has provided himself with the force he requires. Snowball is hounded out by the dogs. The Meeting is abolished. New rules relating to administration of the farm are laid down. The lower animals, all except the intelligent pigs, are unable to protest; they either fail to make sense of what has happened or are simply unable to formulate their thoughts into arguments. When some of the pigs protest against the decision to dissolve the meeting they are cowed down by the menacing dogs.

The hens that revolted against Napoleon's orders, the young pigs that raised a feeble voice of protest at the abolition of the Meeting, Boxer who showed misgivings about the official version of the Battle of the Cowshed and several others are marked out for liquidation. Napoleon proceeds to carry out the 'purge' for which the ground has been prepared by his carefully orchestrated and well-publicized sabotage stories in which the arch villain is Snowball: his nightly incursions and mischiefs, the ruin of the windmill, fresh documents revealing his traitor's role in the Battle of the Cowshed, and his 'bad influence' on the rebellious hens, on 'the young turks' among the porkers, even on the devoted worker Boxer, who dared to call in question the 'well-documented' official version of the Battle of the Cowshed. These latter are now perceived as 'saboteurs' in league

with the enemy and must be got rid of! And so, Napoleon calls a meeting of all the animals, and carries out the 'trial' and executions. The dogs seize the 'culprits' and drag them trembling to Napoleon's feet. Only Boxer is able to oppose to Napoleon a force greater than his. The 'saboteurs' are then ordered to confess their crimes: the porkers confess that they had been secretly in touch with Snowball, had collaborated with him in destroying the windmill and had plotted with him to hand over Animal Farm to Frederick. They reveal that Snowball had privately admitted to them that he had been Jones's secret agent for 'years past'. The hens admit to having been incited by Snowball to rebel; a goose confesses to having kept back a few ears of corn; a sheep confesses to having urinated in the drinking pool at the instigation of Snowball; two other sheep admit to having caused the death of an ailing old ram, a devoted follower of Napoleon and so on and so forth. All of them are executed on the spot.

> And so the tale of confessions and executions went on, until there was a pile of corpses lying before Napoleon's feet and the air was heavy with the smell of blood, which had been unknown there since the expulsion of Jones. (83)

In narrating the circumstances leading up to this episode and, further, the details of the purge itself, Orwell's story comes uncomfortably close to its historical parallels. It is a brilliant caricature of the Great Purge carried out by Stalin in the late thirties to secure absolute power.[22] Arrests on trumped up charges, show trials, forced confessions and executions set the pattern of this hideous 'cleansing' act. It is appropriate to recall that some of Stalin's victims had been denounced before being executed as saboteurs working in league with

Trotsky who had gone into exile abroad. Anyone in the Party and the Army, suspected of harbouring the slightest oppositional attitude, was got rid of; this meant there was to be no scope for independent, critical thought. The peculiar horror of Stalin's action was that he did not spare the Old Guard, comrades of Lenin in the Great Revolution and that he did so against the rule laid down by Lenin himself, that a Communist should never be put to death for a merely political opposition to the leadership (the origin, presumably, of the Sixth Commandment: 'No animal shall kill any other animal'). The horrible brutality and perfidy of this act is carried over into the animal story, and, even in the animal perspective, the narrative does evoke intense anger and pathos.

Napoleon's aim, as in the case of his historical counterpart, has been to root out the faintest trace of opposition to his power. The purge brings to the fore the potential for cruelty and violence inherent in a system that has abolished all power-sharing arrangements, the meeting and debates in this case, and seeks to impose revolution from above.

The reaction of the animals shows that a character like Napoleon can always get his own way. They are simply unable to see through his bare-faced villainy. Hence their puzzlement: which is the more shocking, the treachery of the criminals or their terrible punishment? Of one thing they are certain. This is not what they had fought for. A new note now mingles with the strains of this horrible black comedy, an elegiac note tinged with distress and dismay over a vanished dream. From a little knoll in the pasture, the animals look over the alluring vistas stretching before them, those wide prospects over the farm made the more enchanting by contrast with the scenes of terror and slaughter they have just witnessed –

> The long pasture stretching down to the main road, the hayfield, the spinney, the drinking pool, the ploughed fields where the young wheat was thick and green, and the red roofs of the farm buildings with the smoke curling from the chimneys. The grass and the bursting hedges were gilded by the level rays of the sun. (84)

If they had a picture of the future, "... it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and the whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong protecting the weak" (85). Instead, they have come to a time when no one dared speak his mind, when fierce growling dogs roamed everywhere, and when you had to "watch your comrades torn to pieces after confessing to shocking crimes" (85). And yet, rebellion is far from their thoughts. Despite all setbacks to their hopes, they consider themselves far better off than in the days of Jones; their first duty is, of course, to prevent the return of Jones. And so, "whatever happened, they would remain faithful, work hard ... and accept the leadership of Napoleon" (85).

To assuage their grief the animals begin singing 'Beasts of England'; they sing it slowly and mournfully. As soon as they have finished, Squealer, attended by two dogs, comes up and announces that by a special decree of Napoleon, 'Beasts of England' has been abolished. The song spoke of the Rebellion and the future millennium. With the execution of the traitors, the Rebellion has been carried through completely and decisively. As for the millennium, it has already arrived. So the song has lost its relevance. A choral bleating of 'Four legs good, two legs bad' from the sheep clinches the argument. In place of the old song, a new song composed by Minimus emphasizing the animal citizen's duty and loyalty to the new dispensation is to be sung on every Sunday.

(f) The Masses

Both Hitler and Mussolini professed contempt for the masses upon whose support their power depended. Their movements were genuine mass movements because they knew well how to sway the crowd by propaganda and promises of millennial glory. They were able to manipulate the crowd as an artist manipulates clay. Under Stalinist rule, too, the masses were cheated of their revolutionary hopes.

In Orwell's story, an early hint is given of the fate of the lower animals when Napoleon appropriates the milk and apples for pigs. Snowball apparently approved of the decision. Squealer's explanation left no room for doubt as to where the pigs stood on this question as a class.

Under Napoleon's rule, the society of Animal Farm carries further the growing differentiation of 'class' and 'rank': on the one side there is the class of the willing slaves, on the other a governing, managerial elite. The specific context of Orwell's satire here is the general deterioration in the condition of the working class in the Soviet Union after the Revolution. In his essay "Looking Back on the Spanish War," he comments: "In the long struggle that followed the Russian Revolution, it is the manual workers who have been defeated, and it is impossible not to feel that it was their own fault."[23] Again, in his review of Jack Common's book *The Freedom of the Streets*, Orwell wrote: "It would seem that what you get over and over again is a movement of the proletariat which is promptly canalised and betrayed by astute people at the top, and then the growth of a new governing class. The one thing that never arrives is equality."[24] By equality, of course, Orwell understands economic, social and political equality.

It is worth noting that in *Animal Farm*, inequality between ruling and working animals is based on a division between mental and manual labour. In Communist theory, such a differentiation and the preferential treatment accorded to mental workers was considered a retrograde step. Like so much else, the ideal of equality in income was scrapped under Stalin's rule.

When the windmill, the labour of many days and hands, is blown down by a strong gale, Napoleon blames it on Snowball, his motive being to cover up the mistake of not making the wall sufficiently thick but also to motivate his 'slaves' to work at it with a vengeance. "This very morning we begin rebuilding the windmill, and we will build all through the winter, rain or shine. We shall teach this miserable traitor that he cannot undo our work so easily" (72).

The animals are determined not to give humans cause for joy. The windmill will be finished on time. They have also to combat the fiction invented by men, namely, that the windmill was blown down because its walls were too thin! The animals know that the men are putting out this fiction out of spite since it is well known that the destruction was the work of Snowball. Nevertheless, it has been decided to build the walls three feet thick this time instead of eighteen inches as before. And this means a lot more work for the animals. Cold, hunger and hard work have made life miserable for them, hardly to be alleviated by Squealer's excellent speeches on the joy of service and the dignity of labour. Famine and starvation now appear a distinct possibility. But it is vitally important to conceal this from the humans. So Napoleon has several empty bins filled with sand and a thin layer of meal spread on top. On some suitable pretext he shows Whimper round the store-room. He also has some faithful sheep remark in his hearing that rations have been increased.

To the working animals on the farm, Napoleon is nothing but a slave driver, although they still prefer him to any human taskmaster. They are slaving away at the windmill for longer hours and less rations than in Jones's day. They also have their regular work on the farm. On Sunday mornings Squealer will read out from a strip of paper figures proving astounding improvement in production. However, there are times when the animals wish there were less figures and more food!

The object of Orwell's satire here is the rapid industrialisation drive (symbolised by the windmill project in the story) initiated by Stalin in the First Five Year Plan of 1929-1933. Although phenomenal successes were achieved in heavy industry, agriculture was ruined as a result of forcible collectivisation of farms. Great numbers of peasants starved to death in the famine of 1933. Yet these harsh realities were concealed behind a chorus of self-congratulations, exaggerated claims of success and faked statistics. In real terms the income of industrial workers, too, was less than what it was in 1929. The only group that was better off was the Party and the state officials.[25]

Working against heavy odds, — inexperience, primitive implements, bad luck — the animals manage to complete the windmill. To think of all the amenities that the windmill will provide besides substantial reduction in farm labour fills them with the greatest joy. But Napoleon steals the credit by naming it Napoleon Windmill.

Napoleon knows how to keep the 'proles' amused. There are songs, speeches and processions to keep alive the memory of the triumphs and struggles of Animal Farm. Once a week, a spontaneous demonstration is

organised under orders from the Leader. The animals leave work, march round the farm in military formation with the pigs leading and Napoleon's black cockerel walking in front. The procession is flanked by the dogs. Boxer and Clover would carry between them a green banner marked with the hoof and the horn and the words 'Long Live Comrade Napoleon'. Afterwards, there are recitations of poems composed in honour of Napoleon: and a speech by Squealer setting out production figures which always show vast increases, then the firing of the gun, and all the sheep bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad" and so on. On the whole, the animals enjoy this ritual for the comfortable illusion it gives of being their own masters now.

Around this time, Moses the raven reappears and begins descanting on the Sugarcandy Mountain above the clouds. The animals are disposed to believe him, having known only cold and hunger and drudgery in their lives. The pigs' attitude is equivocal. They contemptuously dismiss his story as a lie while allowing him to stay on with a daily ration of beer. It is obvious that the pigs value Moses' religion for its sedative virtue, its power to reconcile the slaves to the misery of their lot here on earth.

Hard work is beginning to tell upon Boxer. And yet he is determined to carry on. Then, one day, he collapses and has to be helped to his feet by his comrades. For the first time he is prepared to accept defeat. He looks forward to retirement in the company of Benjamin, a quiet, peaceful life on the farm. Squealer informs his comrades of Napoleon's solicitude for Boxer's well-being and adds that he will be taken to the veterinary surgeon for better treatment. The animals feel a little uneasy at the decision but are soon reassured by Squealer.

When the van arrives to take Boxer to the surgeon, Benjamin notices that it has a knacker's address marked on it. He warns the other animals who shout to Boxer to get out, but it is too late! Boxer is never to be seen again. Three days later it is announced that Boxer died peacefully in hospital, in spite of receiving the best attention a horse could get. Squealer professes great grief at his passing. He tells the animals that Boxer's dying words were an exhortation to greater effort for the glorification of the Rebellion and the Animal Farm. He reports that Boxer died with the words "Comrade Napoleon is always right" on his lips. Squealer goes on to reassure the animals about a rumour, which he suspects, has been put about by certain comrades. It is about Boxer being taken to the knacker's just because the van that took him away bore the sign of a butcher. Could any comrade have been so stupid as to believe this? It is only that the surgeon who had bought the van had forgotten to paint out the sign!

Napoleon himself appears at the next meeting to pay homage to Boxer. It has not been possible to bring back his remains but he assures his audience that a large laurel wreath will be sent down to be placed on his grave. And in a few days' time the pigs will hold a banquet in his honour. He concludes by reminding his comrades to bear in mind the two maxims of their departed friend.

On the day fixed for the banquet, a large wooden crate is delivered at the farmhouse. The pigs make a night of it, rounding it off with a drunken brawl. Apparently, they had come into some money with the sale of Boxer and had bought themselves another case of whisky.

It has been pointed out that there is nothing corresponding to the fate of Boxer in the history of the Soviet workers. Orwell's point seems to be that a power-drunk dictator will stop at nothing to further his interests. Once the

decisive step has been taken to subvert principle there is nothing to stop one from carrying it through to absurd limits provided that some selfish motive could be served by doing so. Orwell's satire at this point may claim psychological, if not historical, veracity.

The narrative now moves on to the final phase of what might well be called the 'counter-revolution' initiated by Napoleon. The servitude of the lower animals is now complete. There is no one to challenge Napoleon's domination. For the revolution to come full circle, there remains only the transformation of pigs to men, and some 'minor' adjustment of doctrine to go with it.

The older ones among the working animals have not quite caught up with these transformations. There are only a few of them now: Clover and Benjamin among them. Some of them are still labouring under the illusions bred in them by the great Rebellion. Although material conditions on the farm have improved, there has been little improvement in the lives of the lower animals. Only the pigs and the dogs have benefited. For the rest of them, the stalls fitted with electric light, hot and cold water, the three-day work-week, have come to seem like fictions of some dream world. Napoleon has denounced such ideas as contrary to the spirit of Animalism: "the truest happiness", he said, "lay in working hard and living frugally" (118).

For the older generation of working animals, it is impossible to decide whether their lives were better than now at any time in the past. They no longer have any clear recollection of the past and there are no records. And so there is no way of checking Squealer's statistics against an objective standard. Only Benjamin remembers everything and can't be fooled. Only he knows "that things

never had been much better or much worse - hunger, hardship and disappointment being, so he said, the unalterable law of life" (120).

As yet, the animals have never given up hope. They have never lost their sense of honour and privilege in being members of the liberated animalkind. Theirs is still the only farm in the whole country to be owned and operated by their kind. They have never ceased to wonder at that. To hear the gun booming, to see the green flag fluttering, fills their hearts with imperishable pride. None of the old dreams have been abandoned. One day the Republic of animals which Major foretold will come, when the green fields of England will be trodden by beasts alone. They are not as other animals. If they are hungry it is not from feeding tyrannical humans. If they work hard, at least they are working for themselves: "No creature among them went upon two legs. No creature called any other creature 'Master'. All animals were equal" (121).

It is not long before the animals are disabused of these 'antiquated' notions, evidently a 'hang-over' from the days of the Revolution.

One day the animals are horrified by a sight they have never seen before: "It was a pig walking on his hind legs" (121). It is Squealer strolling across the yard. Soon he is joined by other pigs, Napoleon himself emerging last, attended by his dogs and the cockerel, carrying a whip in his trotter.

For the lower animals it is as though the world has turned upside down. For all their docility and terror of the dogs, some of them feel compelled to utter a word of protest and are about to do so when all the sheep break into a tremendous bleating of 'Four legs good, two legs better'. This goes on for several minutes, by which time the pigs all go back into the farmhouse.

Clover seems to remember vaguely some prohibition against walking on two legs. She persuades Benjamin to read it to her. But in place of the Seven Commandments there is now only a single commandment:

All animals are equal

But some animals are more equal than others (123)

From the next day on, the pigs are all seen supervising work with whips in their trotters. They buy themselves a wireless set, plan to install a telephone, and have taken out subscriptions to popular publications. Napoleon is seen strolling in the garden with a pipe in his mouth. The pigs have taken Mr.Jones's garments out of the wardrobes and put them on.

A deputation of neighbouring farmers are invited to visit the farm. They are much impressed by what they see, especially by the windmill. That evening loud laughter and singing come from the farmhouse. The working animals tiptoe up to the house to see what is happening. There is a banquet going on. Half a dozen farmers and half a dozen pigs are at table. Napoleon occupies the seat of honour at the head of the table. Mr. Pilkington rises to propose a toast. He speaks of the misunderstanding and mistrust that once sullied the relationship between the animals and men and which are fortunately cleared up. It was quite a silly mistake, he says, to suppose that animals can't order their affairs on their own. In fact, he is deeply impressed by the organisation and efficiency he has seen on animal farm. Longer working hours and less food than on his farm. And the most up-to-date methods of farming, too. He and his friends are going to emulate the example of the pigs. Between the pigs and humans, he declares, there is no clash of interests. Isn't the labour problem the same everywhere? He concludes with the witticism that the humans have their lower classes to contend

with just as the animals have their lower animals. It is received with uproarious laughter. In his reply, Napoleon thanks Pilkington warmly and recalls that at one time there were rumours--spread no doubt by some vicious enemy--that there was something revolutionary about the animals' outlook. It was believed that they were trying to stir up rebellion on other farms. Nothing could be further from the truth. He only wants peaceful business relations with his neighbours. His farm, he says, is a co-operative enterprise. The title deeds which are in his possession are owned by the pigs jointly.

He has, he says, introduced certain changes which should reassure his human neighbours. He has got rid of the silly custom of animals addressing one another as 'comrades'; and then there is the strange custom of unknown origin, the custom of marching round a boar's skull every Sunday. This is also stopped. The skull has been buried. Also the sign of the horn and the hoof has been removed from the flag. Finally, his farm has recovered its original and correct name 'Manor Farm'.

The mugs are now emptied to the dregs. The company proceeds to take up their cards. The animals turn to go back to their stalls. Presently there is an uproar of voices. A violent quarrel has broken out between Napoleon and Pilkington who have each played an ace of spades simultaneously. All the players are now shouting together. The animals outside look from pig to man and from man to pig, unable to decide which is which.

At the banquet with the human neighbours, while Napoleon makes his rollicking speech, explaining his attitude to his own kind, the animals have their eyes opened to what Benjamin, the donkey, has always known to be the truth about all revolutions.

The satire in the concluding episode is directed against the Teheran Conference of 1944 which brought together Stalin, Churchill and Truman. These men were able to unite against the fascists; the temporary rapprochement was to be followed by the bitterness and hostilities of the cold war between the capitalist and Communist power blocs.

The novel as political satire

The foregoing analysis has concentrated on the dialectic of power as it operates in the politics of revolution and post-revolution in Orwell's allegory. It remains now to determine the relation of this satire to the evolution of Orwell's thinking on the psychology of the power-drive and on power relations in general. One might approach this question by way of examining various issues raised in the critical debate on the meaning and significance of this novel. It will be seen that these questions, when followed through, point to a certain ambivalence in Orwell's thinking on the dynamic of the power impulse as it manifests itself in individual and social activity. This ambiguity expresses itself as an unresolved tension between the moral and political approaches to the power enigma, the question why vast numbers of people in our enlightened century have fallen prey to totalitarian philosophies; what is it in individuals and groups that gives the power impulse the force and inevitability of a biological urge? In *Animal Farm* Orwell wanted to pose and answer this question in exclusively political terms, to give imaginative projection to a play of forces whose internal dynamics could be elucidated in terms of structural changes. In the event, the story he wrote from these presuppositions is felt to depend too heavily on the moral imagination in its handling of character and situation to render such an analysis possible.

As might be expected, critics have tended to construe the satire in ways Orwell could hardly have endorsed. To Dwight Macdonald who wrote asking for a clarification of the political point, he explained his intentions thus :

> Of course, I intend it primarily as a satire on the Russian Revolution. But I did mean it to have a wider application in so much that I meant that that kind of revolution (violent conspiratorial revolution, led by unconsciously power-hungry people) can only lead to a change of masters. I meant the moral to be that revolutions only effect a radical moral improvement when the masses are alert and know how to chuck out their leaders as soon as they have done their job. The turning point of the story was supposed to be when the pigs kept the milk and apples for themselves (Kronstadt). If the other animals had had the sense to put their foot down then, it would have been all right. If people think I am defending the status quo, that is, I think because they have grown pessimistic and assume that there is no alternative except dictatorship or laissez-faire capitalism... What I was trying to say was, "You can't have a revolution unless you make it yourself; there is no such thing as a benevolent dictatorship."[26]

Orwell makes four points all of which have proved highly contentious in critical evaluations of the novel: the first concerns his choice of the Russian Revolution to illustrate the operation of power politics; the second point, related to the first, concerns the wider implications of the specific case, its implications for revolutions that make systematic use of violence and terror to get and

maintain power and are led by a minority party — Lenin's 'narrow party' — which does not enjoy the support of the masses. This party, it is implied, will hijack the revolution, because its leaders are motivated by an unconscious desire for power. Orwell's third point has to do with the prevention of such a betrayal of revolutionary ideals. The solution proposed is for the masses to be vigilant against the emergence of power-hungry leaders, to throw them out as soon as these latter show signs of dictatorial tendencies. The fourth point follows logically from the third: so long as the masses are vigilant, a revolution need not fail to attain its ends. Hence such pessimism as critics claim to see in the novel's conclusion applies only to the specific case chosen for illustration, while the satire leaves the door open to an altogether different issue, an optimistic one, to revolutionary action. Orwell is at pains to insist on this last point because, as a convinced socialist, he would not like to be considered as a supporter of the status quo.

Although, as Orwell explains it, the logic of revolutionary politics seems clear and consistent, the text itself does not appear to bear out these presuppositions. Hence the controversy over its interpretation. Stephen Ingle considers that the novel has effectively undermined the very idea of revolution since all revolutions tend to be violent and conspiratorial:

> It could be said that when he brought down Stalin's revolution, he brought the whole enterprise of revolution down with it, since all revolutions tend, by their nature, to be violent, conspiratorial and led by the power-hungry."[27]

Ingle considers two possible objections to this conclusion: first, that the revolution failed because the 'masses' of the animals had not been made politically aware before the revolution; secondly the revolution failed because the leadership forsook its principles and lost contact with the masses. He rejects both arguments, the first, because, the sheep being what they are, the mass of the animals could never be educated to the right level of "ideological consciousness;" the most they could do is to bleat unthinkingly: "Four legs good, two legs bad" or "Four legs good two legs better" according as the authorities want it. The second argument he rejects because it presupposes that the pigs had an initial commitment to the principles of animalism. Even if this dubious assumption were to be accepted, there remains the problem that the mass of the animals only wanted social equality, not political power. With the overthrow of human tyranny, the political leadership passed into the hands of the pigs who could not possibly countenance any power-sharing arrangement. So he concludes: "The choice for the animals, as presented by Orwell, was simple enough—to be tyrannised by a drunken human or by a pig."[28]

Ingle draws attention to the fact that while most revolutionary thinkers have laid down guidelines on how to conduct a revolution, they have little to say on how society should be administered after the revolution. Faced with this situation, Lenin had to adapt Marxist theory to the needs of the moment in ways which could not possibly be considered democratic in the liberal sense.[29] On Animal Farm, Napoleon instituted a reign of violence and terror, undermining the principles of animalism.

Finally Ingle examines Orwell's view on Revolution which occurs in his essay "Arthur Koestler" and which might be cited to save *Animal Farm* from the charge of total pessimism. In his review of Koestler's novels, Orwell comes to the conclusion that Koestler, a former Communist brought up on the ideals of Marxism, has now been so disillusioned by the betrayal of the Russian revolution as to reject the very idea of revolution itself as a corrupting process, as issuing in the cult of power on the part of leaders and blind loyalty on the part of the followers. Orwell says that Koestler's mistake is to have misconceived the nature and aims of Revolution. He is too much of an idealist to accept anything that falls short of his idea of a utopia. In actual fact, says Orwell, all that one can reasonably expect of any revolution, even of a socialist one, is that it should bring about some improvement in the social order:

> (P)erhaps the choice before man is always a choice of evils, perhaps even the aim of Socialism is not to make the world perfect but to make it better. All revolutions are failures, but they are not all the same failure.[30]

Ingle points out that this view of revolution begs as many questions as it answers. Both Koestler and Orwell, he observes, knew too much of human nature and its dependence on customs and familiar structures to be able to put much faith in the efficacy of revolutions.

Critics on the political left object to the choice of Russian revolution as the paradigm of failed revolutions and to the treatment of the history of the revolution in the novel. Kingsley Martin[31] points out that Orwell could equally well have satirised Americans for their treatment of Negroes. He accepts a good

deal of the satire directed against Soviet Communism but does not share the ultimate cynicism expressed by Ben, the donkey. Martin argues that Orwell has ruined what might have been a perfect piece of satire on human life by putting the Stalin-Trotsky struggle in the centre of the narrative. To do this, he points out, is to invite every sort of historical and factual objection. Orwell does not consider why Stalin rejected the Trotsky line on world revolution, nor does he realise that the outcome of the revolution would have been little different if Trotsky, who was just as ruthless as Stalin had succeeded Lenin. Martin concludes that it is not in Russia that Orwell has lost faith, but in mankind.

Isaac Rosenfeld[32] finds Orwell's novel disappointing because it merely states the known fact – the despotism of Stalin – without offering a historical analysis of the conditions that produced it. The allegory, says Rosenfeld, presents the despotism of the pigs as a 'historical necessity' in which case the novel isn't worth writing at all. What then, asks Rosenfeld, is the point of *Animal Farm*? He observes that the story turns on the conflict between Snowball (Trotsky) and Napoleon (Stalin), Snowball's motive being the good one and Napoleon's the bad one. As events are to prove, the bad one wins out, because history shows that the wicked always win out in the end. This, according to Rosenfeld, is the old moral argument which has little to contribute to historical analysis and which Orwell himself could not countenance on the intellectual plane. Why, then, did he write the story as he did? Because, argues Rosenfeld, there has been a divorce of the imagination from the critical intellect. But even as a work of the moral imagination, it is a failure because it does not expand the parable to incorporate into it something of the complexity of the real event, of the

historical parallels of the story. This failure in imagination, according to Rosenfeld, amounts to a failure in politics.

Rosenfeld buttresses his argument by comparing *Animal Farm* to Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. In Koestler's novel, the hero, Rubashov, is faced with the despotism of Stalin but tries to make sense of it through a Marxist analysis of history and a criticism of Marxist theory in general: "Rubashov, also faced with the triumph of the pig, at least asks *why* the pig is so attractive, *why* he wins out over the good."[33] Orwell, on the other hand, has taken a well-known fact and converted it into an imaginative symbol which, according to Rosenfeld, falsifies the fact, for the fact of Stalinist human nature as Orwell presents it actually explains nothing.

Northrop Frye, while admiring the fable as a very well-written story, raises serious objections to its treatment of the Russian revolution. He objects to the episode corresponding to the German invasion as "both silly and heartless", and to "the final metamorphosis of pigs into humans" as "a fantastic disruption of the sober logic of the tale". Frye vehemently rejects as completely false the implied suggestion that conditions in Russia after the Revolution were little better than they had been before the Revolution. According to Frye, Orwell concluded the story as he did in order to round it off "with a neat epigrammatic finish". He goes on to make an even more fundamental criticism of Orwell's fable by pointing out that it "completely misses the point as a satire on the Russian development of Marxism". Orwell, he argues, proceeds from the assumption that the tragedy of Russian Communism under Stalin lies in the "corruption of principle by expediency"; actually, however, the tragedy arose from "the corruption of

expediency by principle.[34] Scientific Marxism had set its face against the prevailing dogma of metaphysical materialism and had claimed to be the only socialist theory to base itself on an analysis of actual historical conditions. However, at the hands of the Russian party men, Marxism had developed into a dogma so that history had to be manipulated to conform to its dictates. Frye concludes his remarks by saying that Orwell's story, starting out from a specific historical context, has developed into a moral tale with the pessimistic conclusion that human nature can't be changed.

