ORWELL AND THE ROAD TO SERVITUDE

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ABSTRACT

This study arises from an interest in the relationship between the creative writer and the study of politics. It examines George Orwell's view of those conditions which could lead to a world dominated by super-states. In such a world the majority is subservient to a minority who rule by deception and terror. This is the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. As well as focusing upon Orwell's novels the study draws heavily on his essays, journalism and semi-documentary writings.

In addition to showing how a creative writer can offer an added perspective to the academic student of politics, the study aims to provide a better understanding of Orwell the man as well as the writer and political commentator. In examining Orwell's developing view of those conditions which may lead to servitude I have approached his works thematically rather than in order of publication dates, though for the most part these coincide. The major themes considered are: (1) imperialism at the local level, (2) unemployment, (3) the stultifying power of political orthodoxy, and (4) the ever increasing tendency of the state and society to smother the autonomous individual. These themes are dealt with in four corresponding sections: (1) Colonial Conditions - based on Orwell's experience in Burma, (2) Indigenous Conditions - based on Orwell's experience in Britain and Paris, (3) Foreign Conditions - based on Orwell's experience in Spain, and (4) Global Conditions - dealing with Orwell's vision of totalitarianism based on all his earlier experiences.

The conclusions of the thesis are that (1) Orwell was a better social critic than political thinker, (2) *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as the culmination of all his major themes is more a warning against a state of mind than a prophecy of a political system, and (3) contrary to widely
held opinion, Orwell, though pessimistic, continued to believe in the viability of democratic socialism.
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INTRODUCTION

This study examines George Orwell's view of those conditions which could lead to a world dominated by totalitarian super-states. Herein most people are subservient to a minority who rule by deception and terror. Such is the world of Nineteen Eighty-Four.

I hope to show that a creative writer can offer an added perspective for the academic student of politics. Because Orwell's life and work are intertwined, it is also my hope that a better understanding of Orwell the man, as well as the writer and political commentator, will emerge.

I have not assumed that the reader is especially familiar with Orwell's works or is aware that his writing so often reflects his firsthand experiences as policeman, bookseller, tramp, critic, journalist and soldier.

In his autobiographical piece, Why I Write (1946), Orwell stated that "In a peaceful age I might have written ornate or merely descriptive books, and might have remained almost unaware of my political loyalties." But Orwell (1903-1950) did not live in a peaceful age. His books were unapologetic attacks upon what he saw as the major injustices of his time, mainly (1) imperialism, (2) unemployment, (3) the stultifying power of political orthodoxy, and (4) the ever-increasing tendency of the state and society to smother the autonomous individual.

Orwell's experience of these "injustices," whether in Burma (1922-27), England (1927-36, 1937-50), or Spain (1936-37), suggests the following divisions for this study: (1) Colonial Conditions - dealing with imperialism at the local level as experienced by Orwell in Burma where he served for five years as an imperial policeman; (2) Indigenous Conditions - dealing largely with unemployment and class differences in
Britain, based on his experiences in London (and Paris); (3) Foreign Conditions - dealing with the betrayal, largely through Soviet intervention, of the aspirations of sections of the Spanish people in the Spanish Civil War; and (4) Global Conditions - dealing with Orwell's vision of the totalitarian state, which grew out of his "nightmare" experiences in Spain and his first hand knowledge of the victims of unemployment and the local administrators of imperialism in Burma.

In examining Orwell's developing view of those conditions which may lead to servitude, I have approached this study thematically rather than in order of publication dates, even though for the most part the above divisions follow his life chronologically. Accordingly, I have placed the published novels and the semi-documentaries Down and Out in Paris and London, Homage to Catalonia and The Road to Wigan Pier in the following categories: (1) Colonial conditions - Burmese Days (1934); (2) Indigenous conditions - Down and Out in Paris and London (1933), A Clergyman's Daughter (1935), Keep the Aspidistra Flying (1936), The Road to Wigan Pier (1937), and Coming Up For Air (1939); (3) Foreign conditions - Homage to Catalonia (1938); and (4) Global conditions - Animal Farm (1945) and Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949).

In pursuing this thematic treatment the attention given to the novels reflects my primary interest in the relationship between fiction and politics. One cannot afford to ignore, however, the richness of Orwell's varied and voluminous journalism and other non-fiction. Consequently I have also drawn on the four volumes of Orwell's Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters (edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus) and on material from the Orwell archive at University College, London. The quality and quantity of this archival material, most of it copies of Orwell's journalism not yet
reprinted, seriously challenges Mrs. Orwell's claim that the "journalism" which she and Mr. Ian Angus "have not printed" in the four volumes of *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters" is purely ephemeral." It is true, as she says, that Orwell often returned to favourite topics in his journalism but as she also notes "he tended to discuss the same argument from different aspects and in different ways." I believe that this study will show how these "different aspects" give us a fuller understanding of his work.