The above criticisms may be taken as fairly representative of the main lines of argument in the interpretation of Orwell's satire. It is easy to see that these evaluations run counter to the meaning and intention which the author believed he had realised in the text. It is argued in this study that this divergence in the reading of the novel results from a confusion of formal conventions in the construction of the story, itself symptomatic of a deeper ambivalence in the handling of the central theme — the dynamic of power conceived as a social political force and as a brute fact of individual psychology. It is Orwell's contention that the will to power properly organised and guided as a social political force could effectively counteract the tendencies of the individual power-monger who might manipulate the collective will to further his ambitions. However, the story that came to be written out of this presupposition has ended up showing that the individual will is destined to exploit revolutionary power for its own ends. In other words, Orwell set out to write a political satire, but ended up writing a moral tale of the ineradicable corruption of the human will.

The Novel as Moral Fable

This point may be elucidated in terms of the formal conventions employed by Orwell to develop his story. The sub-title he gave it – 'A Fairy Story' – need not detain us; it is used merely to point the irony of a revolution which promises to deliver a utopia in which men could, as in the fairy tale ending, live happily ever after, but ends up delivering a cacotopia, a slave society ruled by the most piggish pigs. In other words, 'the fairy tale' was to serve as a political satire which would at once illustrate and warn against the danger of power politics. However, an examination of the norms and modes employed in the construction of the story shows that it might more properly be characterised as a moral fable than as a political satire. Since the manner of telling a story is itself a determinant of the story's meaning, Orwell's theme is altered by being transposed from the political to the moral conception. As Edward M. Thomas has pointed out, "the form is, of course, decisive; it is not merely another, indirect, way of conveying the same political message, but alters the thing said."[35]

A moral tale, of its nature, is concerned with the general unvarying patterns of human behaviour and is predicated on human nature as a constant. It subjects human experience to a radical simplification, dealing in stock characters and situations. Its typificatory strategy leaves little room for exploration of character and situation. A beast fable greatly assists this process of simplification; animals can easily be identified with simple, unvarying character – traits, the fox with cunning, the lion with courage and so on.

A political satire on the other hand, works best when its allusions to particular events, persons and issues are fully understood. In this sense, it is

much more context-dependent than a moral fable; its categories of understanding and analysis are expected to be empirical rather than abstract and speculative.

Both political satire and moral fable are concerned with questions of action and value. However, while the former is occupied with the behaviour of individuals as members of a community, the latter is more often concerned with questions of private as opposed to public morality.

Examined in the light of these criteria Orwell's story will be found to reflect moral and political ambivalences in its choice of narrative strategies. We shall first examine the grounds on which one might defend an interpretation of *Animal Farm* as a political satire. Inevitably this involves an examination of the use of historical material in the story. In the preface to the Ukrainian edition, Orwell anticipated several objections voiced by critics concerning his use of historical models. He made it quite clear that his use of the history of the Russian Revolution is 'schematic' rather than sequential and chronological; that he has rearranged events to suit the demands of a symmetrical design.

Since Orwell's purpose was to expose the power struggle between Stalin and Trotsky and its consequences for the future of the socialist revolution, one might expect him to have concentrated on the years between 1924 (the year of Lenin's death) and 1945. As it is, the narrative is pushed further back to the start of the Revolution of 1917. Lenin merges with Marx as an idealogue of the Revolution, making up a composite figure represented by Old Major. Events of Lenin's period now fall within the reign of Stalin. These include the Revolution itself, the Allied Invasion of 1918 (The Battle of the Cowshed) and the Kronstadt naval rebellion of 1921 (the milk and apple episode). True historical parallels include three definable periods of Stalin's rule: collectivisation (1929-33), the

purges (1933-38), the rapprochement with Germany (1939-41); characters include Snowball – Trotsky, Napoleon – Stalin, Minimus – Mayakovsky, Moses – Russian Orthodox Church, Mollie – White Russians; among events true to chronology are the Battle of the Windmill – German invasion of Russia (1941); pigs meeting with local farmers – Teheran Conference (1944). There have been some distortions or exaggerations of the historical situation such as the fate of Boxer for which there is no parallel in Russian history; the degradation of working animals to mere slaves; the pigs turning into humans at the end.

The narrative is shaped round the conflict of Napoleon and Snowball. For symmetry of design, the expulsion of Snowball with the consequent rise to power of Napoleon is placed at mid-point of the story. Up to this moment the revolution stays on course. The narrative builds up steadily through ever greater efforts to realise Old Major's dream: the defeat of the counter-revolution (The Battle of the Cowshed), Snowball's campaign of political education, his ambitious programmes for development, the teaching of Animalism and the rule of law (the Seven Commandments) based on it, the Meeting, debates and voting on resolutions. Then comes the turning point: with the expulsion of Snowball and the abolition of the Meeting, the Revolution goes into reverse, moving further and further away from the egalitarian ideal towards a totalitarian slave-state. One Commandment after another is violated as Animal Farm reverses its course with what seems like the inevitability of fate, and spirals down to the point where it started.

That Orwell expected his story to be interpreted in political terms is evident from his comments on the meaning and symbolic structure of the novel. As he explains it, apart from its primary object of exposing the Soviet myth, the allegory is intended to have a wider application: its moral is that violent

conspiratorial revolutions led by unconsciously power-hungry leaders can only result in a change of masters. It is up to the people to be vigilant and throw out the leaders as soon as the revolution has been won. In the story itself, he points out, the animals had a chance to assert themselves but missed it: the milk and apple incident which he likens to the Kronstadt naval rebellion of 1921 in the historical parallel. According to Orwell, the milk and apple incident marks the turning point of the story. He goes on to say that the conclusion of his story is not to be interpreted as a surrender to despair and pessimism, that he most certainly does not defend the status quo. He asserts that a revolution may yet attain its goals providing that people make it themselves without depending too much on power-hungry leaders.

Few critics will be found to agree with Orwell's reading of his allegory. It will be noticed that he does not countenance a 'moralistic' interpretation of the story. He is the convinced socialist who considers the only valid solution of the political crisis to consist in judicious action by the masses. Soviet workers failed to assert themselves; so, too, did the animals when their leaders claimed special privileges (the milk and apples) for themselves. It is doubtful, however, whether the proposed course correction could have been carried through, given the superior intelligence of the pigs. The lower animals may have the advantage of physical strength but lack intelligence. The pigs are bound to win sooner or later. This being so, it is hard to see how the pessimistic conclusion can be avoided. In terms of the story, no amount of political education can enable the rest of the animals to challenge the supremacy of the pigs. They are not just a ruling class; they are a ruling 'caste' as well. They are superior in intelligence by virtue of being a different type of animal. So, it seems, they are destined to rule. Even

assuming that it is possible, somehow, to overthrow the rule of pigs, there is no guarantee that the next regime will prove any better. Social development may well get bogged down in an endless series of revolutions and counter-revolutions in which case, the periodic recall of those in power, institutionalised in the democratic system, would seem to be a far better option than revolution itself.

Thus, in spite of his ideological commitment and pronounced bias towards historical analysis and interpretation, Orwell has constructed a story that appears to be weighted against a sociological interpretation of events and issues.

The narrative is shaped by a controlling moral idea: lust for power as an evil capable of subverting the highest ideals, and, through the superior force of intellect, institutionalising itself as a system of violence and terror. Now the question is: can it be combatted effectively by social political action or is it quite beyond the power of political action to control and subjugate? Orwell says it can. It is significant that he does not enquire into the origin of the power complex. He merely assumes its existence. Napoleon is inscrutable in his motivation, in his will to power. In other words, Orwell does not raise the question '*why*' in regard to power mania as a fact of individual psychology. He is concerned with the question '*how*', how power hunger operates to frustrate revolutionary action. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that the question '*why*' is introduced parenthetically at a crucial moment in the story – in Clover's troubled cogitations after the 'purges'. However, by the terms of the fable, she is a marginal character, unable to influence the course of events, unable even to express herself in words: "Such were her thoughts though she lacked the words to express them" (86). However, she is speaking for the vast majority of the animals. For them, the question '*why*' is indeed, the crucial one. Boxer, racking

his brains - such brains as he has - on this, comes to a conclusion at once pathetic and oddly illuminating: "I do not understand it. I would not have believed that such things could happen on our farm. It must be due to some fault in ourselves. The solution, as I see it, is to work harder..." (84). Boxer's words: 'It must be due to some fault in ourselves" can be made to bear a meaning he may not have intended; the power hunger in the individual mind might then be viewed as a force almost independent of social political conditions, and a solution will have to be sought in terms of moral psychology rather than revolutionary political action. This would mean that evil is not structural and could not be eradicated by changing the social structure. As Cyril Connolly puts it:

> The Commandments of the Animal Revolution, such as 'no animal shall kill any other animal' or 'all animals are equal' can perhaps never be achieved by a revolutionary seizure of power but only by the spiritual operation of reason or moral philosophy in the animal heart.[36]

In short, then, the effect of Orwell's treatment of history and psychology — the highly selective treatment of historical parallels, manipulation of facts and avoidance of historical analysis, the radical simplifications of character and motivation — is to foreground the theme of power politics in terms more appropriate to the moral fable than political satire. And so, indeed, have most critics read the allegory. The proper conclusion to be drawn on this view has been put very well by Stephen Greenblatt: he regards Orwell's indictment as applying equally to the Communists (the pigs), the Nazis and Capitalists

(Mr.Pilkington and Mr.Frederick). The one factor that unites them all is lust for power: "All three major 'powers' are despicable tyrannies, and the failure of the Revolution is not seen in terms of ideology at all, but as a realization of Lord Acton's thesis, 'Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely'..."

> *Animal Farm* remains powerful satire even as the specific historical events it mocked recede into the past, because the book's major concern is not with these incidents but with the essential horror of the human condition. There have been, are, and always will be, pigs in every society, Orwell states, and they will always grab power. Even more cruel is the conclusion that everyone in the society, wittingly or unwittingly, contributes to the pigs' tyranny."[37]

The question relegated to the margin of this allegory — the question '*why*': the complex psycho-dynamics of the power-drive — is explored together with its social political aspects in Orwell's last novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Notes

[1] Crick, 309.

[2] Cited in Michael Shelden, *Orwell: The Authorized Biography*. (London: Heinemann, 1991) 405.

[3] Raymond Williams, *Orwell* (London: Fontana, 1984) 61.

[4] Crick, 309.

[5] David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977) 206.

[6] Lodge 207.

[7] George Orwell, "Why I Write," *The Penguin Essays* 6.

[8] Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, *The A B C of Communism*, ed. E.H. Carr (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969) 431-2.

[9] George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (New York: New American Library, 1946)18. * All further quotations are referred by page numbers to this edition.

[10] George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (London: George Harrap & Co., 1959) 670.

[11] Sabine 671.

[12] See Sabine 730-4.

[13] "The Prevention of Literature," *The Penguin Essays* 336.

[14] "Looking Back on the Spanish War," *The Penguin Essays* 225.

[15] *CEJL* I, 376.

[16] Sabine, 733.

[17] See R. N. Carew Hunt, *The Theory and Practice of Communism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975) 230-1.

[18] Giovanni Gentile's phrase cited in "Totalitarianism," *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 629.

[19] "Totalitarianism" *The Oxford Companion to the Politics of the World*, ed. Joel Krieger (OUP, 1993).

[20] "Looking Back on the Spanish War," *The Penguin Essays* 225.

[21] See G.F. Hudson, *Fifty Years of Communism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) 107.

[22] Hudson, 107-119.

[23] "Looking Back on the Spanish War," *The Penguin Essays* 226.

[24] *CEJL* I, 336.

[25] See Hudson, 103-106.

[26] Cited in Michael Shelden, *Orwell: The Authorised Biography* (London: Heinemann, 1991) 407.

[27] Stephen Ingle, *George Orwell: A Political Life*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) 75.

[28] Ingle, 80.

[29] See Carew Hunt, 171-2.

[30] "Arthur Koestler" *The 'Penguin Essays* 278.

[31] Jeffrey Meyers (ed.), *George Orwell: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) 197-9.

[32] Jeffrey Meyers, 201-204.

[33] Jeffrey Meyers, 204.

[34] Jeffrey Meyers, 207-8.

[35] Edward M. Thomas, *Orwell*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968) 72.

[36] Jeffrey Meyers, 200.

[37] "Orwell as Satirist" in Raymond Williams (ed.) *George Orwell: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1974) 110-111.

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

V. J. Sebastian “The theme of power in George Orwell's post-war novels : animal farm and nineteen eighty-four ” Thesis. Department of English , University of Calicut, 2001

CHAPTER IV

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

The genesis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be traced to those same circumstances of the Spanish war that inspired the story of the barnyard revolution. Both novels are constructed around a common core of ideas relating to the problem of revolution – the revolutionary transfer of power and its aftermath: the corrupting effects of power, the post-revolutionary reign of terror and violence and the re-institution of slavery under a managerial despotism. While *Animal Farm* follows the course of this revolution from its very inception as an idea, the dream of a golden age, on through phases of power-shift, and the emergence of a new hierarchy to the eventual betrayal of the revolutionary ideals, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* refocuses attention on this final phase and discloses the horrors of a totalitarian regime whose sole object is to exercise power and domination for its own sake. If, in the earlier story, the victims of tyranny were presented as a class, the class of the lower animals, in the latter the political problem is restated in terms of the conflict of the individual with the organized power of the State. The alternative title proposed by the author for his last novel, 'The Last Man in Europe,' is a clear indication of this change of perspective. Social organization in this nightmare scenario is such as to concentrate all power in the hands of a minority of party officials who impose a strict regimentation in thought and behaviour, the inevitable outcome of which must be the death of the autonomous individual.

Even relations between nations are governed by this same motive: by a curious perversion of political logic, permanent hostilities are maintained between nations merely to dominate and oppress people within the state. The world political organization shows the dominance over vast areas of three super-states: Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia. At any one time, two of these powers are at war with each other for extending influence over neutral territories. Since all three are possessed of the nuclear weapon, it is only a limited war they are fighting with no risk of total subjugation. Moreover, the roles of friend and foe are frequently reversed to suit political expediency. And yet the war is kept going in order to keep people in a permanent state of privation and brute labour, willing to accept any sacrifices demanded of them.

Airstrip One, the setting of Orwell's story, is a province of Oceania, which includes the two Americas. Set up in the aftermath of a nuclear war in the sixties, this new State is avowedly Socialist; its ruling ideology is Ingsoc--English socialism. Membership of the ruling party comprises only fifteen per cent of the population. Only a small fraction of these party members, called the Inner Party, wields any real power, with Big Brother at the helm. The vast mass of ordinary working people, called the proles, have no rights whatever. Although the State subsists on their labour, they are treated as no different from animals in respect of both function and political status. They are considered too stupid to pose any real threat to the Party's monopoly of power. The Inner Party keeps a tight grip on the more articulate, intelligent members of the Outer Party. Any deviation from official doctrine is severely dealt with; strict vigilance is maintained over thought and conduct through the agency of the Thought Police and the two-way

telescreen that is installed in every house and office. Thus Oceanic society is organized around a totalitarian power structure of which the constituent elements are the Leader, the Party, ideology, propaganda and the secret police empowered to intervene in the activities of the people.

The peculiar horror of this despotism is that tyranny has passed from the bodies of men to their minds. In the past, the dictator was content merely to regulate external behaviour: the individual might entertain the most subversive ideas provided he stopped short of acting on them. Even if a formal allegiance was required one could always repudiate it in the privacy of one's mind. In Oceania, on the other hand, to think an oppositional thought is a crime against the State, a 'Thoughtcrime' that is certain to attract the notice of the 'Thought Police'. Not only does the Party prohibit thoughts which it considers undesirable; it dictates what the individual ought to think. This it does by denying the very notion of objective truth, by imposing its own arbitrary interpretations on facts and events and by inventing a new language which makes it literally impossible to think any thought not approved by the Party. Again, it is not just conceptual thinking that is so circumscribed; the whole range of emotional and spiritual life--ethical, aesthetic and erotic--is warped and canalized to serve totalitarian ends. Loyalty to the family, to the lover, interest in the arts and love of nature are all condemned as expressions of the individual consciousness and autonomy. Sex is divorced from love and pleasure, its sole function being procreation. The only emotions that are endorsed and positively encouraged are love of Big Brother and hatred of the Enemy, both emotions being systematically worked up into hysteria in the hideous black Mass of the Two Minutes Hate.

In this three part novel, the narrative is organized around two crucial questions: *how* the system of total power operates to constrain individual and social lives and *why* the Party is prepared to sacrifice all values of civic society to the pursuit of absolute power. The first two parts explore the question *how*; part three is concerned with the question *why*, the driving force behind the system. These themes are developed in terms of the experiences of a typical victim of Oceania's despotic regime. Winston Smith, the novel's hero, and his lover Julia defy the ban on sex and love, attempt to join a rebel movement, betray themselves into the hands of the Thought Police, are interrogated, tortured and 're-integrated' into the system. Against the Party's attempt to exert total control over his life, Winston preserves a precarious identity knowing full well that he is doomed to fail. With desperate courage he holds fast to truth and reason, cherishes the values of family and marriage, and the rich heritage of language and tradition; he claims his right to privacy and material sufficiency as necessary conditions to preserving individuality.

These abstractions of political struggle and conflict are transmuted into the terms of a crime thriller; the story line follows the well-known pattern of crime, detection and punishment. As a story, however, this version of 'Jack the Giant Killer' is hardly convincing. The struggle is given up for lost almost before it starts. The characters are too weak and gullible to pose any real threat to the armed might of the Party and its crafty managers. It is clear that in constructing his satiric fantasy, Orwell has allowed his political purpose to predominate over the demands of narrative interest. If, in spite of serious flaws in artistic conception, the novel exercises a compelling power over its readers, this is in part

a triumph of style, but still more due to the essential 'truth' conveyed by the fiction, a truth that seemed stranger than fiction to readers exposed to totalitarian regimes and their ideologies.

It is appropriate to enquire further how this political truth is translated into the terms of fiction, how the narrative explores the operations of totalitarian control over the lives of its characters. One might distinguish five areas of the individual's life in which total power is exerted and resisted: these are (1) the individual's access to objective standards of truth and reason (2) his claim to satisfying emotional relationships (3) his access to tradition as preserved in culture and language (4) his claim to material sufficiency and (5) to privacy, to a private world into which he could retire.

These aspects of the power motif may now be considered in greater detail.

(i) Access to objective standards of truth and reason

The Party wants to block the individual's access to objective standards of truth and justice, because it wants to establish its own omnipotence and infallibility as 'incontestible' facts. In theory Big Brother is omnipotent and infallible; in practice he is neither. He cannot conquer the rival states and he is liable to make mistakes in policies and programmes. Now, this might create disaffection among Outer Party members and the dissidents may then split off and pose a challenge to Big Brother. To avert this, it is necessary that Party members must be made to accept as absolute truth whatever Big Brother chooses to tell them at any given moment. This is only possible if all evidence to the contrary is destroyed. Evidences survive as recorded documents and individual memories. Of themselves individual memories can prove nothing.

Destroy external evidence and the memory is deprived of its basis in objective facts. Hence the need to correct and rewrite history as required by political expediency. It is not merely the past that is thus shut off. Party members are prevented from ever coming to the knowledge of conditions outside Oceania. So if conditions in Oceania are deplorable, they will have no means of knowing that people are any better off anywhere else.

As an employee in the Records Department of Minitrue Winston has to work with others in fabricating lies and outright fictions. The Ministry of Truth is an immense manufactory of untruth where 'facts,' 'statistics,' 'meaning' and 'feeling' are literally manufactured at the behest of Big Brother. If a particular number of *The Times* is found to contain reports that prove the Party wrong in a statement of fact, prediction or policy, then the offending pieces are submitted for 'correction'. Once the corrections have been made, that number is printed again with the original date on top, the original copy destroyed and the corrected copy placed on the files. This process is applied to every kind of written or printed matter which might have ideological or political implications: "Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date.... All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and re-inscribed exactly as often as was necessary."[1]

Of course, it is never stated or implied that an act of forgery is being committed. Always the instruction given is to 'rectify' "slips, errors, misprints or misquotations" in the interests of accuracy.

A lie or a forgery might imply some relation to a corresponding truth or fact, however distorted or far-fetched this might be. In the case of Miniplenty's figures there is not even this pretence of a relation to truth. The statistics in

question might be a pure fabrication. Miniplenty may have forecast an output of a hundred and forty-five million pairs of boots. The actual output is given as sixty-two millions. In rewriting the forecast Winston marks it down to fifty-seven millions to allow for the usual claim that the quota has been over-fulfilled. It may well be that no boots have been produced at all !

Between the workers in the Records Department there is little scope for communication. In cubicle after cubicle along the walls, comrades are correcting and rewriting their bits of history in virtual isolation from one another. Nobody dare discuss his fabrications with another. One is not even sure that the particular piece of history delivered for correction is itself true or merely a correction at several removes from the truth. And so the charade goes on day after day with scores of comrades bending over their speakwrites, speaking not above a low murmur, and having corrected their pieces, throwing the original matter down the memory hole to be consumed by flames in the underground cellars of Minitrue.

Often a particularly tricky matter requiring great skill in manipulation is given to more than one corrector. When all the various 'corrections' have been assembled, some directing brain in the Ministry will decide which are to be chosen; this will set in motion a complex process of cross-referencing; in time, the chosen lie would pass into history and become truth.

Winston recalls dealing with one such piece relating to an organization called F F C C. A certain comrade Withers belonging to this organization had at one time been singled out for praise by Big Brother. The organization has apparently fallen into disgrace and has been disbanded; comrade Withers himself

is now referred to as an 'unperson'. Incidentally, it transpires that it is not merely facts and events that might be annihilated in Oceania. Human beings who have incurred the displeasure of the Party could be purged, 'vaporized'. Once they have been vaporized, they become 'unpersons'; that is, they never in fact existed in which case it would not even be possible to say that they have ceased to exist. The great purges involving thousands of people with public trials and executions are show-pieces put on once in a couple of years. More often, it is the case that people just vanish without a trace, and are not heard of again.

Winston is now having to rewrite Big Brother's speech commending Withers for excellent service. He speculates on the fate of Withers. He wonders what caused him to fall from grace: it might be incompetence or corruption; or may be he was becoming too popular or was suspected of heretical tendencies: "Or perhaps - what was likeliest of all - the thing had simply happened because purges and vaporizations were a necessary part of the mechanics of government" (48).

Winston applies himself to the task of 'correcting' Big Brother's speech that would cause the least dislocation of 'facts' in related documents. To turn the speech into a denunciation of traitors and thought-criminals would be too patent a manipulation, while to invent some victory at the front or triumph of over-production would require large-scale rewriting of records. And so Winston decides to invent a quite new character, a certain Comrade Ogilvy, who has recently died in battle, in heroic circumstances, to take the place of Withers in Big Brother's speech of commendation: "It was true that there was no such person as

Comrade Ogilvy, but a few lines of print and a couple of faked photographs would soon bring him into existence" (49).

Winston now proceeds to write up a resume of Comrade Ogilvy's life, a life lived in the best traditions of Party discipline and devotion. He reflects on the facility with which people could be conjured into and out of existence: "Comrade Ogilvy, unimagined an hour ago, was now a fact" (50). If our only access to past facts is through recorded evidence, then Comrade Ogilvy who never existed in the present, now existed in the past, just as surely as Charlemagne or Julius Caesar. Conversely, the 'annihilation' of Withers is equally complete and final. With no records to point to his reality, he has never existed at all !

Lest it should be thought that the satire on the operations of Minitrue has been carried too far, it is well to remember that Orwell had conceived the idea of this satiric fantasy in the early forties against a background of purges and propaganda barrage carried out by fascists and communists, and that writers like Orwell and Koestler knew well what they were parodying. Speaking of outright lies and blatant distortions of facts put out by fascist propaganda, Orwell wrote: "This kind of thing is frightening to me, because it often gives me the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. After all, the chances are that those lies, or at any rate similar lies, will pass into history."[2] In 'Literature and Totalitarianism,' Orwell notes that while the dictator controls one's thoughts he does not fix them:

> The peculiarity of the totalitarian state is that though it controls thought it does not fix it. It sets up unquestionable dogmas, and it alters them from day to day. It needs the dogmas, because it

> needs absolute obedience from its subjects, but it cannot avoid the changes, which are dictated by the needs of power politics. It declares itself infallible, and at the same time it attacks the very concept of objective truth.[3]

In "Anatomy of a Myth" Koestler expresses surprise at the facility with which people in the West are willing to swallow whole atrocities and blatant denials of facts perpetrated in the name of a totalitarian ideology:

> Constant purges, the monotonously recurrent excommunication of the popular leaders of yesterday, the absence of any rank and file influence on the Party line, the sacrifice of thousands in hopeless adventures alternating with capitulations to and alliances with the enemy, the twisting around of slogans to mean the exact opposite of what the words conveyed, indignant denials of the truth of yesterday, an atmosphere of slander, denunciation and Byzantine worship — how can it be explained that millions in the West swallowed all this, and swallowed it voluntarily, in self-imposed discipline, with no Gestapo or G.P.U. to back it up?[4]

In *Darkness at Noon*, the hero Rubashov notes with sardonic humour that not only portraits of the old heroes who dared to disagree with No I are taken down but their books are taken away to be replaced by new ones agreeing with the Party line; "the old histories" by new histories; "the old memoirs of dead revolutionary leaders were replaced by new memoirs of the same defunct."[5]

And so, viewed in its proper political context, Orwell's parody of the operations of Minitrue comes across as essentially true; and the truth it contains

is that of the incompatibility of commonsense rationality with arbitrary exercise of power. This might seem to be a truism not worth insisting on. And yet, what distinguishes modern despotisms, oligarchical collectivisms as they are called in Goldstein's Book, from their older varieties is precisely their dependence on well worked out ideologies. And so it comes about that both the despot and his victim are driven to shore up their defences with what either claims to be the truth and reality of the given political situation. There is this crucial difference that the despot has the power to create or annihilate truth to suit expediency and impose his version upon the people. This procedure is known as 'reality control' in Orwell's satire.

It is pertinent to recall that one of Orwell's specific aims in creating this satire, as he himself explains it, was "to indicate, by parodying them, the intellectual implications of totalitarianism."[6] To illustrate his point Orwell cites the persecution of scientists in Russia as a thing that should have been foreseen ten or twenty years earlier as it followed naturally from the dogmatism and intolerance of Communist ideology. The burden of his political writing since the Spanish War has been a passionate protest and warning against atrocities committed in the name of the racial myth or the dictatorship of the proletariat. He noted with dismay that intellectuals in the West were only too willing to condone these atrocities or deny them altogether. In some cases he even detected a sneaking sympathy with and admiration for the dictator who perpetrated them.

Orwell's advice to intellectuals was to love truth more than power. In Winston Smith he has created a character whose ruling passion is the defence of

truth and reality as perceived by empirical commonsense. Inevitably this brings him into conflict with the powers that be. The grotesque irony of his situation is that he is obliged to work at systematic perversion of facts and events in the service of the State. When this manipulation has gone on sufficiently long, not even Winston will be able to tell fact from fiction in the mass of material on record.

It is his passion for truth that sends Winston on his search for the truth about social conditions before the Revolution. From an official textbook obtained from the Parsons children Winston learns that conditions were deplorable for the vast majority of the people before the Revolution; that the capitalists owned everything in the land, the land, houses, factories, and all the money. Others were their slaves. They would treat these slaves most cruelly, throw them into prison for disobedience, take their jobs away and starve them to death. "London," one is told, "was not the beautiful city that we know today" (75). And so on and so forth. How much of all this is true, Winston wonders. It might be true that the average human being is better off now than he was before the Revolution. There is no way of verifying this on recorded evidence. The search for the truth takes him to the proles quarters. Here he talks to a man old enough to have known conditions in the capitalist past. However, to his persistent enquiries the old man is only able to reply in vague and superficial terms. Hardly enlightened, Winston turns away to face the harsh reality of the present, the intolerable conditions of his life and the voice from the telescreen reeling off statistics proving that people today have more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations, that they live longer, work shorter hours and so on and so

forth. Not a word of it could ever be proved or disproved. It might very well be that every word in the textbook, and all the statistics coming from the telescreen are founded on pure fantasy: "Everything faded into mist. The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth" (78).

For the sensitive individual, the practical consequence of living under the Oceanic regime is to experience total alienation within an imposed collectivity. Strict regimentation produces an artificial uniformity in thought and conduct; inwardly, however, the individual is driven further and further into isolation and solitude. One is literally compelled to live in the public eye, under the watchful eyes of Big Brother. Where every thought, spoken or unspoken, is closely monitored, communication of an intimate nature ceases altogether. And yet one is obliged to say the right thing, feel the right emotions at the right time. Conversation under such circumstances becomes an exercise in dissimulation or pure hypocritical gush. Even for a fanatical supporter of Big Brother it can be dangerous to know too much, and speak openly. The behaviour of the lunch crowd at Minitrue's canteen affords a good instance of this. There is Syme talking excitedly about the aims and methods of Newspeak. There is Parsons talking about programmes for Hate Week and of his daughter's exploits in espionage; there is the man from the Fiction Department who gabbles incessantly about some perfectly innocuous matter of political propaganda to which a young woman, probably his secretary, keeps replying: "I think you're *so* right. I do *so* agree with you" (56). Winston turns to look at him. The man's spectacles catching the light, present to Winston two blank discs instead of eyes. Winston is unable to distinguish a single word in his incessant chatter:

> As he watched the eyeless face with the jaw moving rapidly up and down, Winston had a curious feeling that this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy. It was not the man's brain that was speaking, it was his larynx. (57)

While the eyeless man chatters on, Syme brings up the Newspeak word for his style of talk. It is 'duckspeak': to quack like a duck. Applied to the enemy, it is abuse; applied to one's own side, it is praise. This kind of remark, Winston reflects, will one day get him into trouble with the Party. Earlier, enthusing over the prospects of Newspeak, Syme went so far as to say that a time will come when the Party will have to change its slogans:

> How could you have a slogan like "freedom is slavery" when the concept of freedom has been abolished? The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact there will *be* no thought as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking--not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness. (56)

Such observations as these are too true to be good enough for the Party. Syme is just too clever, too intelligent and the Party wouldn't need him for their work. The irony is that Syme is dead serious about what he says. He is not being ironic. He loves Big Brother and venerates Ingsoc. In fact he would betray Winston, his friend, to the Thought Police if he knew his secret thoughts! The trouble is that he sees too clearly and speaks too plainly. He lacks "discretion, aloofness, a sort of saving stupidity." His intelligence has no survival value in Oceania. Parsons may survive, and the eyeless chatterbox certainly will. But not Syme. With nice irony Winston observes: "Zeal was not enough. Orthodoxy was

unconsciousness" (58). As it happens, Syme does vanish without a trace a few months later.

The lunch crowd at the canteen is a lonely crowd, a typical product of over-organisation. All relationships are relationships between unknowns. At one moment Winston is made sharply aware of his essential loneliness. It is when the telescreen announces that there have been demonstrations to thank Big Brother for raising the chocolate ration to twenty grams a week. Only the previous day, Winston recalls, it had been announced that the chocolate ration was to be *reduced to* twenty grams a week. This announcement coming after only twenty-four hours is swallowed by everyone, with stupid greed by Parsons, with fanatical enthusiasm by the chatterer, and even by Syme in a complex way involving doublethink. "Was he, then, *alone* in the possession of a memory?" (62), Winston wonders.

"Fair is foul and foul is fair." Shakespeare spoke of a profound disorder in the moral sphere and dramatised its consequences in *Macbeth*, Orwell's favourite Shakespeare play. However in that story of ambition and treachery, objective truth was never in question. There was no mistaking the reality and identity of hero and villain, and consistency of human motivation. Appearances could be deceptive, yet, they were deceptive in relation to standards which were themselves objective and invariable. In Oceania, however, it is the rational order of perception and judgement that is overturned. Does Big Brother exist? Do Goldstein and the Brotherhood exist? Supposing that Goldstein does exist, did he write the book attributed to him? Why should the Party wage wars for which there is no apparent motivation? Why should the Party maintain the fiction of infallibility

which is the sole cause of all this tampering with past facts? Answers to these and other questions, when they emerge at the end of the story, are found to turn on an arbitrary denial of objective truth.

Winston is convinced that in the masquerading crowd he meets at lunchtime and at the Two Minutes Hate there must be some who secretly hate Big Brother and would be in league with the mysterious Brotherhood. But there is no way of verifying this. Between one mind and another there is an impassable gulf fixed. To reach out across the chasm of fear and suspicion and make contact would be to risk one's life. Oddly enough, the man whom Winston suspects to be disloyal to Big Brother is O'Brien, an Inner Party official. Winston is intrigued by something in his manner and expression which seems to invite confidences. O'Brien is able to read Winston's thoughts and tempts him with his own secret desires. He induces Winston to commit acts that would eventually incriminate him.

Excluded from the possibility of genuine communication and daily bombarded by lies and distortions, himself working to distort facts, Winston decides to open a diary. It is an act of rebellion, one that might cost him his life or long years in a prison camp. The first thing he sets down, the date on the page gives him pause: does he know for certain the year in which he is writing? Even the year of his birth is now only an uncertain, unverifiable memory. And then there is the further question: for whom is he writing the diary? The very idea of communicating with someone appears impossible. He could only record his thoughts for the future, for the unborn. But if the future resembles the present,

it would not be interested in his experiences; if different, his experiences will have no meaning for it.

If he writes at all now, it must be to unburden his soul, to find release in the very act of setting down the thoughts teeming in his mind. And so, sitting in an alcove, out of range of the telescreen, he starts writing as though by automatic action. He finds himself writing in bold capitals: DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER. For a moment he is seized with panic at the thought of so seditious a matter falling into the hands of the Thought police. Soon, however, he realizes that it makes no difference whether he commits his thoughts to writing or not. The decisive act is to have thought them. It is thoughtcrime — "the essential crime that contained all others" — and sooner or later the Thought police will get him: "Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you" (21). Once again, it is the sheer futility of his act that he must now face and accept. He must now face the possibility that, once the police gets hold of his diary, no trace will be left of himself and his writing; there lay before him not death, but annihilation:

> Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: vaporized was the usual word. (21)

The explosion of a rocket bomb somewhere far away gives him the desperate hope that some day the Party's dominion might come to an end. As if in answer to his thoughts, there comes into his mind the vision of the enormous structure of

Minitrue towering into the sky, an impregnable fortress of absolute power ("A thousand rocket bombs would not batter it down") mocking his puny efforts at revolt:

> Only the Thought Police would read what he had written, before they wiped it out of existence and out of memory. How could you make appeal to the future when not a trace of you, not even an anonymous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive? (29)

And yet, write he must if only because to do so would be the only way of staying sane and human. To hold on to the facts as one knows them is to clear a little space for truth and justice, albeit for a while, from a wilderness of lies and distortions. Where the Party holds sway it is no longer possible to situate oneself in relation to objective facts and events. Only the harsh physical environment dominated by Big Brother seems stable and solid. For the rest, one might be a somnambulist wandering in a nightmare world:

> Newspeak, doublethink, the mutability of the past. He felt as though he were wandering in the forests of the sea bottom, lost in a monstrous world where he himself was the monster. He was alone. The past was dead, the future was unimaginable. (28)

Within the privacy of his alcove, writing his diary, Winston is able to create a little world of remembered facts and felt certainties. The moment he steps outside this space he is in the power of Big Brother, his power to deny and negate, to freeze history at any chosen moment. The maddening thing is that Big Brother gets his way with the crowd; the most palpable absurdities are swallowed

whole and acted upon instantly. A striking instance of this occurs at a public rally at the end of a Hate Week. All week long there had been speeches, demonstrations, shouting, singing, banners and posters to whip up sentiments against the Enemy. At the conclusion of the rally on the sixth day an Inner Party orator is haranguing several thousand people at a public square. Gripping the neck of the microphone with one hand, and clawing air menacingly with the other he is denouncing atrocities, massacres, deportations, lootings, rapings, tortures of prisoners, bombing of civilians perpetrated by the Eurasian Enemy. A messenger hurries on to the stage and slips a scrap of paper into his hand. Without pausing in his speech, the idealogue unrolls and reads the slip of paper: "Nothing altered in his voice or manner, or in the content of what he was saying, but suddenly the names were different. Without words said, a wave of understanding rippled through the crowd. Oceania was at war with Eastasia !" (188-9). Suddenly there was a mighty commotion. Half the faces on the posters and banners are wrong! Surely it was sabotage! The agents of Goldstein had been at work ! Within two or three minutes, they were all pulled down. In recalling this incident what impresses Winston most is "that the speaker had switched from one line to the other actually in mid-sentence, not only without a pause, but without even breaking the syntax" (189).

Just once in his life Winston held in his hands an incontrovertible evidence of an act of falsification. It was in 1973, five years after the purges in which the original leaders of the Revolution had been wiped out once for all. Winston was unrolling a wad of documents delivered for correction in his cubicle. Among them was a half page of *The Times* of about ten years earlier. The piece had evidently

been slipped in mistakenly. The cutting showed photographs of three leaders of the Revolution – Jones, Aaronson and Rutherford – who had been executed during the purge on charges that included colluding with the Eurasian enemy. Now the photograph showed them at a Party function in New York on the same day on which they were alleged to have flown from a secret airfield in Canada to a rendezvous somewhere in Siberia, and conferred with the Eurasian General Staff! It was clear beyond a doubt that this particular charge was a pure fabrication and that the victims' subsequent confession to this crime had been obtained under torture. Of course, for Winston this was not a great discovery. He had never in fact believed that people who were wiped out in purges were in fact guilty of the crimes they had been charged with. What was significant in this case was that he had concrete proof with which to support his conviction; if it could be made public it would undermine altogether the Party's claim to infallibility:

> (T)his was concrete evidence; it was a fragment of the abolished past, like a fossil bone which turns up in the wrong stratum and destroys a geological theory. It was enough to blow the Party to atoms, if in some way it could have been published to the world and its significance made known. (82)

As it was dangerous to be found in possession of this tell-tale piece of evidence, Winston threw it into the memory hole to be consumed by the flames. That was one piece of history destroyed for ever. The material evidence has been transposed to memory. Winston wonders whether the power of the Party has grown less now that one person's memory possesses incontrovertible evidence of

the chicanery they have been practising all along. What if he had preserved the piece? Would it have made any difference? Oceania's friends and enemies have changed sides more than once since his discovery of the *Times* photograph and each time the whole past history was rewritten to suit the new alignment. Naturally the charges against the three men and their confessions would have been rewritten over again so that the original facts and dates would now be of little significance.

Winston understands quite well how this huge machinery of oppression and deception works; but what he can't understand at all is its ultimate cause and purpose. He writes in his diary: "I understand HOW: I do not understand WHY" (83).

With all evidence suppressed or destroyed, it might be possible for the Party to prove him a lunatic if a lunatic is a minority of one. This prospect Winston feels able to face: "There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad" (226). But what if the Party were right, after all? Could it be that reality is a mental construct, that the evidence of one's senses is mere illusion? The Party tells one to reject the evidence of one's eyes and ears. It is their final, essential command:

> In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of experience, but

> the very existence of external reality, was tacitly denied by their philosophy. (83)

Winston thinks of the enormous power arrayed against his simple commonsense beliefs. He thinks of the subtle arguments with which the Party intellectual could overthrow him in debate. And the power they exert over you is not merely rational; it is the power of a superhuman will. He looks at a portrait of Big Brother; the hypnotic eyes drill into his own:

> It was as though some huge force were pressing down upon you--something that penetrated inside your skull, battering against your brain, frightening you out of your beliefs, persuading you almost, to deny the evidence of your senses. (83)

To these perversions of reason and will Winston opposes an empirical faith based on the intuitions of the senses, uncomplicated by the desire to dominate: "The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre" (84).

Winston's conception of freedom is grounded in this same recognition of objective facts and relations. Freedom is only meaningful when the mind submits to the discipline of the facts disclosed by the senses and the laws of analytical thought. Such freedom alone constitutes the basis of all meaning and value. And so, against the Party slogan "Freedom is slavery" Winston sets forth his axiom in his diary: "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows" (84).

In the torture chambers of Miniluv Winston's commonsense faith is made to confront the armed might of the State. It is Truth versus Power, the power to

break down the will and induce belief by means of torture, drugs, shock therapy and hypnotic suggestion. O'Brien, his teacher and tormentor, informs Winston that the purpose of the torture and indoctrination is "to cure him," to make him "sane." In the Middle Ages, heretics were tortured and burnt at the stake; but the Inquisition could not touch their minds. So they died a heroic death for their beliefs. Numerous others came forward to emulate their example. The modern totalitarians — German Nazis and the Russian Communists — went much further than the Inquisition: the Russians did obtain confessions under torture, but these were known to be untrue because they did not rewrite the past to bring it into line with the 'facts' confessed. And so the victim of the purges was vindicated by posterity. Oceania will not, says O'Brien, repeat these mistakes. The Party will not vaporize the heretic until he has surrendered of his own free will: "The command of the old despotisms was 'Thou shalt not'. The command of the totalitarians was 'Thou shalt'. Our command is '*Thou art.*' " (267)

The man whom Oceania sends to his death will not be vindicated by posterity, because no evidence of his ever having existed will be allowed to remain:

> Posterity will never hear of you. You will be lifted clean out from the stream of history. We shall turn you into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you; not a name in a register, not a memory in a living brain. You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future. You will never have existed. (266-7)

There are, O'Brien informs Winston, three stages to his reintegration: learning, understanding and accepting. Of these, the first two belong to the phase of intellectual integration, the third to emotional integration. In the first stage, Winston will learn the 'correct' views of what is true and real. In the second he will find the answer to the question that has long puzzled him: what is the driving force that keeps going this immense machinery of manipulation and control?

O'Brien sets himself to teach Winston the 'right' views on truth and reality. He reminds Winston of the Party slogan: "who controls the present controls the past" (260). The past, O'Brien explains, exists in memories and records. Since the Party controls both, the past itself is controllable. The Party expects everyone to blot out by a conscious effort all memories which conflict with its ideological position at any given moment. Or else, as Winston is to learn later, he will have the offending memory permanently obliterated by suitable treatment. As for objective reality, O'Brien states the official view bluntly:

> (R)eality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be truth, *is* truth. (261)

Winston rejects both views. Desperately he clings to his commonsense beliefs. He is subjected to intense physical pain; its intensity is increased to the point when he is quite willing to deny his convictions. However, a mere denial of conviction obtained under torture wouldn't do. What is required is a 'positive'

conviction of the views professed by the Party. For this he is subjected to further 'treatment' from which he emerges fully convinced that Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia, that Jones, Aaronson and Rutherford never existed, that two and two make five.

Having been cured of 'wrong' ideas and having re-learnt the 'right' ones, Winston comes to the next stage: understanding. The question to be considered at this stage is: Why does the Party want power? The answer which Winston gives to this question – "You are ruling over us for our own good" – only earns him an angry rebuke from O'Brien. "The Party seeks power," he tells Winston, "entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power" (275). Once again Oceania is to be distinguished from earlier oligarchies in that these latter never had the courage to own up to their motives. They pretended, perhaps even believed, that they seized power in order to create a society where men would be free and equal. The rulers of Oceania know that this is a mere delusion:

> We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. (276)

Power-worship is the religion of Oceania. "God is power," declares O'Brien, and the rulers of Oceania are "priests of power." He goes on to explain

what the Party understands by the term 'power'. In the first place, power is collective. By himself, the individual has little power; in any case death puts an end to such power as he is able to acquire. But if he can escape from his identity, if he can merge his identity in the Party, then he becomes all-powerful and immortal. Secondly power is power over human beings, over their bodies and minds, especially over minds. By being able to control minds, the Party has acquired absolute power over matter since all external reality exists in the human consciousness only.

The only way of exercising power over another human being is making him suffer. Mere obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering there is no way of knowing that he is obeying a will not his own. Progress in this world will be progress towards more pain: "Always we shall have the heretic here at our mercy, screaming with pain, broken up, contemptible – and in the end utterly penitent, saved from himself, crawling to our feet of his own accord" (281).

O'Brien tells Winston that at the end of his lessons he will more than understand this prospect of a world founded on power; he will accept it, welcome it, and become part of it. Winston recoils from the prospect, and declares that a society founded on fear, hatred and cruelty cannot endure. O'Brien reminds him that individuals may wear themselves out in indulging these negative emotions but the Party is immortal, indestructible. Nor can anyone cite human nature as a safeguard, for the Party can shape it at will. Winston cannot claim moral superiority either, for he had offered to commit the most dreadful crimes in the name of the Brotherhood. Winston accepts complete defeat in

intellectual resistance, but claims that he is still free in his emotions: he has not betrayed Julia.

(ii) Emotional relationships

Intimate personal relationships within the family and in love and friendship are considered inimical to the Party's interests. They are thought to create centres of power and loyalty outside the Party's control. And so Big Brother keeps a tight grip on emotional relationships among Party members. Marriage is only allowed between persons who do not love each other, the sole function of sex being procreation. There is the Anti-Sex League to campaign for sexual austerity. Sexual promiscuity between Party members is strictly forbidden. The parent-child relationship is also undermined. Children are encouraged to spy on their parents and betray the guilty ones to the Thought Police. "We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer," (280) O'Brien tells Winston.

The emotional energy thus dammed up is channelled into expressions of political feeling, into love of Big Brother and hatred of and triumph over the enemy. Naturally this leads to a brutalisation of healthy instincts and emotions. As O'Brien explains it, "the old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love or justice. Ours is founded upon hatred. In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph and self-abasement. Everything else we shall destroy — everything" (279).

The ritual of the Two Minutes Hate offers a striking example of emotional manipulation and control: the face and voice of Goldstein denouncing Ingsoc,

behind him columns of Eurasian forces marching, a Eurasian soldier in close-up, screams of rage and hate from viewers – fade out – the hated enemies' faces melting into the visage of Big Brother, ecstasies of praise and adoration from the viewers, rhythmic chanting of 'B-B,' finally the Party slogans in bold capitals splashed across the screen. The whole show turns the viewers into a pack of screaming, grimacing lunatics. Even on a disaffected Party member like Winston, the impact is too strong to resist:

> A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. (16)

Winston notices that this emotional orgy has a curious unsettling effect on him. It is an abstract, undirected rage that is roused in him. It could be directed at Big Brother himself or at any one he happened to hate. The dark-haired girl sitting behind him, screaming and shouting abuse, rouses his hatred because he associates her in his mind with all that he hates in the Party. A member of the Anti-Sex League, she seems to him to have bartered her soul and her beauty for a stupid orthodoxy. With a violent effort, Winston transfers his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl: "He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like St. Sebastian. He would ravish her and cut her throat at the moment of climax" (17).

The Hate Week campaigns and public executions of War-prisoners serve the same purpose as the hideous black mass of the Two Minutes Hate. They work up aggressive, savage instincts and provide appropriate hate objects for the crowd to vent their feelings on. Winston recalls a Hate Week campaign organised against Eurasia. Processions, speeches, parades, shouting, singing, banners and posters had worked up general hatred to a hysterical pitch. If the crowd could have got their hands on the two thousand war-criminals who were to be publicly hanged they would have torn these prisoners to pieces. And then, at the conclusion of a rally, a party demogogue went to work on the crowd, whipping up their feeling still further with a long list of atrocities committed by the Eurasian Enemy. And then the miracle happened! In the middle of a sentence, on instructions from Big Brother, the speaker switched the name of the Enemy from Eurasia to Eastasia and the surging, seething crowd transferred their hate from one to the other with an emotional flexibility equal to that of Big Brother himself!

Winston records in his diary an appalling instance of the perversion of human instincts perpetrated by the power philosophy of Oceania. He records his experience of watching a war film and audience reaction to it. A ship carrying refugees is being bombed somewhere in the Mediterranean. A huge fat man is swimming away with a helicopter after him:

> (F)irst you saw him wallowing along in the water like a porpoise, then you saw him through the helicopter's gunsights, then he was full of holes and the sea round him turned pink and he sank as

> suddenly as though the holes had let in the water. audience shouting with laughter when he sank. (10)

Then there was a shot of a lifeboat full of children with a helicopter hovering over it. A middle aged Jewish woman is shielding her three year old boy with her arms. Frightened, the child hides himself in the enfolding arms. The helicopter plants a bomb and the boat is smashed to matchwood: ."..then there was a wonderful shot of a child's arm going up right into the air ... and there was a lot of applause from the party seats" (10-11). While the Party men applauded the scene, a prole woman started kicking up a row saying that this kind of thing should not have been shown in front of the kids; but she was turned out by the police.

It is worth noting that the proles haven't had their emotions brutalised by Party ideology. It is the prole woman who reacts against the barbarity of these scenes, not the party men. Even on Winston's language and emotion the ideology has left its mark: 'very good film,' 'wonderful shot,' the fascinated lingering on the detail of the camera following the severed hand all the way up. With this scene in the cinema may be contrasted another related incident. Winston is walking in proles quarters. There is a commotion in the street. People run for shelter. They sense a rocket bomb coming: "A young woman leapt out of a doorway a little ahead of Winston, grabbed up a tiny child playing in a puddle, whipped her apron round it and leapt back again, all in one movement" (87). A man takes the trouble to warn Winston against the bomb. After the bomb-blast, Winston visits the site, comes upon a severed hand now whitened like a plaster cast, kicks it into the gutter and walks away.

The proles are able to respond to tragedy in a way more humane and supportive than the reactions of an intellectual like Winston. Their minds haven't been perverted by ideology. Now this links up with a recurring theme in Orwell's writing on totalitarianism. He points out that it is the intellectual and not the working man who is ready to condone violence and terror as instruments of revolution. It is the intellectual who hungers after power, not the working man. Orwell sees a direct connection between ideology and power lust. The intellectual's mind is ruled by ideas and ideals which are abstractions from physical experience. Unlike the working man or the soldier at the front he cannot grasp the 'human cost' of suffering and sacrifice which his philosophy requires. The proles in Oceania are able to retain their normal human reactions precisely because they have not been infected with O'Brien's philosophy of power.

How far the party ideology could poison young minds and undermine family loyalties is illustrated by the case of the Parsons family. Winston is called in by Mrs.Parsons to unblock a pipe. After his work he is confronted by the Parsons children, a boy aged nine, his sister aged seven. Both of them are active in the Spies. The boy stops him pointing a toy pistol at him, his sister makes the same gesture with a piece of wood. Suddenly they are both leaping round him, shouting "Traitor," "Thought-criminal." The boy threatens to shoot him as a Eurasian spy, to vaporize him. Winston notices a quiet evident desire in his eyes to hit him. His manner strikes him as really vicious. Mrs.Parsons apologizes for their rudeness saying the kids are disappointed because she could not take them to see the hanging of the war criminals in the Park. Winston turns to

go; the boy lets fly at him with his catapult. Winston gets a smart blow in the back of his neck.

Back in his room, Winston reflects on the life of a mother surrounded by kids who have such savagery drilled into them. Mrs.Parsons is worn out with house work and care of children and after a year or two, these kids would be spying on her night and day for signs of unorthodoxy. It is surprising that although the kids are trained in this vicious campaign of hating and fighting the traitors, not one of them ever thinks of rebelling against Big Brother. On the contrary they adore him. The songs, slogans, drills and hikes are all most exciting to them. All their ferocity is turned against enemies of the State: "It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children" (26-7). Hardly a week goes by without *The Times* reporting some 'child hero' overhearing a compromising remark and betraying his parents to the Thought Police.

Reviewing a book on radical rehousing programmes in 1946, Orwell argued for the preservation of the family as an institution, "which in the modern world is the sole refuge from the State ...."[7] In Oceania, the Party's strategy is to retain this institution and undermine it from within. Parents are even encouraged to be fond of their children. It is the children whom the Party expects to do their work for them: "The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately" (140).

Mr.Parsons is the sort of parent who, in his anxiety to please Big Brother, would set the most deplorable example for the kids. He shows a fatuous

enthusiasm for the kids' work of spying and is fond of recounting their exploits. He tells of how his little daughter persuaded two other girls to join her in shadowing a man whom they suspected of being a foreigner. Her suspicion was roused because the man was wearing an unusual pair of shoes! In the end she handed him over to the Thought Police. On another occasion his kids sneaked up behind an old woman and set fire to her skirt because they saw her wrapping up sausages in a poster of Big Brother: "That's a first-rate training they give them in the Spies nowadays — better than in my day, even. What d'you think's the latest thing they've served them out with? Ear trumpets for listening through keyholes !" (66).

In the end, Mr.Parsons himself is betrayed to the Police by his daughter who had listened at the keyhole and heard him talk in his sleep. "Down with Big Brother" was what he had said over and over again.

If the Parsons may be taken as fairly representative of the Ingsoc conception of the family — a family divided against itself subsisting on emotions and loyalties that are public and political — Winston is able to reconstruct from memory an image of the traditional family bound together by a parental love that expresses itself in suffering and sacrifice for the loved ones.

Winston has only vague memories of his father. His father disappeared unaccountably, when he was still a boy. Not long after he lost his mother and little sister, too. His mother, too, had just disappeared along with the baby. Evidently they had been swallowed up in one of the first purges of the fifties.

Twice Winston is troubled by dreams of his lost mother and sister; the first time it occurs, he is tormented by a sense of guilt and remorse. He feels himself

to have been somehow the cause of his mother's suffering and disappearance. In the dream he sees his mother sitting in the saloon of a ship, her arm around his little ailing sister. The mother and sister are looking up at him through the darkening water, the ship sinking deeper and deeper under water. He is up there in clear light and air while they are going to their death for his sake. There is this knowledge in their face and their hearts, but no reproach in their eyes.

Waking from his dream Winston reflects on its meaning for him now, thirty years after the loss of his mother and sister. He is filled with guilt and grief although he cannot explain in what precisely his guilt consists. It may be that he was too young and selfish to return her love; maybe she was sacrificing her life and that of his sister to a conception of loyalty rooted in a culture that valued the individual and the sanctity of personal relationships. Her death was sorrowful and tragic in a sense quite alien to the current culture of the dehumanized, depersonalised relationships:

> Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason ... Today there were fear, hatred and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows. (32)

The next time he dreams about his mother and sister, the setting has changed from the darkening claustrophobic submarine chamber to wide open, sunlit vistas under the crystal dome of the sky. This time only a single marked detail of the earlier dream stands out--the gesture of the protecting arm around the little baby; it coalesces with a similar gesture made by the Jewish mother in

the war film Winston had seen, trying to shield her baby with her arms against the bullets. The dream calls up a number of memories he had pushed out of his consciousness, memories of privation and suffering in the family, of his quarrels with his mother. Winston remembers that, with the arrest of his father a great change had come over his mother. It was as though all strength and purpose had gone out of her life. Sometimes she would sit on the edge of the bed, holding the kids close to her, lost in thought, as though expecting the same fate as had befallen her husband. She went through the chores mechanically, silently. The family was virtually starving. There was never enough to eat. Winston quarrelled with his mother over his share at every meal. The mother bore all patiently, always indulging his wish, skimping on her and the ailing child's share to feed him. Then, one day, he quarrelled over his share of chocolate. The mother gave up her share for him. Not satisfied, he grabbled the piece given to his sister and ran out. His mother called to him to stop. He stopped and looked at her. "His mother's anxious eyes were fixed on his face." Even now, while he recalls the incident, Winston cannot tell what it was that she was threatened with. His sister started wailing. "His mother drew her arm round the child and pressed its face against her breast. Something in the gesture told him that his sister was dying" (170). He turned and fled. When he came back a few hours later, his mother had disappeared. He never saw her again.

This dream and the memories it called up set in motion a train of thoughts in Winston's mind. For him the whole meaning of the dream is contained in that "enveloping, protecting gesture of the arm." This particular gesture links up the two dreams. Exactly as his mother had sat on the edge of the bed with the child

in her arms, so she had sat in the sunken ship with the child clinging to her, looking at him through the darkening water. Certainly this was a gesture of a fierce protective love, betokening "a kind of nobility, a kind of purity," coming out of a world that lived by personal convictions, the heart's truths, not by those imposed from above. Just because an action is ineffectual, it does not thereby become meaningless. His mother's protective arms could not produce more chocolate; neither could the Jewish mother's arms save her child from the bullets: "If you loved someone, you loved him, and when you had nothing else to give, you still gave him love. When the last of the chocolate was gone, his mother had clasped the child in her arms" (172). The Party has not only trampled under foot the sanctity of private loyalties and standards, it has nothing to offer in their place. "The terrible thing that the Party has done was to persuade you that mere impulses, mere feelings, were of no account, while at the same time robbing you of all power over the material world" (172). Their brutal logic leaves no room for the value of individual action and motivation, nor for the continuance of value through time. The proles, on the other hand, still live by the standards of the old world where "a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself... They were not loyal to a party, or a country or an idea, they were loyal to one another" (172). There comes into his mind, in sharp contrast to the proles' sanity and generosity, the crudity of his own emotional response when a few weeks ago he had seen a severed hand lying on the pavement, kicked it into the gutter and walked away.

In Oceania, the threats to love and loyalty do not come from the physical environment but are invariably caused by the social system devised by man and

the material conditions it produces. As a boy, Winston showed himself cruel and selfish because of the utter privation in which he was compelled to live. The Parsons children are perverted by a cynical ideology of power. The rocket bombs falling on London, the suffering they inflict, are all part of a cynical political game whose sole purpose is to maintain the party in power. One of Winston's memories relates to his family seeking shelter during an air raid and hearing an old man lament the death of a loved one, "something that was beyond forgiveness and could never be remedied" (35). The one memory of his that is unclouded by grief or guilt is of an afternoon on a rainy day, when he and his mother amused themselves with games, his little sister laughing because the others were laughing. This is a moment of joy and happiness snatched from the clutches of a monstrous law that ordains suffering as the proper measure of the exercise of power.

Winston's marriage to Catherine, a blind adherent of the Party ideology, foundered because he could not establish a satisfying emotional relationship with her. They differed in their attitude to sex. Catherine accepted the Party's rationalisation of the sexual function as "a duty" one owed to the State. She stiffened at the thought of pleasure or enjoyment associated with sex: "The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime" (71).

Winston's affair with Julia, like his decision to open a diary, is an act of rebellion, undertaken just as much in protest against a dehumanising ideology as in satisfaction of an emotional need. They meet in the Golden Country, a landscape that has haunted Winston's dreams, a rabbit-bitten pasture bordered

by elms, a clear stream with dace swimming in it under the willows, the grass gilded by the slanting rays of the sun. In the dream, the dark-haired girl comes across the meadow and with a single disdainful gesture throws aside her clothes. It is a gesture of contempt and revolt against the Party's attempt to distort and dirty the sex instinct:

> With its grace and carelessness it seemed to annihilate a whole culture, a whole system of thought, as though Big Brother and the Party and the Thought Police could all be swept into nothingness by a single splendid movement of the arm. (33)

With Julia, the primary motive is pleasure; although she hates Big Brother and his ideology she considers it futile to attempt a revolt. Winston's attitude to sex is more complex. In the first place, he understands and accepts sex as a natural healthy instinct. To recognise this and act on it constitutes an act of rebellion. He would, if he could, cherish sex as a source of pleasure and a means to forging intimate relationships. But it is the political motive that is uppermost in his mind: "Not merely the love of one person, but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party apart" (132). He is excited to learn from Julia that she has gone with scores of Party members; he sees sex as a potential subversive force, a force for corruption: "I hate purity, I hate goodness! I don't want any virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone to be corrupt to the bones" (132). He understands that this corruption of the sexual motive is part of a pervasive corruption of healthy instincts practised under Ingsoc and that he himself is debasing sex for political ends: "Their embrace had

been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act" (133).

Julia shows a better understanding of the Party's sexual puritanism than Winston. The Party's aim, she says, is not merely to extend its control over the emotional life; through sexual privation the Party aims to induce hysteria which could be turned into war-fever and leader-worship. As she puts it, "All this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour" (139).

As their secret meetings grow more frequent Winston and Julia realise that their relationship cannot last long. They know they can expect the worst at the hands of the torturers in the Ministry of Love. They will be made to confess. Winston says that they need not worry unduly about confessions so long as their feelings for each other do not change: they should not betray each other. The lovers are convinced that whatever the torturers might do to their minds and bodies, "they can't get inside you." "They could lay bare in the utmost detail everything that you had done or said or thought; but the inner heart, whose workings were mysterious even to yourself, remained impregnable" (174).

In the Ministry of Love, the lovers learn that they have underestimated the Party's power to break down their will and dictate their sentiments. In Room No. 101, Winston is made to confront and confess the ultimate failure of will. He confronts his worst fear in the way of physical torture and realises how weak and selfish the inner heart can be. He interposes the body of Julia between himself and his worst terror: "Do it to Julia," he cries, over and over.

The third stage of his reintegration, O'Brien had told Winston, was acceptance. He has betrayed Julia and accepted Big Brother. He has transferred his love from Julia to Big Brother. Meanwhile Julia has betrayed him in identical terms. When they meet afterwards in the street, it is clear that their relationship is at an end. They have both failed in the ordeal of love and they know it: "All you care about is yourself."

In Oceania, all positive emotional relationships are foredoomed to failure; they are frustrated, betrayed or brutalised by a collective mania for power and domination.

(iii) The destruction of traditional language and culture.

The Party's domination of the individual life extends beyond the sphere of thought and emotions to the very instrument of thought — language — and the cultural life generally. Since it is impossible to think without words the best way to control the expression and transmission of thought would be to control language itself. To achieve this end, Oceania has devised a version of the language currently being used. This new version is called Newspeak; its purpose is "not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible" (312). When perfected, its vocabulary would allow Party members to express orthodox opinions with force and precision but would make it literally impossible to think a heretical thought. The idea is to invent new words, drop unacceptable ones and strip those that remain of secondary meanings, especially if these meanings are ideologically suspect. For instance, the word "free" would be retained but without its political and intellectual meaning. Political and

intellectual freedoms do not exist in Oceania even as concepts; hence there is no need to express these meanings any longer. As the Party slogan expresses it, "freedom is slavery." To employ the word "freedom" in the sense in which Winston uses it – "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four" – would be considered heretical. It is significant that Winston is able to record this thought only in his diary with little hope of communicating it or being understood at all.

It is not merely heretical meanings such as these that are suppressed; the reduction of vocabulary is carried out as a matter of deliberate policy so that no word that could be dispensed with will be allowed to remain. This follows logically from Ingsoc's attempt to limit the scope of independent thought and action: "Newspeak was designed not to extend but to *diminish* thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum" (313).

Newspeak vocabulary contains three sorts of words. There are the words denoting concrete objects and physical actions which are ideologically neutral. These words purged of all secondary meanings, could not be used in literary, political or philosophical discussion. Then there are scientific or technical words of a similar character, used by specialists in various fields but with no common vocabulary shared between them. There is no word for science itself or for the method of thought or habit of mind that might be called scientific. All these meanings are covered by the term 'Ingsoc." Finally, there are words of a political implication, which have been subjected to the greatest manipulation and control. These words are intended to impose a desirable mental attitude upon the person using them. Only a person adept at Ingsoc would be able to use them correctly.

They are a kind of verbal shorthand which has a range of meanings packed into a few syllables with greater force and accuracy than in Oldspeak. The words in this group are compound words such as 'goodthink,' 'thinkpol'; some of these were capable of subtilised meanings: 'bellyfeel' implies a blind enthusiastic acceptance and 'oldthink' carries a strong suggestion of decadence and wickedness, but these nuances would be lost on those not well versed in the ideology of Ingsoc. Moreover, a word like 'oldthink' functions as a blanket term of condemnation, covering all the ideas associated with the political system Ingsoc has supplanted. In this way, it destroys these various ideas and their words while conveying a strong indictment of them:." ... the special function of certain Newspeak words, of which *oldthink* was one, was not so much to express meanings as to destroy them (318)." Words such as 'honour,' 'justice,' 'morality,' 'democracy,' 'science,' religion have simply ceased to exist, by being covered by a few blanket terms. All words relating to liberty and equality are now covered by the term 'crimethink'; those relating to nationalism and objectivity are subsumed under the term 'oldthink'. A Party member using these words and others like 'goodthink,' 'bellyfeel' in praise or blame is not called upon to make subtle discriminations in moral judgement. A word such as 'ungood' covers all gradations of undesirable moral conduct and in so doing makes it impossible to judge the relative degree of deviation from the moral norm.

A great many words are euphemisms meaning the opposite of what they appear to mean. Examples are 'joycamp' for forced labour camp and 'Minipax' for Ministry of War. Some words are frankly contemptuous in intent. 'Prolefeed,' for instance, refers to the rubbishy entertainment and spurious news which the Party

dole out to the masses. Long words are shortened to an easily pronounced form: 'Recdep' for Records department, 'Ficdep' for Fiction Department. Sometimes such abbreviations had the effect of stripping the original word of its historical and idealistic associations as in the case of 'Comintern' for 'Communist International'. While the latter calls up a composite picture of universal brotherhood, red flags, barricades, Karl Marx and the Paris Commune, the former is a purely functional word suggesting a close-knit organisation with a well defined party doctrine. One might use the word 'Comintern' in a brisk, businesslike way with little thought of the history of political struggle and triumphs, whereas 'communist international' would, however momentarily, recall something of its glorious idealism whenever the word is used. The same goes for 'Minitrue,' representing the Ministry of Truth. By abbreviating words whenever possible, Newspeak has provided, itself with a supply of short, clipped words of unmistakeable meaning which could be uttered rapidly without the speaker being distracted by their emotional or ethical associations. These words of two or three syllables with the stress distributed equally between them would produce the effect of a gabbling style of speech, at once staccato and monotonous. Nor is this effect quite unintended. The intention is to make speech on political subjects as nearly as possible independent of consciousness. A Party speaker called upon to give his opinion on political or ethical subjects is expected to reel off the right words without unconsciously attending to their meanings, "as automatically as a machine-gun spraying forth bullets." In Newspeak his speech would be described as 'duckspeak,' meaning quacking like a duck. If the speaker is wholly unconscious of his meanings, he would be honoured as a 'double plus good

duckspeaker'. This kind of unconscious verbalisation is made possible by the telescoping of words into bloodless abstractions, by the elimination of secondary meanings and by narrowing the choice of words through the suppression of undesirable terms: "Ultimately it was hoped to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centres at all" (322).

When Newspeak has finally established itself it might still be possible to make sentences like 'Big Brother is ungood,' 'All mans are equal' which are grammatically correct. To the orthodox ear, the former would be a self-evident absurdity; even if one tried to defend the statement, there wouldn't be sufficient terms and concepts with which to defend it. The word 'equal' in the latter statement would only have a physical meaning which would render the statement patently absurd. Similarly, the famous opening words of the Declaration of Independence would, when translated into Newspeak, become a panegyric on absolute government.

The laborious rewriting of past history carried out in the Records Department of Minitrue is made necessary by the persistence of Oldspeak in speech and writing. In the future, with the total obliteration of oldspeak it wouldn't even be necessary to alter historical records or literary works because these would have become totally unintelligible and untranslatable; and so the last link with the past would have been severed once and for all.

Winston's decision to open a diary is a desperate attempt to preserve his last link with the past. As a worker in the Records Department he is obliged to assist in the systematic mutilation of words and concepts. Back in his room, he is able to record his thoughts in his diary, for no other reason than to stay sane

and human. The book itself like the language he is writing in is a thing of the past, a forbidden possession. It is 'a peculiarly beautiful book' with smooth creamy paper and marbled cover. The pen he is writing with is an 'archaic' instrument the possession of which along with the book would betray a devotion to 'oldthink'. Winston knows that in writing his thoughts down, he is in some obscure way carrying on the human heritage. And so he addresses himself "To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone - to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone" (30). It is a desperate attempt to break out of the imposed regimentation, the locked loneliness ("the age of uniformity, the age of solitude") of the Oceanic system, and also from the practised chicanery of doublethink, from the kind of conversation he is obliged to make with a Newspeak philologist like Syme. With the establishment of Newspeak, Syme informs him:

> The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron – they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be. (56)

Syme speaks gloatingly of the work of destroying words and meanings, of narrowing the range of thought, and of preventing thought-crime through reality control.

In "Politics and the English Language," an essay written two years before the novel, Orwell expressed serious concern over the debasement of language in political writing. This, he said, resulted from unwillingness to think clearly, from the need to rationalise unpalatable truths because of a blind adherence to

ideology. These concerns are reflected in the satire on Newspeak with this difference that while the idealogue of Oceania is able to make a brutal frontal assault on the expressive functions of language, his counterpart in real life, not possessed of absolute power, has to have recourse to various shifts and devises – portentous phrasing, streams of abstractions – to conceal his real intent. One detail, however, that of the eyeless duckspeaker, talking only with his larynx – has come into the novel straight out of the essay.

In his search for living traditions in the language, Winston is not even able to resurrect an old song entire. He is haunted by fragments of the rhyme about the chimes of churchbells; he is fascinated by the singing of the prole woman even though she is singing some silly sentimental stuff, churned out by the versificator. In place of the old classics, he comes upon the rubbish produced by the novel-writing machine in the Fiction Department. In his little hideout above Charrington's junkshop, Winston experiences a momentary escape into an old world. The room awakens in him a sort of nostalgia, a sort of ancestral memory; the carpeted floor, the pictures on the wall, the arm-chair by the fire, the mahogany bed by the window, the old fashioned glass clock with a twelve hour face — all these speak of an age now gone by. Here at the junkshop Winston buys a glass paper-weight with a lovely piece of coral in it. Even more than its beauty, what appeals to him about the paper-weight is its aura of bygone times; it is yet another valuable link with the past: "It is a little chunk of history that they have forgotten to alter. It is a message from a hundred years ago, if one knew how to read it" (152). He values it also because of its apparent uselessness, its value as art. For this reason as well as for its oldworld flavour, it

is suspect in the eyes of the Thoughtpolice: "Anything old, and for that matter anything beautiful, was always vaguely suspect" (99). The glass paper-weight releases in Winston a whole complex of emotions, emotions of security and stability under the luminous dome of the sky. The surface of the glass is the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world, the coral is his life and Julia's made secure against the ravages of an inhuman system. "The paper-weight was the room he was in, and the coral was Julia's life and his own, fixed in a sort of eternity at the heart of the crystal" (154). From this charming illusion Winston is recalled to the harsh reality of his situation when the Thoughtpolice smash the paperweight to pieces on the hearth-stone. "The fragment of coral, a tiny crinkle of pink like a sugar rosebud from a cake, rolled across the mat. How small, thought Winston, how small it always was !" (232).

Winston's attempt to recover vital continuities in tradition, in language and the cultural life is an attempt to maintain a precarious identity against the Party's effort to atomise the consciousness, to break up the continuum of history, to freeze history at a chosen moment for no better reason than the desire to exercise arbitrary power.

(IV) The right to material sufficiency

In "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution" published in 1946, Orwell raises the question why, in the age of the machine when it is technically possible to eliminate poverty and drudgery, class distinctions still remain and large numbers of the people are made to slave for a minority ruling class. He takes Burnham to task for not addressing this question and hints that the explanation might be found in psychological rather than political terms: "The

question that he ought to ask, and never does ask, is: Why does the lust for naked power become a major human motive exactly *now*, when the dominion of man over man is ceasing to be necessary?"[8]

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* written two years later Orwell asks and answers this crucial question himself. From Goldstein's Book one learns that Oceania maintains large masses of its people on the brink of starvation in order to assure the continuance of a hierarchical society:

> From the moment when the machine first made its appearance it was clear to all thinking people that the need for human drudgery, and therefore to a great extent for human inequality, had disappeared... But it was also clear that an all-round increase in wealth threatened the destruction--indeed, in some sense was the destruction--of a hierarchical society. (197)

If, under machine production, goods were produced in sufficient quantities and were distributed equally, then the masses of men would have the means to live in comfort, acquire education and learn to think for themselves. They would then see that the ruling class is a class without function and sweep them away. To prevent this happening, to maintain the power structure intact, Oceania has devised the solution of carrying on a continuous war with one or other of the rival powers merely in order to use up the surplus wealth produced. In practice there is a chronic shortage of half the necessities of life; even the favoured group of the Inner Party are obliged to lead an austere, laborious kind of life. The situation is far worse for members of the Outer party, while the proles get the worst deal of all.

To a man like Winston "the truly characteristic thing about modern life was not its cruelty and insecurity, but simply its bareness, its dinginess, its listlessness" (77). On the one side there are the streams of statistics pouring out of the telescreen proving that the battle for production has been won, that the standard of life has risen by no less than twenty per cent over the past year. There are the reports of irrepressible spontaneous demonstrations: workers marching out of factories and offices to express their gratitude to Big Brother for 'the new, happy life' he had given them. Actual conditions of life bear no resemblance to these lies or to the great ideals envisaged by the Party. One is reduced to cadging a saccharine tablet, saving a cigarette end, darning a worn-out sock, making do with a skimpy regulation meal after a day of soul-destroying, back-breaking work. Broken-down lifts and blocked waste-pipes, leaking roofs and plaster flaking from roofs and walls, Victory mansions itself falling to pieces — the contrast is most striking with the elegant well-appointed flats of Inner Party officials or the enormous pyramidal structures of Minitrue, Miniluv, Miniplenty and Minipax towering above grimy streets of dilapidated houses. In place of strong, healthy men and women, vital, surburnt, carefree — the physical type set up by the party — the type that flourish under its dominion are little dumpy men, short and stout with swift scuttling movements and fat inscrutable faces. The Party had held out the prospect of a world of glass, and steel and glittering white concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons, a nation of warriors and fanatics marching forward in perfect unity: "The reality was decaying, dingy cities where underfed people shuffled to and fro in leaky shoes, in

patched-up nineteenth century houses that smelt always of cabbage and bad lavatories" (77).

The school history textbook speaks of atrocious social conditions that existed before the Revolution. The capitalists owned everything, houses, mines, and factories and business. The poor were worked like slaves, underfed and ill treated. Winston's attempts to ascertain the truth fail. He is not only faced with severe material deprivations; he is deprived of the means of knowing whether the suffering inflicted on him and millions of others like him could be justified on any grounds whatever.

Winston's most poignant memories are those of the sufferings he inflicted on his mother and sister, always quarrelling at meal times for more than his share of the food ("The fierce sordid battles at mealtimes"). There was never enough to eat. He and the boys of the neighbourhood would scrounge round dustbins and rubbish heaps for ribs of cabbage leaves, potato pealings, or scraps of stale bread crust. The day he lost his mother and sister he had been most cruel and selfish at mealtime. He had quarrelled as usual with his mother, robbed his sister of her share of the chocolate and run away. He knew he was starving his mother and sister, yet he felt justified in doing so ("The clamorous hunger in his belly seemed to justify him") (169). Looking back on his life, Winston realizes the extent to which his character had been corrupted and debased by the material circumstances of his life.

(V) The right to privacy

According to the ideology of Ingsoc, the individual must seek and find fulfilment within the collectivity of the Party organization. Alone, he is weak and mortal; as

a member of the Party he is all powerful and immortal. Apart from the Party, the individual has no real existence. As Rubashov (the hero of *Darkness at Noon*) observes: "the first person singular" is "a grammatical fiction."

The Party expects every member to surrender his individuality to it. It is jealous of its rights and powers over every aspect of the individual's life. Any attempt at 'ownlife' the Newspeak word for individualism and eccentricity, is regarded as a crime.

The one area in which the individual might conceivably assert his right to independent thought is the area of analytical and empirical thought. Even here the Party has imposed its will by fiat. In fact there is no word in Newspeak for 'science'. Scientific research has been abolished in all fields except war and espionage. The ultimate goals of the Party, one is told in Goldstein's Book, are world conquest and conquest of the secret recesses of the individual mind. And so, in so far as scientific research is allowed to continue, it has only two objectives : "One is how to discover, against his will, what another human being is thinking, and the other is how to kill several hundred million people in a few seconds without giving warning beforehand" (201).

The Party has deployed its elaborate system of espionage and surveillance to detect and prevent the crime of ownlife. It is impossible for the would-be rebel to escape detection by the telescreen, the Thoughtpolice or the surveillance helicopter. Then there is the sheer psychological pressure exerted by the posters of Big Brother, his unsleeping eyes watching every movement and gesture. Winston takes out a coin from his pocket. On one side of it are the three Party slogans, on the other, the head of Big Brother.

> Even from the coin the eyes pursued you. On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters and on the wrapping of a cigarette packet – everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed--no escape. Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimeters inside your skull. (29)

Even "the few cubic centimeters inside your skull" has only a dubious privacy. A thoughtcrime might in an unguarded moment or in an involuntary gesture manifest itself as a facecrime and might be detected: "The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself--anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide" (65).

One's worst enemy is one's own nervous system. At any moment, one's tension inside is liable to translate itself into some visible symptom. Winston thinks of a man he had passed in the street once. He was an ordinary-looking man, a Party member. As they passed each other, Winston noticed that the left side of the man's face was contorted by a violent spasm. It was only a twitch, a quiver, quite possibly an unconscious action, but it was enough to betray him. He remembers thinking at the time that the poor wretch was done for. Even in sleep, one's thoughts are watched, as Parsons knew to his cost. Again it wouldn't do merely to conceal one's thoughts. One must make the right responses at the right time. To look incredulous when a victory is announced, is a punishable offence.

Most of the time a Party member is obliged to live in the public eye. In principle he has no spare time and is never alone except in bed. It is assumed that when he is not working, eating or sleeping he would be taking part in some kind of communal recreation. To do anything that suggested a taste for solitude, even to go for a walk by himself was always slightly dangerous.

Winston asserts his emotional and intellectual independence, his right to privacy, by opening a diary and by engaging in a love affair. In either case, he is aware that his revolt is doomed to fail; but he is willing to pay for his folly and suffer for his passion. He commits his secret thoughts to his diary and confides in his lover, feels utterly secure in the wood, in the little room above the junkshop, always confident that even in the torture chamber he can preserve inviolate the little space within the skull.

He is proved wrong on all these counts. Even the last refuge is broken in; the last heretical thought and feeling are drained away in the torture chambers of Miniluv. The mind is remade again after the image of Big Brother's mind. What is more, this change of identity is for ever. There is no going back to the former self:

> Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves. (269)

It will be seen from the foregoing account that the main thrust of the narrative is the individual's doomed battle against the organized power of the State. Clearly, it is an unequal struggle; the odds are against the lone rebel and

he knows it. From the moment he commits his thoughtcrime, Winston knows that his fate is sealed. Only the Thought police will read his diary. At each meeting the lovers are vaguely conscious of the threat awaiting them. When they go to meet O'Brien, the latter holds out little hope of success but deceives them with the illusion that they will be giving up their lives for a noble cause. O'Brien is much too clever for a weak creature like Winston. Apparently he is able to read Winston's thoughts and sets a clever trap for him. Winston walks into it on the faintest suspicion of disaffection in the man. It is not certain that the Brotherhood exists. Goldstein may be a mere scapegoat. The Book, though real enough, may well have been concocted by the Thought police. Thus, from the first the impression is steadily built up of inevitable defeat and failure awaiting those who dare to oppose the Party's absolute domination over their lives.

"If there is hope, it lies in the proles" (72), Winston wrote in his diary. He has pinned his hopes on those swarming, disregarded masses, the vast majority of the population of Oceania, who might generate the force with which to destroy the Party. The Revolution had been fought to liberate them from oppression by capitalists. After the Revolution, they are being treated as natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals. So long as they continue to work and breed, their activities are of little importance. To keep them in control is not difficult. Hence physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer and above all, gambling fill up the horizon of their minds.

Winston realizes that to expect these submerged masses to revolt, requires an act of faith. The fact is, they will not rebel until they have been made

politically informed and aware; the Party has seen to it that the proles are never educated to the right degree of political awareness.

Against the proles and the lone individual rebel, is arrayed the armed might of an oligarchical collectivism. It is a self perpetuating oligarchy whose ranks are open to the cleverest among the people who are willing to live the laborious, austere life required by the Party's ideology. Its stability is assured by the adoptive character of its membership and leadership. Big Brother, as O'Brien tells Winston, is the embodiment of the Party. And Big Brother will never die. At the hands of his torturers, Winston's mind is refashioned to the point where he acknowledges his folly and identifies himself completely with Big Brother and his ideals.

> O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother. (311)

Nineteen Eighty-Four belongs within the tradition of utopian fiction which describes alternative worlds with the aim of revealing and criticising existing social and political conditions. Orwell studied closely several works in this tradition, notably Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), H.G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia* (1905), Eugene Zamiatin's *We* (1924) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). His comments on them indicate significant points of contact and divergence from these writers and help elucidate the peculiar emphasis placed on the power motif in his own work.

In "Politics vs. Literature" Orwell gives a perceptive analysis of the political and moral attitudes behind Swift's pessimistic attack on humanity. Swift was, he admits, a rebel and iconoclast; but he was certainly not a 'progressive' writer. He was a Tory anarchist and his views on politics, science and on human life generally were reactionary. He did oppose injustice and oppression but he was not a liberal in politics and he did not favour democracy. He poked cruel fun at scientific pursuits; the 'reason' he praised in his ideal creatures, houyhnhnms, was not speculative or empirical reasoning but common sense and freedom from passion and superstition. But the life of these creatures, without passion, without excitement, is utterly dull and dreary. The 'reason' by which they live is "really a desire for death." It kills the joy of living. Moreover, it imposes a strict uniformity of thought and behaviour. In the general assembly of the houyhnhnms, one is told, there is no genuine discussion of any matter except that of the relations towards the yahoos. All decisions are unanimous, being based on self-evident truths. Truths that are not self-evident are considered undiscoverable and unimportant. There is no law to regulate behaviour, every one is expected to act according to reason. No one is *compelled* to do anything; but one is exhorted or advised to act in a certain way. Gulliver's master is unwilling to part with his human companion, but he is exhorted to get rid of him. And this exhortation, in practice, works like a compulsion by law. Orwell points out that this continuous exhortation to conform to 'reason' exerts a greater pressure on human lives than any system of formulated prohibitions: "They had reached, in fact, the highest stage of totalitarian organization, the stage when conformity has become so general that there is no need for a police force."[9] It is

pertinent to observe that when Winston decides to open a diary, he remarks pointedly that his action is not strictly illegal since in Oceania there is no law anyway. The Party member is expected to conform to the perverted logic he is brought up on, to have the right opinions and right instincts without having these defined by any formulated code of do's and don'ts. There goes with this a severe constriction of the mental life. The Party member should not think or feel beyond the range of orthodox doctrine. Orwell takes Swift to task for extolling the rationality of the houyhnhnms, but warmly commends his master for his prescience in exposing totalitarian tactics in part III of the book, where the author discusses the work of the political projectors in "discovering" plots, arranging frame-ups, writing books on machinery, abolishing individuality and so on. As Orwell puts it, Swift "has an extraordinarily clear prevision of the spy-haunted 'police state,' with its endless heresy hunts and treason trials, all really designed to neutralise popular discontent by changing it into war hysteria" ("Politics vs Literature" 377). Swift's distinction is to have extrapolated the limited models of totalitarian practices available to him to include developments that lay far in the future for him, in Russian purges, for instance. Orwell points out, in particular, Swift's insight into totalitarian control over thought, into the practice of leader-worship, in his conception of the Leader's stooge who doubles as favourite and scapegoat:

> There is something queerly familiar in the atmosphere of these chapters, because, mixed up with much fooling, there is a perception that one of the aims of totalitarianism is not merely to make sure that people will think the right thoughts, but actually to

> make them *less conscious*. Then, again, Swift's account of the Leader who is usually to be found ruling over a tribe of Yahoos, and of the 'favourite' who acts as a dirty-worker and later as a scapegoat, fits remarkably well into the pattern of our own times. ("Politics vs Literature" 378)

It hardly needs pointing out that every one of these details has been carried over into Orwell's satire, including the detail of the favourite becoming scapegoat. On this last point, one might cite the fate of devoted Party workers like Parsons and Syme and the poet Ampleforth who was arrested just because he allowed the word 'God' to stand in his rewriting of a poem by Kipling: as he explained it, the English language being deficient in rhyme words, he could not find a proper rhyme word with which to replace the offending term!

At the furthest remove in tone and temper from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is Wells's *A Modern Utopia*. In fact, of the four works listed above, this is the only one that puts forward a positive conception of human polity and society. The Wellsian Utopia is conceived on a world scale. The World State as it is called, is founded on science and reason, and is ruled by a voluntary nobility, a semi religious military order known as the Samurai. Membership of this ruling class is open to any intelligent adult in a reasonably healthy and efficient state. The Samurai are expected to lead an austere life and serve the state with discipline and devotion. Since the Utopia is a world state, there is no risk of war or wasteful competition in trade. This leaves the State free to devote all its energies to maximising production though science and technology. The religion of Utopia rejects the doctrine of original sin: it affirms the inherent goodness of man and

the ability of science to deliver man from enslavement to toil and pain. Unlike earlier utopias, the world state respects and promotes difference and individuality, not uniformity. It allows private property, takes care of the weak and disabled, and secludes the criminals for curative treatment. Order and efficiency is the hallmark of its social organization. Orwell attacked the Wellsian conception on two counts; its worship of the machine, and its equation of science with reason and progress. It was Wells's boast that his Utopia was, unlike the conventional ones, dynamic and progressive, striving to achieve greater and ever greater improvement in material conditions through improvements in technology. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell launches a vigorous attack on this cult of the machine which he believed, might, if carried too far, lead to human beings being reduced to stunted, atrophied creatures, possessing only brains and no limbs, all physical labour having been taken over by machines. As for equating science with reason and progress, Orwell challenges the idea in an article published in 1941 under the title, "Wells, Hitler and the World State." He quotes several passages from recent articles published by Wells to show how hopelessly wrong the latter was in predicting the course of fascism in the thirties. Orwell argues that "Wells is too sane to understand the modern world."[10] He accepts that Wells's world view is what sane and sensible people everywhere would warmly endorse. It is even probable that in the long run a rationally ordered society such as he has described, would prove more durable than any dictatorships. However, at the present time, with Hitler's forces sweeping over Europe, Wells is no reliable guide, says Orwell. While few people will be found willing to die for Wells's world state, millions have thrown themselves at the feet of "the criminal lunatic" Hitler,

and are willing to fight and die for the racial myth. The fact is, Wells has quite failed to understand the power of irrational forces in shaping the course of history: "The energy that actually shapes the world springs from emotions--racial pride, leader-worship, religious belief, love of war--which liberal intellectuals mechanically write off as anachronisms..." (*The Penguin Essays* 190). Throughout his writings, Wells had stressed the antithesis between the man of science working towards a planned world state and the romantic reactionary trying to restore a disorderly past. Now, modern Germany under Hitler is far more scientific than any other country in Europe and yet, Orwell points out, it is far more barbarous too in its social and political outlook and behaviour:

> Much of what Wells has imagined and worked for, is physically there in Nazi Germany. The order, the planning, the State encouragement of science, the steel, the concrete, the aeroplanes are all there, but all in the service of ideas appropriate to the Stone Age. Science is fighting on the side of superstition." (*The Penguin Essays* 191-92)

Huxley's *Brave New World* is a caricature of the Wellsian Utopia. It is a novel of the future set in a period six centuries further on in which society is run on purely scientific lines. The two sciences that are pressed into service are biology and psychology. At the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, human beings are produced and conditioned for their allotted roles in society. The entire process, from the fertilization of the egg to the birth of the baby, is carried out by trained workers and machines. Each fertilized egg is placed in solution in a large bottle for scientific development into whatever class

the human was intended. After birth, the babies are further conditioned by sleep-teaching (hypnopoedia) for their predestined roles. In this way it is possible to produce Alpha Plus Intellectuals or Epsilon Minus Morons or several gradations between them as required by the social situation. Moreover, by means of the Bokanovsky process it is possible to produce as many as ninety-six identical humans from a single fertilized egg. These Bokanovsky groups might be employed in jobs where a large number of people are required to perform identical tasks. Society is based on a rigid caste system; the Alpha Plus are assigned to administrative roles, the Epsilon Minus to menial tasks. Boredom and discontent are warded off by cheap entertainment, promiscuous sex and drug-induced euphoria. It is a frankly hedonistic society whose sole aim is avoidance of pain and pursuit of pleasure. The individual is merged with the community. Any force that might destabilize the artificially imposed uniformity of the system--the pursuit of beauty, arts, religion--is restrained systematically. Anything that is not socially useful is regarded as useless ("A love of nature keeps no factories busy.")[11] As Mutapha Mond, a World Controller explains it, the socio-political order of the Brave New World has got rid of the outmoded conventions of liberty ("Liberty to be inefficient and miserable. Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole" (49)), and equality ("As though men were more than physico-chemically equal" (49)). The individual's submission to the State is secured not by force but by genetic standardization and post-natal conditioning. The Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre waxes eloquent over the enormous potential of psychological manipulation. Subliminal suggestions are constantly poured in

> Till at last the child's mind *is* these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions *is* the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too – all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides – made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are *our* suggestions. (35)

The subordination of the individual to the State is carried further by blocking his access to the past, to his historical inheritance, by the closing of museums, by the blowing up of historical monuments, by the suppression of all books published before A.F 150. In short, then, Brave New World is a non-violent despotism which has suppressed all freedoms and offers instead a happiness which turns out on inspection to be no happiness at all: the individual is conditioned to love and feel happy in his servitude: "'And that,' put in the Director sententiously, 'that is the secret of happiness and virtue – liking what you've *got* to do. All conditioning aims at that; making people like their inescapable social destiny" (26). Huxley's story develops the theme of the individual's conflict with the State through the story of John, the white youth born and brought up in the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. When John comes to live under the highly artificial regimented system of London, conflict ensues between his natural human impulses and the dehumanized values of the new social environment. He moves out to the countryside, but unsettled by inner conflict, he murders his former friend and takes his own life on discovering his guilt.

To Orwell, Huxley's version of utopia was valuable primarily as a satire on hedonism and only secondarily as an attack on totalitarianism and the caste system. In his review of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Orwell warned against the danger

of succumbing to the hedonistic attitude to life. To accept the lotus eater's philosophy was particularly dangerous at a time when dictators like Hitler and Stalin were mobilizing vast forces by exploiting the human hunger for heroic action and heroic suffering:

> Hitler, because in his own joyless mind he feels it with exceptional strength, knows that human beings *don't* only want comfort, safety, short working hours, hygiene, birth control, and, in general, common sense; they also, at least intermittently, want struggle and self sacrifice, not to mention drums, flags and loyalty-parades.[12]

This truth, known to the dictators, is denied or scorned by the "progressive" intellectual: "Nearly all western thought since the last war, certainly all "progressive" thought, has assumed tacitly that human beings desire nothing beyond ease security and avoidance of pain." And so, Huxley's satire, observes Orwell, has its point to make to readers in the thirties, but he sees little value in it as a projection of future trends. The novel fails as political prophecy because no political system can be sustained on hedonist principles:

> No society of that kind would last more than a couple of generations, because a ruling class which thought principally in terms of "a good time" would soon lose its vitality. A ruling class has got to have a strict morality, a quasi-religious belief in itself, a mystique.[13]

Orwell returns to this question in a review of Zamiatin's We. In Huxley's book, he points out, the political problem does not arise at all; it has been solved by

scientific means. By genetic and post-natal manipulation, the individual is rendered incapable of revolt. Primitive instincts such as parental affection and the desire for liberty are artificially suppressed. But then there is no clear explanation of the will and motives of the ruling class or of why there should be social classes at all: "The aim is not economic exploitation, but the desire to bully and dominate does not seem to be a motive either. There is no power hunger, no sadism, no hardness of any kind."[14] The insistence on a strong motivation in the ruling class, on a "strict morality" and "quasi-religious belief," recalls the emphasis on similar qualities in members of the Samurai class in Wells's utopia. Needless to say that the same logic is found to operate in the obsessional motivation of the Inner Party members in Orwell's own fiction. It is not only that the social system of *Brave New World* is insufficiently motivated; the pleasure principle can hardly qualify as a political motive because, of their nature, political relations are power relations and must derive their dynamic power from a delicate balance of force and resistance. Such a dynamic relationship is found wanting in Huxley's hedonistic society: "Those at the top have no strong motive for staying at the top, and though everyone is happy in a vacuous way, life has become so pointless that it is difficult to believe that such a society could endure." (Review of *We* 73)

Orwell compares Huxley's utopia, to his disfavour, with two other works of futurist fiction: *The Iron Heel* (1908) by Jack London and Zamyatin's *We*. These latter, Orwell notes, got the political point right where Huxley missed it. London and Zamiatin understood the crucial significance of the power motive in political relations.

The Iron Heel, mistakenly thought to be a prophecy of fascism, is in reality an attack on the capitalist exploitation of the working class. The iron heel of the title is, of course, the embodied image of naked force grinding the face of the poor. Richard Everhard is a fiery-tempered revolutionary working in an underground movement against the capitalist oligarchy. The revolution fails; Everhard is captured; the story is related from a manuscript left behind by his wife, discovered long after his capture when the oligarchy had at last been overthrown. Orwell observes that London does not present the class enemy as idlers or sensualists. They are presented as inhuman monsters capable of enormous power for domination and destruction; the point may be illustrated by a passage such as the following in which Mr.Wickson, champion of the capitalist class, meets Everhard's closely argued case with an impudent assertion of power: "There is the word. It is the King of words - Power. Not God, not Mammon, but Power. Pour it over your tongue till it tingles with it. Power."[15] Unlike Huxley's, London's conception of class relations is political. It is also more realistic. The oligarchy in *The Iron Heel* who ruled the world for seven centuries were able to stay in power for so long only because they honestly believed in what they regarded as their historical mission and so in a different way they were just as brave, able and devoted as the revolutionaries who opposed them.

Of all the works named above, it is Zamiatin's book, *We*, that exerted the strongest influence on Orwell's imagination. Like *Brave New World*, Zamiatin's utopia is projected on to the twenty-seventh century. Called the United State, this utopia is a police state ruled over by a personage referred to as the Well - Doer. He is re-elected annually, unanimously, of course. It is a state organized

on scientific lines, a world ruled by the machine, in which the citizens themselves, stripped of their individuality and reduced to mere numbers or 'unifs' (uniforms) are expected to function with mathematical precision, like units of a vast, impersonal social machine. The city is secluded by a green wall from the woodlands where the "brutes" live in their natural state. Citizens (the 'numbers') are obliged to live in glass apartments for easy surveillance by the Guardians (the secret police). There is no marriage and no permanent sexual relationships. The narrator, D – 503, is a gifted engineer working on a space ship, the "Integral." Compelled to live in an abstract mathematical world, he has hankerings after the old primitive world of instincts and emotions. He and his lover 1-330 meet secretly at the Ancient House beyond the Green Wall. 1-330 is a member of an underground movement working to overthrow the state. Their attempt fails. D – 503, who is drawn into the plot, is captured along with the others. He is cured of his disease, imagination, by X-ray treatment of the relevant nerve centre. He betrays his confederates including his lover and watches with unconcern the torture of 1-330.

The governing idea of the United State is that freedom and happiness are incompatible. In the garden of Eden, man was happy but not free. In their folly, they demanded freedom and were expelled. They were obliged to seek a precarious happiness in a more challenging world. The United State under Well Doer's rule claims to have restored the lost Eden with its happiness minus freedom. A sensitive soul like D-503 feels that the price of this happiness is too great; it is the loss of individuality; marching along the streets with other numbers, he feels part of a monstrous entity: "... a thousand heads and two

composite, integrated legs and two swinging, integrated arms."[16] To feel ourselves, as a separate self from this crowd, is thought to be a disease : ".".. consciousness of oneself is a sickness..." (*We* 121). The narrator reflects ironically that this collectivism of the United State is a throw-back to the religion of the ancient Christians who "knew that resignation is virtue, and pride a vice; that 'we' is from 'god,' 'I' from the devil" (*We* 121). The United State has no use for the old ideas of 'right' and 'wrong'. It frankly acknowledges that "Right is a function of might" (*We* 109). The state sends its victim to the Machine which will liquidate him literally, reducing him to a puff of smoke and a pool of clear water. The executions are carried out publicly in the presence of the Well-Doer, like ritual human sacrifices performed by ancient slave civilizations. What appeals to Orwell most in Zamiatin's futurist fantasy is its insight into the nature and operations of the power impulse.

> It is this intuitive grasp of the irrational side of totalitarianism — human sacrifice, cruelty as an end in itself, the worship of a leader who is credited with divine attributes —that makes Zamiatin's book superior to Huxley's.[17]

There is also the disturbed and disturbing thought that the exercise of power is often inseparable from the infliction of pain, that love is at times inseparable from cruelty. The instructress at the Child Educational Refinery calls the Guardians when the children draw a caricature of her on the blackboard. She justifies herself: "I love children very much and I think that the most difficult and the most exalted love is – cruelty" (*We*, 116). Given her essentially mean and vicious character, the instructress might have acted from wounded vanity and sought to

give a hypocritical gloss to her vengefulness. However, at the crucial encounter with Well-Doer, the narrator is confronted with the inescapable paradox yet again. Those who crucified Christ, Well-Doer points out, got all the blame for carrying out a pre-ordained sacrifice to save mankind. And yet the Christian God who ordained this and its consequences is called the God of Love. Well-Doer commends the wisdom of primitive men who invented this myth:

> Even at the time when he still was wild and hairy, man knew that real, algebraic love for humanity must inevitably be inhuman, and that the inevitable mark of truth is cruelty — just as the inevitable mark of fire is its property of causing the sensation of burning (*We*, 199).[18]

In passages such as these, Zamiatin seemed to engage seriously with issues that were relevant to the forties; the contrast could not have been more striking between the trenchant irony and sombre pessimism of Zamiatin's vision on the one hand and the bland optimism and cheery automatism of the Wells – Huxley utopias on the other.

Outside these imaginative narratives the work that shaped the political thinking in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is that of the American Sociologist James Burnham. In 1946, Orwell wrote an extensive commentary on Burnham's most influential work, *The Managerial Revolution* (1940) where he agreed with Burnham's interpretation of what is happening on the European social and political scene but disagreed strongly with his predictions as to future trends. It was Burnham's thesis that capitalism was coming to an end; but contrary to current theory, he held that socialism was not going to replace it. He argued that

capitalism would be replaced by managerialism, a sort of planned economy in which power will be concentrated in the hands of technicians, executives and bureaucrats. He predicted, too, that the world would be divided into three super states, organized around three major industrial centres in Europe, Asia and America. These superstates will fight among themselves for possession of neutral areas but will not be able to conquer one another completely. Within each state, society will be hierarchical, with an aristocracy of talent at the top and a mass of semi-slaves at the bottom. With a great many of these speculations Orwell is in agreement and it is easy to see that the social political structure of Oceania as well as the geopolitical scenario in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is closely modelled on Burnham's projections. But he disagrees sharply with Burnham's view that the managerial state is destined to develop totalitarian tendencies and that it would be unrealistic to resist these developments. Orwell detects in this the all too familiar weakness of the contemporary intellectual, his tendency to power-worship. Orwell detects in Burnham's view of dictators like Stalin and Hitler traces of a sneaking admiration for demoniac will and energy. He points out that Burnham does indeed declare himself a disciple of Machiavelli in his next published book *The Machiavellians* and in a controversial article published in "The Partisan Review," under the title "Lenin's Heir." Where Burnham goes wrong, according to Orwell, is in thinking that just because managerial states such as Nazi Germany and Stalinite Russia are developing into dictatorships, these trends are bound to continue and cannot be resisted. Burnham, Orwell observes, does not raise the crucial question *why* people want power. He seems to have taken it for granted as a quite natural instinct like the desire for food.

Burnham also assumes wrongly, according to Orwell, that the division of classes serves the same purpose in all ages. In the middle ages, before the invention of the machine, large numbers of people had to be tied down to dreary physical labour. But in the advanced industrial societies, there is not this excuse for exploiting large numbers of people and maintaining class divisions. If, then, social stratification still continues, if old power structures still remain, there must be some non-political, psychological, cause for maintaining them which Burnham makes no attempt to discover; "The question that he ought to ask, and never does ask, is : Why does the lust for naked power become a major human motive *now*, when the dominion of man over man is ceasing to be necessary?."[19]

The foregoing account of sources, parallels and influences will have made clear the context of ideas and political forces in which Orwell constructed his nightmare vision of totalitarian power. He was writing in conscious opposition to the views of Wells and Huxley, and in evident sympathy with the ideas of London and Zamiatin. His "mental scenery" was composed of the dramatic discords of revolutionary political action, of the dark episodes of purges, deportations, forced labour, and large-scale mind manipulations. If he exercised a caricaturist's license to exaggerate and distort, he was working from a realistic base. In "Literature and Totalitarianism" he wrote:

> Totalitarianism has abolished freedom of thought to an extent unheard of in any previous age. And it is important to realize that its control of thought is not only negative, but positive. It not only forbids you to express – even to think – certain thoughts, but it dictates what you *shall* think, it creates an ideology for you, it tries

> to govern your emotional life as well as setting up a code of conduct. And as far as possible, it isolates you from the outside world, it shuts you up in an artificial universe in which you have no standards of comparison. The totalitarian state tries, at any rate, to control the thoughts and emotions of its subjects at least as completely as it controls their actions.[20]

In part III of his novel, Orwell asks and answers the question that Burnham failed to raise. Significantly, it is a psychological explanation that he gives, not a political one. The Inner Party seeks power as an end in itself. "The object of power is power." With conscious cynicism, O'Brien declares that the rulers of Oceania "are the priests of power... God is power." The prospect he holds out for Winston is of a brutal gluttony of power: "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – for ever" (280).

The most significant development in Orwell's handling of the power motif is this transposition of perspective from the political domain to the psychological. If, as some critics have suggested, this seems an uncritical surrender to irrationalism, it is important to remember that Orwell is responding to a phenomenon like fascism whose emergence rationalist historians failed to predict. It may be that Orwell is seeking to redress the balance in Marxist interpretation of history which relies exclusively on external criteria and ignores the psychological factor. He raises this issue in his review article "Prophecies of Fascism" and argues that the conventional Marxist "interpretation of history has been so mechanistic that they have failed to foresee dangers that were obvious to people who had never heard the name of Marx." Even a year after Hitler had risen to

power, official Marxism failed to see any danger in him; they were saying that liberal democracy was the real enemy, not Hitler's politics. Orwell points out that a writer like Jack London, although a Marxist, would not have made this mistake, because, with his love of violence and physical strength, his belief in 'natural aristocracy,' his animal-worship and exaltation of the primitive, he would have understood better the motives of a man like Hitler:

> His instincts would have warned him that Hitler was dangerous. He knew that economic laws do not operate in the same way as the law of gravity, that they can be held up for long periods of *by* people who, like Hitler, believe in their own destiny.[21]

As in the case of *Animal Farm*, so with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, there has been considerable divergence in critical opinion as to the specific target of Orwell's satire as well as its deeper import. Orwell was deeply embarrassed to learn that the book was being used as a weapon in the cold war, that right-wing readers saw in it nothing but an attack on socialism. He issued disclaimers to the effect that he was seeking to expose the tendencies to totalitarianism inherent in any kind of centralised economy, not just the economics of socialist countries. In particular, he was concerned to expose the intellectual implications of totalitarianism. As Golo Mann put it, "Orwell's only theme is the totalitarian danger that lies within ourselves and in all the political systems of our time."[22]

The more important question raised in the critical debate concerned its deeper meanings for emerging trends in the political situation. Critics like John Strachey, Raymond Williams and Isaac Deutscher consider that the novel falsifies reality in its third part, as soon as the torture of Winston and Julia begins.

Deutscher argues that Orwell's thoughts, were dominated by such events as the purges in Stalin's Russia. In treating of these irrational episodes, Orwell has adopted "the oldest, the most banal, the most abstract, the most metaphysical, and the most barren of all generalisations; all their conspiracies and plots and purges and diplomatic deals had one source and one source only — "sadistic power-hunger."[23] Deutscher dismisses this explanation as quite irrational, as a "mysticism of cruelty." Raymond Williams considers that the explanation that Orwell puts forward for the power drive is only an evasion of critical analysis and explanation. He argues that to accept Orwell's irrational explanation would imply a cancellation of enquiry and argument, and therefore of the possibility of truth. How could one distinguish between different political systems, between the good and bad ones, if all rulers are invariably motivated by the desire for power? He accepts that Orwell intends his fiction to be a warning against totalitarianism, but points out that, in the event, the meaning conveyed is that of a helpless surrender of the discriminating mind: "The warning that the world could be going [the totalitarian way] became, in the very absoluteness of the fiction, an imaginative submission to its inevitability."[24] The question raised by Raymond Williams, namely whether *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is intended as a warning or a prophecy has been much debated. Orwell himself insisted that he intended it as a warning, not a prophecy: "The moral to be drawn from this dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: Don't let it happen. It depends on you."[25]

Stephen Ingle is able to see the value of Orwell's satire as a warning against the dangers of a system dominated by the machine, as a defence of basic

human values, as a warning against the tendency of the political leader to distance himself from the rank and file and finally as a warning against the over-organised, mass-communication-based social ethos. Yet not all readers are able to see the central issues raised in the novel in these simple terms. Bernard Crick, while fully acknowledging Orwell's defence of freedom and justice feels that he has not succeeded in making the political point clear enough:

> It is a flawed masterpiece both of literature and of political thought. We need to know why hope lies in the Proles; and we need to know whether he really believes that total power needed no ideology other than power for its own sake (a bleak pessimism indeed) or whether that view is satire on the power-hungry.[26]

As regards the two points raised by Crick, it might be argued that text has incorporated its own critique of the first of these; more than once, it is suggested that a hope in the revolutionary potential of the working class may be little more than a desperate response to a desperate situation. As for the more intractable point about the self-sufficiency of the power-motif, one plausible answer is suggested by Richard Rorty. According to Rorty, Orwell is presenting a brute fact of history which cannot be explained by theories of truth, or nature or man:

> O'Brien is not saying that everything else is a mask for the will to power. He is not saying that the nature of man or power or history ensures that the boot will grind down forever, but rather that it just *happens* that it will. He is saying that it just so happens that this is how things came out, and that it just so happens that the scenario can no longer be changed. As a matter of sheer contingent fact –

> as contingent as a comet or a virus – that is what the future is going to be.[27]

As with *Animal Farm*, the possibility of raising such issues even in a relatively straight-forward narrative like that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is symptomatic of a certain ideological ambiguity in Orwell's thinking on power as a motive to political action.

Notes

[1] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 42. All further references to this novel will be identified by page number parenthetically.

[2] "Looking Back on the Spanish War," *The Penguin Essays* 224.

[3] "Literature and Totalitarianism," *CEJL*, II, 136.

[4] "Anatomy of a Myth," *The Yogi and the Commissar and Other Essays* (New York: Collier Books, 1961) 119-120.

[5] Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (London: Vintage, 1994) 96-97.

[6] Quoted in Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* 384.

[7] Stephen Ingle, *George Orwell* 102.

[8] "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution," *CEJL* IV 178.

[9] "Politics vs Literature," *Penguin Essays* 379.

[10] "Wells, Hitler and the World State," *The Penguin Essays* 193.

[11] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: The Vanguard Library, 1953) 31.

[12] Orwell, rev. of *Mein Kampf* by Hitler, CEJL, II, 14.

[13] "Prophesies of Fascism," *CEJL*, II, 31.

[14] Orwell, rev. of *We* by Zamyatin, CEJL, IV, 73.

[15] Jack London, *The Iron Heel, The Call of the Wild and Other Stories* (New York: Exeter Books, 1986) 534.

[16] Eugene Zamiatin, *We*, trans. Gregory Zilboorg, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1952) 118.

[17] Rev. of *We* 75.

[18] Compare Ivanov's claim that the revolutionary practises cruelty to end all cruelties for ever and that in doing so, he is motivated by "an abstract and geometric love" (*The Darkness at Noon* 122).

[19] "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution," *CEJL*, IV, 178.

[20] *CEJL*, II, 135.

[21] *CEJL*, II, 31.

[22] *George Orwell: The Critical Heritage*, 281.

[23] *George Orwell*: A Collection of Critical Essays, 130.

[24] Raymond Williams, *Orwell*, 126.

[25] Crick, 395.

[26] Crick, 399.

[27] Richard Rorty, "The Last Intellectual in Europe" *George Orwell*: New Casebook, ed. Graham Holderness, (London: Bryan Loughrey and Nahem Yousaf, Macmillan, 1998) 153.

POWER: THE INTERNAL FOCUS

V. J. Sebastian “The theme of power in George Orwell's post-war novels : animal farm and nineteen eighty-four ” Thesis. Department of English , University of Calicut, 2001

CHAPTER V

POWER: THE INTERNAL FOCUS

Both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were intended to serve as warnings against the danger posed by totalitarian regimes in Europe. It has been said that "*1984* is *Animal Farm* writ large and in purely anthropomorphic terms."[1] The similarities between the two novels are obvious enough. Reduced in scale and magnitude, the allegory of *Animal Farm* represents the betrayal of revolutionary hopes in Soviet history and the setting up of a totalitarian regime the features of which--omnipotent leader, party elite, ideology, propaganda and secret police--are amplified and made more familiar in the human perspective of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In both novels a revolution has preceded the rise of absolute power. In both the masses are burdened with work and kept outside the bounds of power and privilege. The purge figures prominently in the two novels; history is rewritten, objective facts denied; there is coerced participation in "spontaneous" demonstrations of mass support of the regime.

The similarities between these political 'fables' are so close as to obscure the very real differences in the political experience represented. Quite apart from the changes in formal conventions, the most important difference concerns a shift of emphasis from the political consequences of human actions to their psychological causation. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the entire machinery of power is geared to serve not any political purpose but deep, anarchic, aggressive impulses in human nature. The point may be illustrated by a comparison of the power motif represented in the two novels.

As a political allegory, *Animal Farm* is concerned to show how power is abused by the leader of a revolution who is able to make his individual will prevail over the collective, by the use of naked force. It does not raise the question of personal motives. In this sense, the whole issue is treated in political terms. Orwell's explanatory comments on the novel speak of the likelihood of power hunger operating as an unconscious motive in the leader of a conspiratorial revolution. This is not made explicit in the text. Napoleon is inscrutable in his motivation. Shakespeare showed in *Macbeth* what use can be made of the question of motivation in a play of personal ambition. His concern was with the moral question of crime, guilt and punishment. It is significant that when Shakespeare came to deal with the political question of revolution in *Julius Caesar*, he considerably played down the complications of motivation. Similarly, Orwell's concern is with the political consequences of Napoleon's actions. And so, he does not explain the transformation of his hero, the disinterested revolutionist, into a ruthless seeker after power. There is more than a hint of disinterested idealism in Napoleon when, as an agitator, he was engaged in the task of 'educating the masses':

> They did not know when the Rebellion predicted by Major would take place, they had no reason for thinking that it would be within their own life time, but they saw clearly that it was their duty to prepare for it. (28)

With little prospect of gaining power Napoloeon and others had thrown themselves into the task of teaching and organising their comrades. From this exemplary detachment of motivation and action to the first hint of selfish motives

in the leaders, the appropriation of milk and apples, the psychological transition is left unexplained. This is the more striking because Orwell makes this episode the turning point of his story. He likened it to the Kronstadt Mutiny of 1920 in Soviet history when the naval garrison at Kronstadt revolted on account of the hardships resulting from war Communism. It is suggested that the working animals should have challenged, at this very first instance, their masters' claiming of special privileges. They failed to do so. So, the Revolution took the wrong turning.

And so, after abolishing the meeting, Napoleon concentrates all power in his own hands. He is ruthless in the exercise of his power. He is cruel to the working animals whom he burdens with work but feeds on less and less rations. He is cruel to Snowball and to Boxer. He carries out a bloody purge of his 'enemies'. But in none of these cases was the use of power wholly gratuitous. Napoleon could always allege a 'political' motive for his actions. In other words, he was using power as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. The end might be the securing of material resources, or of his position as undisputed ruler. The terror ceases as soon as Napoleon feels secure from threats to his supremacy. Here is a use of power that is dictated by a rationally conceived need; even though arbitrary and therefore objectionable, it is nevertheless bound by the rules of practical intelligence.

Similarly, Napoleon is willing to maintain a formal allegiance to legality and morality until towards the end when he neutralises the 'rule of law' by enunciating the principle: "Some animals are more equal than others." All civilized societies are founded upon the rule of law. Power is to be the enforcer of law, not its source. With his cynical repudiation of the seven commandments by

the absurd enunciation of the new principle, Napoleon made a decisive rejection of the impersonal reason of law. Until then he could not be said to have rejected law and morality in principle, although he surreptitiously changed the commandments to suit his needs. The injunction "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess" may sound ludicrous in the context. But it is not absurd or self-contradictory. And so with other modifications of the commandments.

The 'power model' represented by this fable falls short of full-fledged totalitarianism in maintaining a façade of law and morality and subordinating the use of force to political ends. Napoleon is quite content with the outward conformity of his subjects to his 'laws'. In one respect, however, there is a marked correspondence between the two novels, that is, in tampering with history and objective facts. For the rest, when it came to the writing of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is as though Orwell had made a fresh start in his assault on totalitarianism. While the tyranny allegorised in *Animal Farm* is one that could be translated into patterns of human behaviour and made credible in human terms, that represented by the later novel exceeds all limits of rational political behaviour and could only betoken the rule of a tribe of Nietzschean supermen. To understand the shift in perspective it is necessary to consider the major development in Orwell's thinking on power as represented by his polemical writing in the forties. It will be seen that this new development is a concern with the mechanism of human motives in their influence on political conduct. It is the personal motives of men who exercise arbitrary power and of those intellectuals who support them that now occupy his attention.

Orwell wrote his last novel against a background of new political alignments on the international political scene. Fascism had been decisively defeated; but the totalitarian regime set up by Stalin was firmly in place. The 'cold war' was going on between the two power blocs, the capitalist west and the Communist east. Orwell was intrigued by the fact that nations should keep up belligerence when technological development had made it unnecessary to fight for markets and raw materials, when there was enough wealth to be distributed among people in all the warring nations. He voiced his concern in two articles written in 1946. In the first of these, "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution" he made the point that the real question to be addressed by a political theorist like Burnham is the "psychological cause"[2] of the pursuit of power by political leaders. He argued that Machiavelli's, and by implication his disciple Burnham's, power philosophy was out of date in a world in which mechanisation had eliminated brute labour and privation and brought the socialist ideal of equality nearer than ever. He returned to this theme in his regular "As I Please" column in the *Tribune* a few months later in which he observed that it would be quite useless to engage in practical politics unless one started by "recognising that political behaviour is largely non-rational, that the world is suffering from some kind of mental disease which must be diagnosed before it can be cured." The non-rational behaviour he illustrated as follows:

> It is commonly assumed that what human beings want is to be comfortable. Well, we now have it in our power to be comfortable, as our ancestors had not. Nature may occasionally hit back with an earthquake or a cyclone, but by and large she is beaten. And yet

> exactly at the moment when there is, or could be, plenty of everything for everybody, nearly our whole energies have to be taken up in trying to grab territories, markets and raw materials from one another. Exactly at the moment when wealth might be so generally diffused that no government need fear serious opposition, political liberty is declared to be impossible and half the world is ruled by secret police forces. Exactly at the moment when superstition crumbles and a rational attitude towards the universe becomes feasible, the right to think one's own thoughts is denied as never before. The fact is that human beings only started fighting one another in earnest when there was no longer anything to fight about.[3]

Orwell drew the conclusion that it was not easy to find a direct economic explanation for the power politics going on among the super powers. Desire for pure power seemed to be the motive, not desire for wealth. He thought it odd that this motive should be taken for granted as it naturally was, as a natural instinct like the desire for food. It was no more natural than drinking or gambling. He wondered what was the special quality in modern life that turned the desire to bully others into a major motive of political behaviour.

Another recurring theme in Orwell's political writing in the forties was the growth of the totalitarian outlook among intellectuals. He attributed this to the dehumanising effect of a passionate inclination towards the most abstract notions as guides for life. The intellectual lived in a world of ideas and ideals. He was cut off from the actualities of physical experience. It would be easy for him to

romanticize ideological war and speak lightly of torture, mass deportations, purges and concentration camps. Thus, in "Inside the Whale" (1940) Orwell attacks Auden's attitude to what the latter called "necessary murder," that is, murder committed in a just revolution. In his poem on the Spanish War, Auden had written, concerning the task before a good party man in a time of revolutionary action: Today the deliberate increase in the chances of death,/ The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder. Orwell comments:

> It could only be written by a person to whom murder is at most a *word.* Personally I would not speak so lightly of murder. It so happens that I have seen the bodies of numbers of murdered men--I don't mean killed in the battle, I mean murdered. Therefore I have some conception of what murder means--the terror, the hatred, the howling relatives, the post-mortems, the blood, the smells. To me murder is something to be avoided. So it is to any ordinary person.[4]

Orwell remarks that even the Hitlers and Stalins would not speak of murder so openly. They would disguise it as 'liquidation', or 'elimination' or under some other soothing phrase. Intellectuals like Auden are able to speak in this plain, unsentimental fashion because of their personal immunity from the experience being described:

> Mr. Auden's brand of amoralism is only possible if you are the kind of person who is always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled. So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot. The warmongering to which

> the English intelligentsia gave themselves up in the period 1935-9 was largely based on a sense of personal immunity.[5]

In "The Lion and the Unicorn," another essay written in the same year, Orwell draws a distinction between the common people who, despite losing faith in dogma and revelation, still retain a Christian feeling, and the intelligentsia who are much given to power worship, which he calls the new religion of Europe. Consequently the masses are capable of generosity, fairmindedness and pity while the intellectual has grown callous in feeling and oddly fanatical and cynical in his thinking. In the same essay he speaks of the emotional shallowness of the intellectual who could blow hot and cold on the issue of war depending on which side he is supporting. They could be antifascist one day and defeatist the next. He returns to the attack in "Looking Back on the Spanish War" (1942) where he remarks on "the romantic warmongering stuff our left-wingers were spilling"[6] at the time of the Spanish War. Before the Spanish War these very people had been jeering at the 'glory' of war; they had been committed to debunking the very idea of war; in 1933 they had sniggered at people who prepared to fight for their country. Then, when war broke out against the left-wing government in Spain their attitude changed from "War is hell" to "war is glorious." The change was abrupt with no intervening stage! Such sudden changes of front were to be repeated time and again in the following decade. These intellectuals, Orwell says, are cushioned against the realities of war by money and physical safety. What he finds even more shocking is their willingness to compromise truth in the interests of a party or ideology. He points out that it would be impossible to write a truthful account of the Spanish War from the right or left perspective; all the

relevant records will have been destroyed or falsified by the time the war is over. In the past, when a fact was suppressed or an account of events falsified it was understood that the truth existed and could be discovered with some difficulty. With totalitarianism today, the very idea that truth could be ascertained by dispassionate enquiry is a vain hope. Whereas in the past even the most despotic regimes and their enemies allowed for a large body of facts that neither of them would seriously challenge, it is this same neutral ground of agreement that totalitarianism has destroyed. The intellectual who ought to be unbiased in his pursuit of truth is often found to be blatantly partisan in his judgements on account of fanatical commitment to a certain ideology. Orwell makes the point succinctly in his essay "Arthur Koestler" (1944): "The sin of nearly all left-wingers from 1933 onwards is that they have wanted to be anti-Fascist without being antitotalitarian."[7]

In offering fanatical support to an absolutist ideology, the intellectual is actuated by an unconscious desire for power. A good example of this is to be found in the ideas and attitudes of nationalists. Nationalism as here understood need not refer to devotion to a particular race or country. It might mean the pursuit of any idea, cause or country in the spirit of competitive prestige. The nationalist picks his side, sinks his self in his group identity and finds a vicarious satisfaction for his power impulses in the success of his group: "The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality."[8]

Having picked his side, he would be quite willing to practise the most flagrant dishonesty in promoting his cause:

> Much of the propagandist writing of our time amounts to plain forgery. Material facts are suppressed, dates altered, quotations removed from their context and doctored so as to change their meaning. Events which, it is felt, ought not to have happened are left unmentioned and ultimately denied. ("Notes on Nationalism" 308)

A nationalist may perform the unusual feat of treating the same fact as both true and untrue, known and unknown according to the needs of the moment:

> In nationalist thought there are facts which are both true and untrue, known and unknown. A known fact may be so unbearable that it is habitually pushed aside and not allowed to enter into logical processes, or on the other hand it may enter into every calculation and yet never be admitted as a fact, even in one's own mind. ("Notes on Nationalism" 308)

He seeks to alter the past by creating a fantasy world in which, for instance, the Spanish Armada was a success or the Russian Revolution was put down in 1918. Sealing off one part of the world from another is a way of encouraging indifference to objective truth. It would be impossible to discover with certainty what is happening outside one's closed-in world. All reports would be biased one way or other so that one would have no choice but to cling to one lunatic version of the facts or other. Orwell finds that the English intellectuals are particularly prone to the vices of nationalism. In "The Prevention of Literature" written in

1946, Orwell takes up once again the intellectual's attitude to the question of intellectual freedom which consists in the freedom to report as truthfully as one can what one has seen, heard and felt. In other words, it boils down to the question of truth versus untruth, freedom being freedom to criticise and oppose when official propaganda or policy cannot be squared with the truths of fact or feeling. Orwell notes the curious fact that intellectual freedom is under attack not only from press barons and big business but from those to whom such freedom ought to mean most, that is, from the intellectuals themselves. He is referring to those apologists for totalitarianism who believe that intellectual freedom is undesirable and that honesty is a form of antisocial selfishness. To reveal an embarrassing fact is considered by these apologists 'ideologically criminal', 'inopportune', or 'playing into the hands of the enemy'. Since, to the Catholic and the Communists, there exists a 'revealed' truth the validity of which can never be questioned, any criticism of these beliefs in theory and practice is invariably thought to proceed from the critic's dishonesty and not from any sincerity of conviction. Conversely, it is considered quite proper to alter or deny altogether known facts in favour of one's dogmatic beliefs. Orwell's particular target in this case is the poisonous effect of the Russian myth on English intellectual life. No apologist of Soviet Russia would be quite willing to admit the truth about the purges and deportations, about the role of Trotsky and Stalin in the Russian revolution. An account of the Revolution which extolled Trotsky would be regarded as an undesirable document, better suppressed, whereas one in which a few complimentary references to Stalin are interpolated would be found quite acceptable. It is not the case that organised lying practised in totalitarian

countries is only a temporary expedient adopted for tactical reasons. It is something integral to totalitarianism:

> A totalitarian state is in effect a theocracy, and its ruling caste, in order to keep its position, has to be thought of as infallible. But since, in practice, no one is infallible, it is frequently necessary to rearrange past events in order to show that this or that mistake was not made, or that this or that imaginary triumph actually happened. Then, again, every major change in policy demands a corresponding change of doctrine and a revaluation of prominent historical figures.[9]

Two arguments are offered by intellectuals of totalitarian outlook to justify denial or falsification of facts. In any case, they say, absolute truth is unattainable; so a big lie is no worse than a small lie. Secondly, they point out, that since modern physics has discredited the evidence of the senses, to base one's belief on direct experience is vulgar philistinism. In practice, this means that one may accept the realities of the sense world in everyday living but may feel free to deny them in other contexts:

> A totalitarian society which succeeded in perpetuating itself would probably set us a schizophrenic system of thought, in which the laws of common sense held good in everyday life and in certain exact sciences, but could be disregarded by the politician, the historian, and the sociologist. Already there are countless people who would think it scandalous to falsify a scientific text-book but would see nothing wrong in falsifying an historical fact.[10]

Finally, in "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution" written in the same year as the above essay, again with his eyes on the russophile English intellectuals, Orwell exposed the real motive behind the intellectual's defence of totalitarian ideology:

> It was only *after* the Soviet regime became unmistakably totalitarian that English intellectuals, in large numbers, began to show an interest in it. Burnham, although the English Russophile intelligentsia would repudiate him, is really voicing their secret wish: the wish to destroy the old, equalitarian version of Socialism and usher in a hierarchical society where the intellectual can at last get his hands on the whip.[11]

The above discussion of Orwell's political writing in the forties indicates that the major new development in his thinking on the problem of power is a concern with the psychological causation of the power complex as opposed to factors of social conditioning. This question frequently brought up after the defeat of the fascist regimes, appears to have been prompted by the intellectuals' continuing support of the Stalinist dictatorship. The dictator's lust for power is linked in Orwell's mind with the intellectuals' unconscious admiration for tyrannical rule and successful cruelty. His attack on intellectuals dates back to the early forties. These two topics — dictatorship in the name of ideology and the intellectual's support of it — provide the conceptual framework on which the political satire in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is founded. As Raymond Williams pointed out, a distinctive mark of this satire is the exceptional emphasis on the control of

society through ideas and means of communication, backed up by direct repression and torture but mainly operating through 'thought control'.[12]

The society depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a totalitarian social order developed beyond both capitalism and socialism. Its ideology, Ingsoc, still retains the terms and concepts of socialism but only to repudiate them in practice. The fact is that this new regime is dedicated to the pursuit of power for its own sake, detached from all social ideals. This power is exercised through the tyranny of ideas on the minds of men. Physical torture and death could be averted through abject surrender of one's freedom, but surrender of the consciousness itself cannot be, even in sleep. Even unspoken thoughts are censored. Although the regime is meticulously organised and controlled by Big Brother's calculating intelligence, it exists merely to serve the irrational forces of instincts and the will to power. Since the exercise of power is divorced from social causation and impersonal social goals, the narrative has an internal focus: it is focussed on the inwardness of the experience of power and powerlessness, projected through a total control of individual consciousness exercised by Big Brother's cold calculating intelligence, in obedience to its own irrational impulses.

This internalisation of the narrative interest enables the author to concentrate his satire on the twin targets of his political polemic: the lust for power in the dictator and the totalitarian outlook in the intellectual. O'Brien is at once an intellectual who rules by the power of ideas, backed up by terror and a dictator motivated by the instincts of a brute. It is significant that in Oceania, the tyranny is exercised by the intellectual over other intellectuals. Both the tormenter and the victim are intellectuals. Only in rare cases are individual

proles, suspected of being too clever for a prole, marked out and eliminated. Even then, there is no attempt made to dominate and rule his consciousness.

The truly Swiftian stroke of irony in Orwell's parody of totalitarianism lies in showing not only that the stupendous organisation Oceania rests ultimately on nothing more substantial than irrational instincts and will, but that this same irrationality permeates and controls the working of its ideology, policies and programmes. The irrationality may manifest itself as a blatant contradiction ("Freedom is slavery") or as an absurd disproportion of means to ends (round-the-clock surveilance to detect potential thought-criminals) or as a preposterous claim of omnipotence and infallibility which necessitates the endless writing and rewriting of history and the denial of objective facts. Oceanic society is a monstrous parody of the Hegelian conception of the State. Excess and excrescence is its mode of being; contradiction its mode of understanding and expression.

By making irrationality the chief device of his satire, Orwell no doubt wanted to expose the intellectual pretensions of totalitarian ideologies. Both Nazism and Bolshevism operated as dogmatic self-fulfilling ideologies; the former claimed to follow the laws of life and nature; the latter those of dialectics and economics. The Leader assumed the pose of being merely an interpreter of predictable forces. Hence he could not go wrong. His predictions must come true. If they don't, the offending facts must be denied or reinvented. This tendency to falsify facts was widespread not only among the ruling oligarchy of totalitarian regimes but among their supporters abroad. Orwell made this the particular target of his attack on Leader worship and the dogma of omnipotence

and infallibility. He did so on the confident assumption that whatever else a power-hungry dictator or his apologist might deny, he could not possibly deny a truth of objective reality. Truth must act as a limitation to his pride and power. Not to acknowledge the primacy of truth would be madness. As Bertrand Russell pointed out,

> The concept of 'truth' as something dependent upon facts largely outside human control has been one of the ways in which philosophy hitherto has inculcated the necessary element of humility. When this check upon pride is removed, a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness — the intoxication of power which invaded philosophy with Fichte, and to which modern men, whether philosophers or not, are prone.[13]

It is this madness of power that reigns at the heart of Oceanic society. It is the power of outright denial of a plain fact: "You do not exist" (272). It is the power of affirmation of a plain falsehood:

> Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia. Since the beginning of your life, since the beginning of the Party, since the beginning of history, the war has continued without a break, always the same war. (270)

It is a simple affirmation of power over nature, the power of "the unconditioned idea"[14]: "There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation — anything. I could float off this floor like a soap bubble if I wished to ... We make the laws of Nature" (277).

It is the subjective appropriation of reality, a willed belief: "Reality is inside the skull" (277).

The madness of power may express itself in an impossible feat of 'doublethink' which is the entertaining of two contradictory propositions simultaneously and accepting them both as true. Thus Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia; Oceania has never been at war with Eastasia. The technique of doublethink has to be at once conscious and unconscious, conscious enough to be precise but unconscious enough to avoid the guilt of ever having contradicted oneself. Even in the use of the word 'doublethink' one has to exercise doublethink or else, one would be admitting to oneself that one has tampered with reality. The practice of doublethink is vital to the continuance of the Oceanic system: "Doublethink lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty" (223).

The subtlest practitioners of doublethink are members of the Inner Party. The more intelligent the Party official, the less sane he is. This is exemplified in the attitude of various people to the war that is going on. To the vast majority of subject peoples war is an unmitigated disaster. It brings no improvement in their condition. War hysteria is most intense among the higher echelons of the Party. They believe in world conquest most firmly even when they know this to be quite impossible. Such contradictions are characteristic of the official ideology itself. Ingsoc is a version of socialism; Oceania had established itself on the socialist plank after the Revolution. Technological progress had made it possible to set up an egalitarian state. Instead the Party chose to create a rigidly hierarchical

society and means to perpetuate itself through educational discipline and efficient organisation. It preaches the utmost contempt for the working class while dressing its members in the uniform of manual workers. It undermines family solidarity while calling its Leader by a name that is intended to evoke family loyalty. The contradictions extend even to the names of the four Ministries which are an open profession of cynicism: Minitrue is concerned with the fabrication of lies; Minipax with war; Miniluv with torture; Miniplenty with starving the people. It must be said that in the practice of cynicism and contempt for its people, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* starts where *Animal Farm* leaves off. Napoleon's dictum, "Some animals are more equal than others" looks tame beside the brutal affirmations of the party slogans: War is Peace; Freedom is slavery; Ignorance is strength. Unlike Animalism Ingsoc makes no pretence of being a programme of social amelioration. It declares itself openly as an organisational device, an expression of power:

> These contradictions are not accidental; nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in *doublethink.* For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely. (225)

If the people of Oceania were to inquire too curiously into truth and untruth, freedom and unfreedom, they might grow sceptical and rebellious. A training in doublethink enables them to accept the most blatant contradiction as the plain truth.

Ironically, it is not the subjects alone that have to practise this technique of mental cheating. Big Brother's power is found to depend on a practised self-

deception of this kind. In the past rulers were either too confident of themselves and used force where they should have been lenient. Or they were too lenient where they should have used force. Consequently they fell from power. Big Brother will have to maintain the pretence of infallibility while learning from past mistakes:

> If one is to rule, and to continue ruling, one must be able to dislocate the sense of reality. For the secret of rulership is to combine a belief in one's own infallibility with the power to learn from past mistakes. (224)

Even the waging of war, an overtly political act, is infected with the same unreality and irrational purpose as any other activity in Oceania. There is no economic motive for war. Each of the three Super States is a self-contained economy having enough resources within its borders; production being geared to consumption there is no need to scramble for markets. There is no ideological motive either: the ideologies of the three States are barely distinguishable. Moreover, the ruling groups in all three States know that the war is unwinnable. And yet the Party ideologue is fanatically convinced of the possibility of world conquest. His training in doublethink enables him to make the necessary adjustment between the fact and fiction of war. Moreover, the ruling class has its ulterior motives in waging a permanent war. It enables them to use up part of wealth produced and so keep their own people somewhere near the brink of starvation. To distribute all the wealth produced would raise living standards; the working class, when educated, would develop critical thinking and challenge the role of a master class in an avowedly socialist state. A permanent unwinnable

war is also a way of sealing off one State from another. Each state would then be a self-contained universe in which the citizens will have no way of comparing their living standards with any other system. The ruling class would be able to carry on a systematic perversion of reality without fear of loss of power:. ".. the fact that there *is* no danger of conquest makes possible the denial of reality which is the special feature of Ingsoc and its rival systems of thought" (205). And so, war has changed its conventional character. It is an internal war, not really a war between nations. By being continuous and harmless to the ruling class, it can be equated with peace! War is peace, by the tortuous logic of Ingsoc ideology!

"There is no 'Law', there is only power," Orwell had written in his essay on Rudyard Kipling. "In Oceania there is no law" (220), Goldstein's book informs us. Power is now the source of law, not just its enforcer. Winston opening his diary reflects ironically that his act is not strictly speaking illegal since there is law anyway. And yet, he knows that when detected he is sure to be punished with death or twenty-five years in a forced labour camp. A Party member is not expected to have private emotions. There is no law stating this or any other prohibition. The Party member is expected to know *by* instinct what is forbidden in Oceania. A training in 'crime stop' effectively blocks the tendency to think and act in a manner unacceptable to the Party. Indeed, the whole purpose of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought so that a dangerous thought would be virtually unthinkable. Oceanic society being frankly amoral, words are drained of their moral meanings; 'good' and 'bad' could only refer to physical qualities.

There being no clearly formulated code of behaviour, the elaborate system of espionage and surveillance becomes yet another expression of pure power. A

party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police. The disproportion of means to end is nowhere more striking. The elaborate machinery of power is turned against a population that has made abject submission to the State. The victim is tempted to think the dangerous thought with the fiction of Goldstein and the Brotherhood. The Book attributed to the hated Goldstein appears to have been written by the party itself and is circulated as a bait for potential offenders. People are punished not for actual crimes; it is virtually impossible to commit a crime in a system equipped to detect thoughtcrime. People are punished for potential crimes, sometimes not even for any potential crime. Thus, Winston speculates on the fate of Comrade Withers who has become an 'unperson'. He wonders what possible crime he may have committed to merit this translation from being to non-being:

> Perhaps it was for corruption or incompetence. Perhaps Big Brother was merely getting rid of a too-popular subordinate. Perhaps Withers or someone close to him had been suspected of heretical tendencies. Or perhaps — what was likeliest of all — the thing had simply happened because purges and vaporizations were a necessary part of the mechanics of government. (48)

Ampleforth, Syme and Parsons are all victims of gratuitous terror and violence. As O'Brien explains it, the entire system is driven by the motive of sadistic power-hunger. Terror and violence is not, in Oceania's perverted logic, an abuse of power; it is integral to the system. The victim is destroyed after he has repented, not before. Oceania cannot endure "a flaw in the pattern" (267). The perfect pattern that O'Brien speaks of and which Winston spoils by claiming his right to

criticize and oppose is a sadistic relationship in which the victim grows to love his tormentor. It is a system in which the power relation defies all political logic. Since power is sought for its own sake, since real power lies in making men suffer, the system is designed to ensure a steady supply of victims for the torture to go on for ever. The tormentor needs his victim just as much as the victim desires his freedom: "Goldstein and his heresies will live for ever. Every day, at every moment, they will be defeated, discredited, ridiculed, spat upon — and yet they will always survive" (281). When it comes to sadism as the driving force of all political behaviour, there appears to be no self-deception at all. While torturing his victim, O'Brien shows himself to be in the grip of some demonic passion: Winston notices the "exaltation," the "lunatic intensity" (265) in O'Brien's face as he warms to his work: "the exaltation, the lunatic enthusiasm was still in his face" (268) ... "The faint mad gleam of enthusiasm had comeback into O'Brien's face" (274). It is power as madness: 'lunatic', 'mad' are the epithets used. For once, the torturer himself seems helpless in the grip of a force that operates in obedience to an immanent logic of its own.

O'Brien is a member of a "priestly" class, as he himself put it, who worship in the temple of power: God is power. He has his own kind of asceticism and morality: he lives an austere and hardworking life, is free from avarice and love of luxury; on the other hand, compared to members of the ruling class in the past, O'Brien and his kind are "hungrier for pure power," "more conscious" of what they are doing and "more intent on crushing opposition" (214). This new ruling class is held together "by adherence to a common doctrine" (217). Their power is collective, belonging to the Party, not to individual members in their own

right. The individual merges his self in the Party, even Big Brother is given institutional embodiment. As an individual he is a fiction. The power that is sought is that over human beings, not over dead matter. Even with men, it is power over minds, rather than bodies, that the Party wants to attain. The power structure in Oceania, then, is a relation of oppression and domination between conscious (that is, politically aware) minds; it is based on an ideology, however contradictory its ideas may be. It is a religion of power. At the heart of this evil cult is a "mysticism of cruelty."[15]

Although totalitarian regimes were basically driven by power hunger they presented to the world an attractive facade of ideology allegedly based on logic and scientific method. Orwell satirises both aspects in his novel. In the first two parts the 'logic' and 'scientific' method is in operation, committing barbarous outrages on fact and reason. In part three, the ideology is 'burnt' into the victim's consciousness with the aid of torture and shock therapy. The ulterior motive is openly declared and defended. Orwell shows not only how ideology can be used to undermine issues of truth and justice but also how it brutalises the mind by offering a spurious justification for the use of terror and violence. The Newspeak specialist Syme represents those intellectuals whom Orwell attacked in his essays for the support they gave to ideological tyranny. Syme speaks gloatingly of an execution he witnessed, of the violent convulsions of the body in death agony. This brutalising of normal human instincts is a natural consequence of the tyranny of ideas. It comes of the divorce of ideas and ideals from their natural human context. As Lionel Trilling said in his essay "George Orwell and the Politics of Truth," Marxism sought to liberate the mind from bondage to property

but subjected it to a new bondage, that of the most general ideas and ideals. In dong so, they opened the way to the use of "the old, unabashed, cynical power of force."[16] In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this divorce of ideas from their natural human context expresses itself as a ritualised, regimented pattern of thinking, feeling and action, in which the mind, buffeted about by contradictions, finds no resting place in fact and reason. Against this ghostly ballet of bloodless categories there is placed the natural world, the golden country of Winston's dreams, to which he escapes and which he cherishes as a region beyond manipulation by abstract ideas. The rabbit cropped pasture, the wood, the slow-moving stream with dace swimming in pools under the willows are fresh, beautiful and unorganized.

"Totalitarianism... does not so much promise an age of faith as an age of schizophrenia,"[17] Orwell had written in "The Prevention of Literature." To understand the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* one would have to perform the difficult feat of a schizophrenic alternation between the real and the unreal, the sane and the insane, the factual and the fantastic. The physical environment is all too real: the dingy, decaying city dominated by the towers of the four ministries, the thought police, the posters of Big Brother, the iron voice from the telescreen are all so real; the mental world, on the other hand, is a mere structure of artifice and illusion, subsisting on its own, cut off from the past, from objective fact, from other worlds: "Cut off from contact with the outer world, and with the past, the citizen of Oceania is like a man in the interstellar space, who has no way of knowing which direction is up and which is down" (207). Shakespeare opened his play *Macbeth* with a verse indicating a profound disorder in the moral world. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* belongs to the twentieth century, to an

age that has lost its faith in religious and moral sanctions; its religion is science and the sole refuge for the mind is truth of fact and logic. Orwell's satire announces in its opening pages the stupendous contradictions of Ingsoc, indicating a profound disorder in rational understanding. Its hero is an employee in the Ministry of Truth which is engaged in a systematic manipulation of facts. What baffles Winston is the fact that Oceania should thrive on its contradictions that by sheer force of affirmation, it can make the most palpable absurdities seem real. He opens his diary well knowing that it will be read by none but the thought police. Yet he must write down his thoughts in order to stay sane in a world of triumphant artifice and illusion. However, there being no one to share his thoughts with, and no records with which to check his observations, the nagging doubt remains of the veracity of his perceptions. What if he is wrong in believing against the immense authority of the State, that the past is unalterable? Is it madness on his part to oppose himself against a whole community? Perhaps a mad man is, he tells himself, "only a minority of one" (83). Momentarily, his sense of reality is unhinged. He is troubled by the thought that he may not merely be *alone* in his thinking; he might also be wrong! Under the powerful gaze of Big Brother he yields to metaphysical doubt: "If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable — what then?" (84). Desperately brushing aside his doubt, he affirms the truth of his rational intuition; two plus two make four. And then, when he comes upon Goldstein's Book, and finds that all his inferences about the workings of the Oceanic system are confirmed in it, he murmers with relief: "Sanity is not statistical" (227). In the torture chambers of Miniluv, his sense of reality is once

again challenged, this time with the unanswerable argument of pain and terror: in the first stage of his reintegration he is made to conceive the inconceivable, to deny the truths of commonsense and reason. The issue once again turns on the question of sanity: "Shall I tell you," O'Brien tells Winston, "why we have brought you here? To cure you! To make you sane !" (265).

The upshot of the above discussion has been to show how radical the change of emphasis has been from the political consequences of power mania in the earlier novel to an exploration of psychological motivation in the later. It is true that the first two parts of the novel are concerned with the answer to the question How. Yet the answer is given in psychological terms, in terms of the tyranny of ideas on the mental, moral and emotional life of the individual. The tyranny itself is not described in political or economic terms: the total subordination of all political and economic considerations to sadistic power-hunger is in fact the clue to the working of the Oceanic system. The whole tyranny takes its colour from its irrational motivation, not least in the systematic derangement of the senses and the understanding; it is by the sheer irrationality of every economic and political operation undertaken that the system betrays its "central secret."

> (T)he original motive, the never-questioned instinct that first led to the seizure of power and brought *doublethink*, the Thought Police, continuous warfare and all the other necessary paraphernalia into existence afterwards. (226)

O'Brien is a politician turned psychopath. At Miniluv the political relation has resolved itself into that between torturer and victim. Reason has

given place to will and instincts as a sufficient principle of action and value. How might one account for this change of focus from social purposes and goals to the sphere of individual will and intention? An answer might be sought in the extraordinary perversion of the political ideal represented by modern totalitarian regimes.

The caricature of power as psychosis would appear less far-fetched and fanciful if one considered the inherent affinity of totalitarian ideologies to certain irrationalist trends in modern thought. Until quite modern times, political theory as well as ethical doctrine had proceeded on the assumption that reason ought to prevail over will and emotions. In philosophy this assumption had been challenged by Rousseau; and many philosophers since his day — notably Schopenhauer and Nietzsche — have carried forward the revolt against reason and enthroned will and action as the ultimate self-validating principle in nature and human life. Fascism drew support from this school of thought while its rival ideologies — liberalism and Marxism — remained firmly rooted in the rationalist tradition.

It is important to distinguish further the relation between the dominant ideologies that occupied the political arena in the early decades of the twentieth century. When nazism and fascism came to the fore in the inter-war years, liberal and marxian theories of political organization had already established themselves in parts of Europe and America. Although in practical politics these latter were violently antagonistic they both were rationalistic systems which based their thought on empirical observation and scientific analysis. The liberal ideology was of its nature pluralistic. It favoured representative institutions,

universal suffrage and the resolution of conflicts through negotiation and compromise. Marxism, it must be admitted, relied less on rational argument and persuasion to achieve its aims. Class war and one party dictatorship were to be the agents of the social revolution. Belief in the inevitability of the dialectic of history, in the historical mission of the working class, is thought to validate the use of force in achieving Communism. This gives rise to a curious amalgam of rationalism in theory with power politics in practice. It is easy to see that in the hands of a power-hungry dictator like Stalin, the power politics would get the better of theory and lead to the setting up of a totalitarian regime. The fact remains, however, that marxism and liberalism were the products of abstruce reasoning applied to general principles of law and government as well as the analysis of socio-economic conditions.

By contrast, fascist ideology was markedly anti-rational and anti-scientific. It emphasized will, especially will to power. Certain races and individuals were believed to possess this faculty to an exceptional degree and were therefore thought to be naturally entitled to rule the world.

Not only in their imperialist agenda, but in their origin and development, German national socialism and Italian fascism bore the marks of political adventurism. These movements had been launched without the elaborate campaigning and theoretical groundwork that usually precede the formation of parties. Their leaders had neither the patience nor aptitude for logical analysis or philosophical construction. They regarded themselves as practical men who believed in action, not words. Discipline and sacrifice were to make up for lack of a coherent body of thought or clearly defined programmes. The leaders of these

movements professed a contempt for what they called the barren intellectualism of liberal and marxian theories. As Hitler put it: "... all programmes are vain; the decisive thing is the *human will*, sound vision, manly courage, sincerity of faith, the *inner will* — these are the decisive things."[18]

Not that these movements were quite able to dispense with clearly articulated policies and programmes. Both Mussolini and Hitler were astute organizers and theirs were genuinely popular movements. They knew how to play upon long running passions and prejudices. When a philosophy was needed, it was put together out of ideas that had long been current — nationalism, socialism, antisemitism and the racial myth. The 'philosophy' was frankly opportunist, designed to appeal to the emotions, rather than to a demand for truth or consistency. The propounders often showed a cynical indifference to intellectual honesty. Their claim to be "creative," to be guided by "sound vision" and "inner will" seemed somehow to have absolved them of a troublesome allegiance to factual truth or logical consistency. In their claim that creativeness and vision are antithetical to intelligence and reason, that creativeness was the prerogative of a charismatic Leader, they were able to enlist the support of certain schools of modern thought.

It is curious to note that both fascism and nazism had put themselves forward as socialist regimes. Their proponents claimed to have adapted socialism to nationalist purposes and so to have created "true socialism." Here is a good instance of the way a Leader or leaders mysteriously endowed with 'will' and 'vision' might put quite arbitrary constructions on generally accepted notions. The term nationalism as employed by the Party ideologue did not indicate a

cultural value or respect for other nations; it was only another name for chauvinism and was used as a ploy to draw together different sections of society. Similarly, socialism in this usage had nothing to do with equal distribution of income; it meant state control of production undertaken with the express intention of mobilising the country's resources for war effort. Thus nationalism and socialism were wrenched out of their positive meanings and pressed into the service of an ideology aimed at total control of the state and imperialist expansion. A successful nationalist socialism of this variety must always keep the country ground down by a permanent war effort. Not compromise or concession to the enemy but victory over and annihilation of them was to be the ultimate goal. The ideas of two writers of note who advocated Prussian socialism are illustrative of the irrational elements in this political programme. These were Oswald Spengler and Moeller van den Bruck. Spengler spoke of the ongoing struggle in history between culture areas, these areas being defined variously as Europe in contrast with Asia or the white race in contrast with the coloured races. It was the mission of Germany to defend the frontiers of Europe against Asia and its coloured races. Political democracy was denounced as a degeneration resulting from industrialisation and the debauching of the will to power by intellectualism. It was to be superseded, so he argued, by an era of dictatorial leadership and of competition for world empire. Spengler considered democracy and freedom to be based on the illusion of human rationality; intellectualism was, in his view, a corruption produced by the urban proletariat. Only the peasantry and aristocracy possessed the healthy will to possession and power which have always been the driving forces of history. Men being by nature aggressive and

rapacious like beasts of prey, it was vain to look for justice, happiness and peace; the ideal of physical betterment was decried as uninspiring and preposterous. Moeller van den Bruck preached an idealist national socialism in place of the marxian materialist version. He despised the working class; liberalism he considered to be a false front for plutocracy. A true national socialism, in his view, depended on "the will of a nation that knows what it wills' under the guidance of a great leader who can express the nation's will."[19]

The intellectual roots of this ideology of will and action may now be considered. As already pointed out, these may be traced to the power philosophies of modern times, to the work of Rousseau, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson. What is common to them all is an assertion of subjectivity in opposition to the claims of an external world apprehended by reason and the senses. These philosophies are to be distinguished from thinkers like Machiavelli and Hobbes who consider power as a fundamental political concept but do not devalue reason and observation as avenues to truth. They had erected their systems on rational analysis and empirical commonsense. Desire for power and possession was for them a datum, a starting point for a closely reasoned exposition of the mechanics of successful government. Their political realism does not preclude the pursuit of the common good of security and stability. Hobbes, in particular, emphasizes the role of reason as a regulative power. It orders non-rational motivation towards the attainment of rational self-preservation.

The subjectivist philosophers, on the other hand, extol some such faculty as will, intuition, the emotions as affording a non-rational access to truth. On the

basis of these subjective modes of apprehension they seek to impose an arbitrary interpretation on nature and human life. In this they betray their power impulses, their unwillingness to accept the reality of what is independent of their will, a reality that is embodied for philosophy in the conception of 'truth'.

The first systematic attempt to challenge rule of reason came from Rousseau (1712-78). He propounded a natural theology which dispensed with intellectual arguments for the attainment of the truths of religion. Instead he claimed that the truths of religion are directly apprehended by the emotions. His argument has since been widely accepted by protestant theologians. It is easy to see that the emotional argument can easily be invoked to endorse the wildest sort of wishful thinking; there will be no way of checking the factual truth of emotional apprehension. No ordered social life could be built on this basis. With Rousseau's championship of the passions, the anarchic aspects of individualism came into the open. The cult of the hero as developed by Carlyle and Nietzsche is a predictable consequence of this thought.

With the German philosopher Fichte (1762-1814) subjectivism develops into solipsism. He argued that only the Ego existed, that the objective world was an emanation of the Ego. An argument such as this may not carry much weight with the vast majority of people who follow the empirical common sense in their judgements; but it can have an appeal of a different kind to some people. It can inflate their sense of power over the external world and so appear plausible. This illusion of omnipotence arising from subjective certainty can in the case of a dictator disguise itself as a dogmatic creed which he feels justified in imposing on the world:

> 'I am Wotan!' says Hitler. 'I am Dialectical Materialism!' says Stalin. And since the claim of each is supported by vast resources in the way of armies, aeroplanes, poison gases, and innocent enthusiasts, the madness of both remains unnoticed.[20]

It was Schopenhauer (1788-1860) in the nineteenth century who put forward the doctrine that will is superior to knowledge. The will that he placed above knowledge was a blind cosmic force that works through nature and human life. It is the source of all suffering; its strivings have no fixed goal the attainment of which might bring happiness. Schopenhauer's philosophy therefore issues in pessimism and resignation. The only escape from suffering is to master the individual will through asceticism or the disinterested contemplation of beauty. Schopenhauer's philosophy had a great influence on modern thought in devalueing reason and truth as these are understood in empirical theories of knowledge.

The revolt against reason was carried further by Nietzsche (1844-1900) who called himself the disciple of Schopenhauer. In Schopenhauer, the irrationalism of cosmic striving had issued in the knowledge that the entire phenomenal world is an illusion; that its underlying unity might be grasped by the saint by identifying himself with suffering humanity in the experience of love. Nietzsche, however, broke this linkage of pessimism and asceticism. He wanted to affirm the irrationality that one perceived in life and nature in the ethical sphere as well. If all human striving is ultimately futile, then the mere striving must be accepted as the only value there is: "Not pity and renunciation but the affirmation of life and the will to power are the inner forces of personality."[21] In

Schopenhauer, it is the hero and the saint who are gifted with the vision that tears the veil of Maya and enables them to rise above the life of the vulgar herd. In Nietzsche who despised asceticism it is the hero, and not the saint, who transcends the common world through his indomitable will to power. He called for a transvaluation of all moral values. He advocated the recognition of innate superiority as against equality, the aristocracy of the virile and the strong in place of democracy, hardness and pride in place of christian humility and humanity, the heroic life in place of happiness, creation in place of decadence. This is a philosophy of the superman who tramples down opposition, despises happiness and creates his own rules. For the masses the best course would be to follow a leader. Failing to do this, they would develop a slave morality of pity and renunciation. According to Nietzsche, democracy and Christianity have fostered such a morality.

Certain schools of thought related to science such as pragmatism and positivism have also weakened the claim of reason to be the sole arbiter of truth. Biological sciences have shown that reason, like other mental faculties, has developed through a process of organic evolution; meanwhile, reflection on scientific method has revealed that even the exact sciences are based on assumptions which are not self-evident in any rationalistic sense. The twentieth century French philosopher Bergson developed these criticisms into a systematic critique of the pretensions of scientific intelligence. He maintained that nature is animated by one vast vital impulse which seeks to express itself in ever freer forms against the obstacles of inert matter. He calls this vital impulse life force; its evolution is neither mechanistic nor teleological but creative; that is, it cannot

be predicted by what goes before or what could be interpreted as a goal. This creative evolution of life force can be grasped by intuition in an act of direct apprehension. Scientific reason can only deal with discrete entities and so cannot apprehend natural processes as at once creative and continuous.

George Sorel, the French syndicalist leader, in his *Reflections on Violence* (1908) attempted to adapt Bergson's theory of creative evolution to his revolutionary labour movement. He wanted to purge marxism of its overtly rationalist interpretation of economic change; according to Sorel, the class struggle would come about as manifestations of creative 'violence', and not as a result of political education. A social philosophy is a myth, a vision or a symbol with which to inspire revolutionary action. It would be pointless to inquire into its meaning or practicability. Mussolini reviewed Sorel's book and found himself in agreement with its conception of myth and revolutionary action. In Sorel's theory, the irrationalist tradition from Schopenhauer to Bergson gained social and political expression.

Viewed against this background of intellectual developments in modern thought, Orwell's caricature of Big Brother's regime acquires a certain plausibility as standing in a definite relation to several elements of irrationalist thought. Big Brother is the Nietzschean Leader whom the masses are expected to follow. He is a superman who is above law and morality. He is the sole arbiter of truth and justice. O'Brien is the solipsist of Fichte's theory who assimilates the external world to his consciousness and so claims an absolute control over it. The ideology is a myth of which the sole function is to sustain a totalitarian power structure. The war is fought merely to keep the masses in subjection. Both

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and after them the fascist leaders had expressed contempt for the vulgar herd. As far as the masses are concerned, Big Brother's demonic will might well be a comic force, much like Schopenhauer's cosmic will, that in its blind striving after power, keeps them permanently in subjection.

Considered in relation to their political context, Orwell's satires will be found to represent a truth stranger than fiction.

A characteristic feature of Oceanic Society was the co-existence in it of efficient organisation with extreme individualization. It was a highly atomized society in which the individual while fully involved in social activities felt isolated from his fellows, lived in an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, spied on even by members of his family. Even intimate personal relationships had ceased to exist. To have cut the links between child and parent, man and man, and man and wife was the proud boast of O'Brien. The object of this exercise is so to isolate the individual from all social and personal ties that he will be forced to depend entirely on Big Brother and give him his love and loyalty, total loyalty being the psychological basis of total domination. In conceiving his mass man Orwell had before him the models set up by Stalin and the fascists. The Russian dictator had inherited from his predecessor Lenin a fairly structured society, organized in independent trade unions, nationalities and the new peasant and middle classes that had arisen after the introduction of the New Economic Policy. Lenin knew that his revolution succeeded because he had mobilized a structureless mass population brought into being by Tsarist despotism and a centralised bureaucracy. Such a population favoured sudden and violent changes. To save the revolution, therefore, it was necessary to render the masses innocuous by organising them

under group loyalties of one kind or another. So he seized upon all possible differentiations, social, national, professional that might bring some structure into the population. Stalin, however, had other aims; to save the revolution was not his concern; his aim was to concentrate all power in his hands: "One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship" (276), O'Brien had said. So, all the new classes and nationalities set up by Lenin were in Stalin's way as he prepared the country for totalitarian government. To create an atomized, structureless mass, he set about the destruction of these group loyalties and centres of power. First, he deprived the Soviets of their power. He saw in these soviets an obstacle to absolute rule by Party hierarchy. He achieved his purpose by introducing Bolshevik cells in the Soviets from which alone were appointed the higher functionaries of the central committee. Next he liquidated the classes, starting with the peasant landowners who constituted the most powerful class. He carried out the programme with ruthless efficiency, by artificial famine and mass deportations. The workers were taken on next. They had already been weakened by the State taking over all factories which they had expropriated during the revolution. Further, the introduction of the Stakhanovite system broke up all solidarity and class consciousness among the workers. The process was completed with the introduction of the labour book which converted the Russian worker into a member of a gigantic forced-labour force. Finally Stalin liquidated that bureaucracy that had helped to carry out the previous liquidations. In the great purges of 1936-38, he destroyed the whole administrative and military

aristocracy of the Soviet Society, at the cost of millions of lives. Stalin's policies were no more rational than those of Big Brother:

> None of these immense sacrifices in human life was motivated by a raison d'etat in the old sense of the term. None of the liquidated social strata was hostile to the regime or likely to become hostile in the foreseeable future.[22]

By 1930, all organized opposition to the State had ceased to exist; nor was there any threat of intervention from abroad. The liquidations were also disastrous economically. The consequences of the artificial famine were felt for years throughout the country; the Stakhanov system destroyed teamwork and threw the young industry out of gear while the destruction of the bureaucracy deprived the Russian technical intelligentsia of what little experience and know-how they had gained.

Another consequence of the totalitarian drive was the changes it brought about in specific party policies and programmes. It was found that to secure total loyalty of Party members, fidelity must be emptied of all concrete content. Changes of mind might occur if emphasis was given to particular programmes in the ideology. Every definite political goal that did not advance the claim to world rule was played down or dropped altogether. So Hitler got rid of his party's earlier programme as soon as he won power. Stalin had more trouble with the better worked out Marxian theory. He could not openly ignore or flout the revolutionary goals. However, he achieved the same result as Hitler through the constant zigzag of the Party lines, by the constant reinterpretation and application of Marxism in which the Leader had the last word. Here is the historical basis of

the satire on Big Brother's policy of world conquest, the directing and focussing of attention on the Enemy of the people, Goldstein, and the false war that is going on between the Superstates. While popular feeling is keyed up in the Hate Hour against the Enemy, Party members are assured of phenomenal increases in production of consumption goods by reports put out by Miniplenty. World conquest by the Nazis, and world revolution by the Bolsheviks were professedly distant goals. Yet Party men were exhorted to think in 'continents and centuries' rather than fix their minds on this or that programme.

The three stages of reintegration through which Winston is taken by O'Brien may be paralleled by the three stages of the destruction of the human person carried out by the Nazis in their labs of total domination, that is, the concentration camps. Winston had to go through the stages of learning, understanding and accepting. In the Nazi camps, the first stage of domination was the destruction of the juridical person, a process by which a person is placed outside the protection of law. The next stage was the destruction of the moral person: first, his death is robbed of all social meaning by becoming unknown to the outside world. So the victim feels his death to be utterly meaningless to himself and to others; then his conscience is broken by having to make an impossible moral choice, say, between betraying a friend or his family. The third stage is the destruction of the uniqueness of the individual human person. The victims are herded together like cattle and subjected to the slow death of the most cruel physical torture.

The height of irrationality is reached when a totalitarian power, after it has established itself in the country and has been recognized by all governments,

develops a true secret police as the nucleus of its government and power. The truth is that political security brings into the open the irrational basis of their ideology so that it needs the fiction of external threat and conspiracy content of theory to prevent interior disintegration. The round-the-clock surveillance of his subjects by Big Brother has its basis in this fact.

The purges that figure so prominently in the two satires were based on those that invariably preceded group liquidation in Stalin's mass atomization campaign. Of the importance of the purges in Orwell's writings on power, Isaac Deutscher observes: "In his thoughts he could not . . . get away from the Purges. Directly or indirectly they supplied the subject matter for nearly all that he wrote after his Spanish experience."[23] The purge was a simple and ingenious device by which not only the victim was implicated in the alleged crime but anyone else — friend, acquaintance or even family relations — associated with him was treated as accomplices. And so, as soon as a man was accused, his friends and even close relatives were transformed into his bitterest enemies. O'Brien's boast that the Party has put enmity between parent and child, man and man, man and woman is a reflection of this fact.

The satiric treatment of the Stalinist purges in the two post-war novels testifies to a rare prophetic vision. These purges clearly anticipate other significant purges and deportations that followed during the rule of Stalin and his successors up to Breshnev. The victims included men of rare literary excellence like Boris Pasternak (1880-1960), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (b. 1918) and Andrey Sakharov (1921-1989) Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Pasternak became a celebrity overnight with the publication of *Doctor Zhivago* (1957), an indictment of the

Communist state, which won for him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1958. The violent reaction of the Soviet authorities made Pasternak more famous than what the novel or the Nobel Prize could. Those who read the book clandestinely saw it as a landmark in the censorship-ridden culture they had become used to in the first three decades of the 20th century. Free and outspoken, the novel conveyed an authentic personal experience of the Revolution, sympathetically evoking the atmosphere of the pre-revolutionary Russian culture. A storm of protest broke out. Though Pasternak insisted that his aim was simply to bear witness as an artist to the agony of his time and not to write a political tract, he was attacked as a traitor and condemned in the Press, especially *Pravda* and *Komsomol*, in the most vituperative language. He was expelled from the Writers' Union — the sole means by which Soviet writers could publish and prosper, and threatened with exile and deprivation of citizenship. During the purge trials of the late 1930's, Pasternak too had to fear for his safety. Like Galileo he was forced to recant his errors. He was deprived of his house and his income including royalties amounting to millions of dollars. Pasternak had to withdraw his acceptance of the Nobel Prize. Only after he wrote a letter to Krushchev and two public letters acknowledging his "mistakes" was he allowed to stay in Russia — under close surveillance. He grew sick and died of cancer in 1960. Even after his death, vengeance pursued him and he was buried without a religious funeral. Only in 1988, more than three decades after its world-wide publication, could Pasternak's magnum opus appear in its own country. Though his other works were reprinted, *Doctor Zhivago* could not even be mentioned before the intellectual liberalisation introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev.[24]

Another illustrious victim of the purges anticipated by Orwell was Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a powerful symbol of Russian dissidence. Solzhenitsyn exposed the Soviet Union's system of labour camps in three novels and a heavily documented study which presented a vivid picture of a man maintaining his freedom against the vicious repressions of a totalitarian regime. Solzhenitsyn was arrested first for criticising Stalin's conduct of the War, and sentenced without a trial for eight years (1945-53) of hard labour in various labour camps. Stalin who was making use of the vast spaces of the Soviet Union for labour camps, far outdid even Hitler in the number of prisoners he held. Solzhenitsyn's short novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962) was a scathing attack on Stalin's forced labour camps. The publication of the semi-autobiographical novels *The First Circle* (1968), *The Cancer Ward* (1969) and *The Gulag Archipelago*, meaning "empire of the camps," (1973) and a Press Conference in 1973, criticising the Soviet system of curbing the individual freedom of its citizens and charging the government with threats against him, resulted in his arrest on charges of high treason, and compulsion to leave the country "voluntarily" in 1974.

Solzhenitsyn like his compatriot Andrey Sakharov, who too was exiled on charges of treason, based his hopes on a moral and religious revival among the Russians. He criticized the democratic system believing that it was powerless before totalitarianism, unjust and founded on chance, because it had replaced general concensus with the law of the mathematical majority. Solzhenitsyn proposed "a slow even descent from the cliff of chilling totalitarianism... a slow

and smooth descent via an authoritarian system." The authoritarian system he conceived of was "based on 'love of one's fellow man' with a solid basis in laws that reflect the will of the people, a calm and stable system that would not degenerate into arbitrariness and tyranny." It would renounce "secret trials, psychiatric violence and the brutal immoral trap of the camps," and include toleration of all religions without oppression, "free publication and free literature of art."[25]

Fascism and Stalinism introduced a major discontinuity in the political experience of Western man. Albert Camus's play *Caligula* written in 1939 is in part a response to this political crisis. Camus's psychotic emperor is not just a metaphysical nihilist; he is a man intoxicated by power, a Hitler or Nietzchean superman who feels annoyed by the rivalry of the gods: "For someone who loves power, the rivalry of the gods is rather irksome."[26] He wonders what a god is that he should wish to be his equal? "No it's something higher, far above the gods that I'm aiming at" (48). In his power to destroy what god has created, he claims an easy superiority to the creator: "I live, I kill, I exercise the rapturous power of a destroyer compared with which the power of a creator is merest child's play" (102). To Caligula, power is an end in itself, the be-all and end-all of his philosophy. He wishes men to live by the light of truth, and he has the power to make them do so, the power to enforce his will. So long as life was his, his freedom has no frontier. Humility's the one emotion he may never feel. Caligula is aware that the real tyrant sacrifices a whole nation to his ideal or ambition. He has no ideal, and there is nothing left for him to covet by way of power and glory. He uses this power to compensate the hatred and stupidity of the gods. His

philosophy of life is: "Power to the uttermost; willfulness without end" (80). Caligula claims that he is "the only man on earth to know the secret that power can never be complete without a total self-surrender to the dark impulse of one's destiny" (80-81).

Camus's own explanation of the play's meaning is quite significant:

> Caligula's story is that of a high-minded type of suicide. It is an account of the most human and most tragic of mistakes. Caligula is faithless towards humanity in order to keep faith with himself. He consents to die, having learned that no man can save himself alone... But at least he will have rescued some souls, including his own and that of his friend Scipio from the dreamless sleep of mediocrity.[27]

However, since he claimed that Nazi doctrine responded to nihilism, it is possible to interpret the play as a dramatic symbol, in the person of Caligula himself, of the mad emperor, who derived his political logic from the absurd and plunged the world into violent bloodshed between 1939 and 1945.[28]

O'Brien is Orwell's version of the mad emperor, Hitler and Stalin rolled into one, who claims the power to annihilate reality or master its intractable laws by a simple act of affirmation; he is incarnate will to power. There is a method in his madness. He is no mere accident of history. He is the product of a world that has mastered science but lost its conscience. This world is capable of vast organisation and the efficiency of a machine that is worked by impersonal inhuman forces.

Notes

[1] Frederic Warburg, *George Orwell: The Critical Heritage* 247.

[2] "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution," *CEJL* IV 178.

[3] *CEJL*, IV, 249.

[4] Orwell, "Inside the Whale," *The Penguin Essays* 122.

[5] "Inside the Whale," *The Penguin Essays* 123.

[6] "Looking Back on the Spanish War," *The Penguin Essays* 217.

[7] "Arthur Koestler," *The Penguin Essays* 271.

[8] "Notes on Nationalism," *The Penguin Essays* 300.

[9] "The Prevention of Literature," *The Penguin Essays* 332-333.

[10] "The Prevention of Literature," *The Penguin Essays* 333.

[11] *CEJL*, IV, 179.

[12] Raymond Williams, *Orwell* 99.

[13] Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974) 782.

[14] Lionel Trilling, "George Orwell and the Politics of Truth," *George Orwell: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Raymond Williams (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1974) 74.

[15] From the title of Deutscher's essay on the novel.

[16] Trilling 63.

[17] "The Prevention of Literature," *The Penguin Essays* 336.

[18] Quoted in Sabine 710.

[19] Sabine 716.

[20] Bertrand Russell, *Power* 178.

[21] Sabine 270.

[22] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* 315.

[23] Deutscher, "The Mysticism of Cruelty" 128.

[24] Angela Livingstone, *Doctor Zhivago* Landmarks of World Literature Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 2.

[25] Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr Nekhrich, *Utopia in Power* (London: Hutchinson, 1986) 685.

[26] Albert Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* (London: Penguin, 1984) 74.

* All further quotations are referred by page numbers to this edition.

[27] Quoted in introd. *Caligula and Other Plays*, 22-23.

[28] John Cruickshank, introd. *Caligula and Other Plays*, 21.

CONCLUSION : THE PROBLEM OF POWER

V. J. Sebastian “The theme of power in George Orwell's post-war novels : animal farm and nineteen eighty-four ” Thesis. Department of English , University of Calicut, 2001

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION : THE PROBLEM OF POWER

In his essay "Arthur Koestler," Orwell wrote that the central problem of revolution is how to combine power with righteousness. Power is legitimate when exercised by lawfully constituted authority. A revolution creates a situation which demands an extra-legal settlement but acquires legitimacy by the adherence of vast numbers of people to its ideology. The post-revolutionary society must, like any other, submit to the rule of the impersonal reason of law. The idea that "there is no such thing as law, there is only power" is wholly totalitarian."[1] *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* both depict post-revolutionary societies which exemplify this idea. The divorce between power and legitimacy is carried to absurd extremes. Out of the 'socialist' revolution, there emerges a political system in which the ruler-ruled relationship is little different from that between master and slave.

Like his mentor, Swift, Orwell claimed a satirist's freedom to magnify and distort what he perceived to be the "single hidden truth"[2] about contemporary political experience: the emergence of the desire for power as a native force of motivation, quite distinct from political reasons and economic motives. In *Animal Farm*, this motive force operates as an unstated premise; it is nevertheless felt to be the force that derailed the Revolution and determined the character of the new tyranny. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, desire for pure power is explicitly stated and made central to the social dynamic. Here the conception of power is developed beyond ideological limits: power is now perceived as a self-sufficient end; the

desire for it is presented as a brute fact of human psychology not to be accounted for in terms of an externalist, mechanistic explanation of human behaviour.

The terrifying vision of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is of the essential evil of power detached from all social ideals. Although only five years separate the writing of this novel from that of *Animal Farm,* the shift of perspective on the problem of power is immediately striking. From a conception of power as a means to realising political and social objectives to the pursuit of power as an end in itself, from power politics to the psychology of power, from a revolutionist's concern with impersonal social forces to investigation of the relation between rational and affective behaviour, the change of perspective is indicative of a growing concern with the triumph of irrational forces in politics. Fascism had explicitly taken its stand on the inequality of man and had devised a racial myth out of pseudo-scientific generalizations to support its claims. As was pointed out earlier, the fascist ideologue was quite frank about the role of 'myth' in inspiring the masses to political action. That the fascists should attempt to maintain their position against all evidence of science and history and pursue power with a demonic will was only to be expected. When fascism had been defeated there still remained the Stalinist threat to political democracy and this was not so easily explained. Orwell had given his allegiance to socialism which promised to abolish class and privilege and bring forth freedom and equality. It had been hoped that when capitalism had been defeated, socialism would follow: men would at last be free and equal. However, the Stalinist version of socialism, allegedly based on a rigorous scientific analysis of history and society, had betrayed this hope. Stalin had achieved centralised ownership of production but discarded the ideals of

equalisation of income, political democracy and abolition of privilege. In "The Lion and the Unicorn", Orwell wrote:

> Centralised ownership has very little meaning unless the mass of the people are living roughly upon an equal level, and have some kind of control over the government. 'The State' may come to mean no more than a self-elected political party, and oligarchy and privilege can return, based on *power rather than the money* (emphasis added).[3]

In his susceptibility to power hunger, Stalin appears to be no different from Hitler. The Big Brother of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a composite figure, Hitler and Stalin rolled into one. In his drive for world domination, he typifies leaders of western democracies as well. The ideology of Oceania, Ingsoc, Eurasia's Bolshevism and Eastasia's Death-worship, all have a common inspiration in power mania.

In throwing the emphasis on power rather than money, Orwell has moved beyond the conventional Marxian analysis of historical development. Persons and events and not material conditions are to provide the energy that would shape the course of history. By a curious anomaly, Orwell has attributed the personal trait of power urge to a collectivity rather than to a single individual. Big Brother is the embodiment of the Party. It is as a member of the Party that O'Brien exercises his power. Evidently Orwell conceives future power centres to consist in self-perpetuating oligarchies. The individual dies; the Party endures. This does not preclude the individual feeling and being moved by an impersonal ardour. In

"Notes on Nationalism", Orwell showed how the individual might feel a vicarious sense of power by merging his individuality in a group identity.

Critics on the left have taken strong exception to Orwell's reading of political behaviour in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. They do accept the irrational side of totalitarianism. But to reduce all political behaviour to the pursuit of power is, in their view, to repudiate the value of critical discrimination and historical understanding. The presumption of sadistic power-hunger is itself an irrational assumption. To adopt this view is to be guilty of imitative fallacy. Isaac Deutscher remarks:

> To be sure, the events were highly 'irrational'; but he who because of this treats them irrationally is very much like the psychiatrist whose mind becomes unhinged by dwelling too closely with insanity.[4]

According to Deutscher, Orwell was impelled to this conclusion by the spectacle of the Stalinist Purges of 1936-38 the repercussions of which he had himself experienced in Spain. This even had a traumatic effect on Orwell. A rationalist and humanist, he was at a loss to fit this event into the pattern of scientific Marxism. Deutscher argues that Orwell like so many others quite misunderstood the nature of marxist philosophy which is not at all rationalist. A true Marxist, on this view, would be better prepared to meet the phenomenon of the purges than a socialist like Orwell. He would certainly be upset and mortified, but would not be shaken in his world view. Orwell's response, on the other hand, was to surrender his critical faculties in the face of this deeply disturbing experience and plump for "the oldest, the most banal, the most abstract, the most metaphysical,

and the most barren of all generalizations ... 'sadistic power-hunger.' " Deutscher explains that Orwell is unable to grasp political events realistically in their complex historical context.

> To analyse a complicated social background, to try and unravel tangles of political motives, calculations, fears and suspicions, and to discern the compulsion of circumstances behind *their* action was beyond him ("The Mysticism of Cruelty" 131).

Raymond Williams similarly attacks the "terrifying irrationalism of the climax of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*"[5] because its reductionist assumption makes it impossible to discriminate between one political system and another. Orwell, he points out, had criticized Burnham for adopting the view he himself puts forward in the novel. The presumption of pursuit of power for its own sake implies a cancellation of all links between power and policy. Both Williams and Deutscher emphasize the strong vein of pessimism that makes *Nineteen Eighty-Four* less of a warning than a prophecy.

Right-wing critics such as Julian Symons, Daniel Bell, Golo Mann and Edward Crankshaw endorse the moral and psychological assumptions behind Orwell's reading of the power drive, the assumption of the essential selfishness of human motives. According to Crankshaw, Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* to expose human brutality and perfidy, but he did not explain it. The explanation came in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In that novel, he confronted the larger questions of human obliquity and "the tragic poetry of human aspiration"[6] which he had long excluded from his consciousness. Crankshaw rejects the view that Orwell lacked a poetic conception of life, that his view was exclusively political. The man who

extolled the integrity and heroism of the Italian soldier he met in Spain ("No bomb that ever burst/Shatters the crystal spirit") was certainly aware of the tragic sense of life, of the intense life of emotions and the will.

The truth of the matter is that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* brings into the open a deep discord in Orwell's thinking on power hints of which might be gathered, outside the fiction, from his essays and reviews. As a socialist, he was committed to the primacy of material progress as holding the key to moral progress. He could not possibly countenance "the charge of heart" solution proposed by moralists. However, with the emergence of fascism and, still more, with the totalitarian perversion of socialism, he grew continually more sceptical of the adequacy of an exclusively mechanistic conception of human nature and motives. Material progress he still regarded as a necessary though not sufficient condition of a decent life. It needed to be supplemented by a psychological readjustment. There is now a question of priority: which of the two — material progress or moral betterment — must come first? Writing in the *Observer* in 1945, Orwell remarked: "The humanist has to decide whether what is needed is re-education and a 'change of heart' or whether the indispensable first step is the abolition of poverty."[7]

It is worth recalling the non-committal position Orwell had earlier taken in the Dickens essay of 1939 between the moral and revolutionary approaches to social questions. With the experience of the totalitarian abuse of power before him he has come round to accepting the much despised change of heart solution as a necessary complement to material progress. It is as though he had travelled the long road from political idealism to political realism, from exclusive concern

with changing the politico-economic structure of society to the realisation that man does not live by bread alone. The last pages of his last novel record the emotional culmination of a long-growing scepticism about the presumed sufficiency of a materialist interpretation of human history and society.

It is argued in this study that this scepticism finds expression in the novels in the pronounced ambivalence of the narrative's exploration of the power motive. Orwell claimed that he had intended his satires as warnings, not as prophecies. Too often, however, they have been read as prophecies, as a despairing prognostication of the fate of revolutions. The tyranny of *Animal Farm* and of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are presumably for ever. Neither the lower animals in the one nor the proles in the other could ever seriously threaten the rule of their masters. Boxer, the strongest of the animals, is too stupid to understand his subjection. The wisest among them, Benjamin, is a disillusioned cynic who does not believe in the efficacy of political action. The lower animals themselves do not want political rights but only more rations and a little less work. In any case, these working animals are no match for their masters with their superior intelligence and organisation. Similarly, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the hope of a counter revolution is undercut by serious misgivings every time it is mentioned. Winston writes in his diary "If there is hope . . . it lies in the proles" (72). He reflects on the enormous power that lies dormant in those swarming disregarded masses that make up eighty per cent of Oceania's population. Walking through a crowded street in the proles quarters he hears a tremendous shout from a side-street, mistakes it for the start of a riot but is disappointed to find that it was only women jostling around a stall selling cheap saucepans. The Party has seen to it

that the working class will always be preoccupied with the bare necessaries of life, that their minds will run on thoughts of cheap sex and gambling. The hope of the counter-revolution is caught in a vicious circle: "Until (the proles) become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious" (74). The pessimism runs through the entire narrative: "If there is hope' he had written in the diary, 'it lies in the proles'. The words kept coming back to him, statement of a mystical truth and a palpable absurdity" (85). The despairing note returns a few pages later:

> But if there was hope, it lay in the proles. You had to cling on to that. When you put it in words it sounded reasonable: it was when you looked at the human beings passing you on the pavement that it became an act of faith. (89)

And finally, in the torture scene, O'Brien tells Winston bluntly to abandon the hope: "The proletarians will never revolt, not in a thousand years or a million... There is no way in which the Party can be overthrown. The rule of the Party is for ever." (274)

Thus the relentless thrust of the narrative is towards the tragic realisation that totalitarian rule has come to stay, that the three power-hungry oligarchies now ruling the world have between them decided on a game plan the objective of which is to maintain the status quo.

The fact is that Orwell was torn between his socialist conviction of the need for radical social change and the spectacle of the Russian revolution going the fascist way; he was torn between faith in revolutionary social change and the moralist's change of heart solution. This ambivalence carries over into the

narrative in the two novels turning what was intended as a warning into a lament on the fate of revolutions. By the terms of the fiction, all revolutions aimed at socialist reconstruction are doomed to fail. And this failure is seen to spring from the inherent selfishness of human motives.

It has been suggested that Orwell's socialism with its strong distrust of the power impulse is indistinguishable from anarchism, his most powerful novel being an indictment of a centralised government controlling the lives of its citizens. V.S. Pritchet writes: "There can hardly have been a more belligerent and yet more pessimistic Socialist; indeed his Socialism became anarchism."[8] Although Stephen Spender would not call Orwell a pessimist, he, too, notices the strange admixture of socialism and anarchism in his political thinking: "I think that Orwell was a socialist who wanted people both to live socialist lives and to live socialist lives in a kind of socialist, anarchist society."[9]

Isaac Deutscher remarks that events of the Second World War seemed to confirm Orwell in his deep-rooted suspicion of transactions between the great powers. Behind what is called reasons of state he seemed to suspect some ulterior motive or other, for at heart he "was a simple-minded anarchist."[10]

It is doubtful if the label of anarchist could be made to fit Orwell's brand of political thought. To be sure he tended to see human relations in terms of power relations. He set himself to oppose every form of "dominion of man over man". Relentlessly he campaigned against exercise of force and victimization not only under absolute despotisms and within the Empire but closer to home under constituted authority, within the educational establishment, the Church and

between social classes. He extended the conception of power beyond politics, into sports, popular literature, emotional relationships, man's dealings with animals and with the material environment, even to the practice of asceticism. Serious sport, to him, was a means of venting one's aggressive, sadistic instincts; "it's war minus the shooting". Popular literature, he observes, panders to the taste for bullying; in his essay "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool" he points to the ascetic's desire for power which he will not renounce even when he parts with his material possessions. In the same essay he refers to the emotional pressure exerted on the child by an affectionate mother which, he says, is no less tyrannical than the power exerted by a father who does not spare the rod. Even the pacifist who preaches peace against war, and the anarchist who considers all power as inherently evil are, Orwell observes, capable of spiritual bullying. In "Reflections on Gandhi" he wonders whether the sage was moved by personal vanity in his "consciousness of himself as a humble, naked old man, sitting on a praying-mat and shaking empires by sheer spiritual power."[11] In "Some Thoughts on the Common Toad" Orwell returns to a theme he had handled with especial emphasis in *Coming Up for Air*: man's relation to Nature. To be able to find delight in simple natural things — trees, fishes, butterflies, toads — is a refreshing liberating experience, an escape from the pressures of a mechanised, regimented life. In making this escape Winston and George Bowling know that theirs is a doomed adventure, that the whole world of convention and organized power will rise up to prevent it. The gharry pony driven by the rickshaw wallah, the elephant Orwell was compelled to shoot, the horse which he saw beaten by a boy in the country lane — all of them were victims of human domination over

animal lives. He dreaded scientific technique not just because it would impoverish human life by making manual work no longer necessary; he feared the power that technology would put into the hands of the dictator. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the only scientific inventions mentioned are instruments of power and domination, the telescreen, the most powerful of them all.

Much as he distrusted power and its manifestation in every sphere of life, Orwell could not properly be called an anarchist. Even though his last two novels leave no door open for the trapped victim, outside the fiction, Orwell was no mere phantasist. He had a very clear conception of the kind of revolution which one might support and which might produce a modest measure of success. A socialist like Arthur Koestler, Orwell noted, had given himself upto conservative pessimism because he believed in the Earthly Paradise and had expected too much of a revolution. The aim of Socialism, Orwell argues, is not to make the world perfect, but to make it better. All revolutions are failures in the absolute sense; but some revolutions may achieve a modest amelioration of the social condition. As a democratic socialist, Orwell could not possibly endorse a violent, conspiratorial revolution. His ideal was a working class revolution, a genuine mass movement,

> A movement which is genuinely revolutionary i.e., willing to make drastic changes and use violence if necessary, but which does not lose touch, as Communism and Fascism have done, with the essential values of democracy.[12]

In "The Lion and the Unicorn" he emphasized further the aims and methods of a true revolution:

> Revolution does not mean red flags and street fighting; it means a fundamental shift of power. Whether it happens with or without bloodshed is largely an accident of time and place. Not does it mean the dictatorship of a single class... What is wanted is a conscious open revolt by ordinary people against inefficiency, class privilege and the rule of the old. It is not primarily a question of change of government.[13]

The above extract shows that Orwell's conception of revolution was quite compatible with conventional notions of law and government. The man who could write in this way of social reconstruction can hardly be called an anarchist of the individual or communitarian variety.

Orwell's writings leave behind the record of a long, persistent often conscience-stricken engagement with the problem of power which culminates in the nightmare vision of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The post-war novels make power and its abuse their leitmotif and force upon the reader conclusions about political activity that are hardly reassuring. Was Orwell over-reacting to the threat of totalitarianism? He anticipated this objection in an essay written as far back as 1942:

> But is it perhaps childish or morbid to terrify oneself with visions of a totalitarian future? Before writing off the totalitarian world as a nightmare that can't come true just remember that in 1925 the world of today would have seemed a nightmare that couldn't come true.[14]

His generation, Orwell says, could not adopt the attitude of indifference to world events of a generation earlier:

> (W)e have developed a sort of compunction which our grandfathers did not have, an awareness of the enormous injustice and misery of the world, and a guilt-stricken feeling that one ought to be doing something about it, which makes a purely aesthetic attitude towards life impossible.[15]

As a writer of the thirties who lived through the stormy days of the second world war Orwell threw himself into the task of defending freedom and justice, saw his own country as a little island of liberty and justice not yet subjected to total domination but whose intelligentsia seemed to him to be fatally inclined to the totalitarian outlook. The impassioned moral fervour of his political polemic and the note of desperation and bitter irony in his political fables are illustrative of the profound social commitment that sets the thirties' writer apart from writers like Joyce and Henry James.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine the theme of power in Orwell's post-war novels and to show that the conception of political power and its imaginative projection in these novels raise issues that cast doubt on the presumed adequacy of political solution to social questions. Account has to be taken not only of impersonal social forces but of the imponderables of human will, imagination and the emotions. Like Machiavelli and Hobbes before him, but with more radical consequences than either of them was willing to allow, Orwell traces all political action to the individual's volitional drive, his desire for pure power. As Orwell pointed out in "Prophecies of Fascism", the emergence of a man like Hitler

who believes in his own destiny is not accounted for by the economic laws of history. To admit human will and emotions into the discussion is to accept, along with the political solution, the competing claims of the moral ('change of heart') approach. True, Orwell does not raise the moral issue directly in the novels. Instead, he employs the ironist's method of exposing the brutal gluttony of power and the conscious cynicism that accompanies it, that is to say, the monstrous immorality of power pursued for its own sake.

Orwell considers two ways of taming power: one political, the other moral. The solution in practical politics is to hold fast to the democratic principle the essential point of which is not to entrust too much power to anyone for too long. On the moral front Orwell is faced with the secular humanist's dilemma of proposing an ascetic self-restraint without the sanction of a transcendent value. Western civilization, according to Orwell, had been disciplined by its religious faith, in particular, by the belief in individual immortality. With the decay of Christian belief and the loss of faith in personal survival, it became pointless to endure failure and oppression in the hope of a fair reward in the hereafter. Orwell sees a direct connection between the rise of power worship in modern times and the decay of Christian faith. Modern man must come to terms with the fact that life here and now is inherently miserable, that it is the only life there is, and having recognised this so order his affairs as not to endanger the common good while pursuing his personal interests:

> The real problem is how to restore the religious attitude while accepting death as final. Men can only be happy when they do not assume that the object of life is happiness[16]

Notes

[1] "The Lion and the Unicorn," *The Penguin Essays* 144.

[2] "Politics vs Literature," *The Penguin Essays* 386.

[3] "The Lion and the Unicorn," *The Penguin Essays* 161.

[4] "The Mysticism of Cruelty," *George Orwell: A Collection of Critical Essays* 130.

[5] Raymond Williams, *Orwell* 124.

[6] "Orwell and Communism," *The World of George Orwell* 124.

[7] Cited in John Atkins, *George Orwell: A Literary Study* 27.

[8] *George Orwell: The Critical Heritage* 294.

[9] "Stephen Spender Recalls," *Orwell Remembered*, by Audrey Coppard and Bernard Crick (London: Ariel Books, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1984) 266.

[10] "The Mysticism of Cruelty," 130.

[11] "Reflections on Gandhi," *The Penguin Essays* 459.

[12] From Orwell's Review of Borkenau's *The Communist International* cited by Edward Crankshaw "Orwell and Communism," *The World of George Orwell* 121.

[13] "The Lion and the Unicorn" *The Penguin Essays* 166.

[14] "Looking Back on the Spanish War," *The Penguin Essays* 225.

[15] "Writers and Leviathan," *The Penguin Essays* 454.

[16] "Arthur Koestler," *The Penguin Essays* 277.

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