While researching in London I became more aware of Orwell having had two different audiences. One of these knew of George Orwell the journalist who wrote book and film reviews in the late thirties and particularly in the forties for periodicals such as the *Adelphi*, *Horizon*, *Tribune*, and the *Observer* for which he was also a war correspondent. The second audience is made up of those who nod their head knowingly and can readily recite the litany of "Big Brother," "Newspeak" and "Doublethink," so familiar do they seem with the novelist author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Of course there is some overlapping of audiences, particularly now that four volumes of Orwell's *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* have been published; but basically I believe the two audiences remain separate. In this study Orwell the journalist and Orwell the novelist are brought closer together.

Finally, the word "servitude" is used herein simply to denote forced-labour and subservience of the type envisaged in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, that is, compulsion under fear of death to accept completely the dictates and political orthodoxy of the more privileged and ruling class.

In any event this study will not concern itself with a word count of Orwell's proper or improper use of the word "servitude" but rather with
his description of those conditions which he believed would lead to the cruel, politically and socially enforced slavery of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This would be a state which, despite its guarantee of subsistence, Orwell believed was a thoroughly evil arrangement. Herein the elite, or "Inner Party," hammer down the mass, many of the latter acquiescing in the abuse of power because they have come to accept that might is right. It is Orwell's concern with the corrupting influence of power, expressed in his belief that man cannot be at once powerful and moral, which smolders beneath the surface of his earlier novels and dominates his later writings. This pervasive theme culminates in the slave state of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where power is God and is officially pursued, not as a means of improving man's condition, but as an end in itself. In such a state independent thought is under continuous attack and the autonomous individual is doomed to extinction.
Notes to Introduction


3. As *A Clergyman's Daughter*, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* and *Coming Up For Air* are more or less fictionalized versions of the inequalities recorded in *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, most emphasis will be placed upon the latter two books.


SECTION I - COLONIAL CONDITIONS

Chapter I - Background.

Eric Blair (Orwell's real name) was born in 1903 at Motihari in India where his father, Richard Blair, worked in the Opium Department of the Indian Civil Service. He was the second of three children, one sister being five years older than he and another sister five years younger. At one time his maternal grandfather had been both a teak merchant and a rice grower in Burma. In 1907, when he got leave, Richard Blair took his family back to England. When he returned to India some months later his wife, Ida, and the children stayed on at Henley-on-Thames. Towards the end of 1911, the first year of George V's reign and the year of Richard Blair's final return to England, Mrs. Blair, on the advice of ex-Anglo-Indians, sent her son, now eight years old, to St. Cyprian's, a private school situated in Sussex. One of the attractions of the school was that its "Old Boys" often ended up in Eton, Harrow, or one of the other socially and academically prestigious public schools.¹

His "one close friend"² at St. Cyprian's, Cyril Connolly, who would later refer to the shy young Blair as "one of those boys who seem born old,"³ describes St. Cyprian's.

The school was typical of England before the last war; it was worldly and worshipped success, political and social; though Spartan, the death-rate was low, for it was well run and based on that stoicism which characterized the English governing class and which has since been underestimated. "Character, character, character," was the message which emerged when we rattled the radiators or the fence round the playing fields and it reverberated from the rifles in the armoury, the bullets on the miniature range, the saw in the carpenter's shop and the hoofs of the ponies on their trot to the Downs.

Not once or twice in our rough island's story,
The path of duty was the way to glory.

was the lesson we had to learn and there were other sacred messages from the poets of the private schools: Kipling or Newbolt.

Muscle-bound with character the alumni of St. Wulfric's [St.
Cyprian's] would pass on to the best public schools, cleaning up all houses with a doubtful tone, reporting their best friends for homosexuality and seeing them expelled, winning athletic distinctions — for the house rather than themselves, for the school rather than the house, and prizes and scholarships and shooting competitions as well — and then find their vocation in India, Burma, Nigeria and the Sudan, administering with Roman justice those natives for whom the final profligate overflow of Wulfrician character was all the time predestined.4

Though critical of the school, Connolly concludes that St. Cyprian's was "a well-run and vigorous example which did me a world of good." Orwell, with good reason, remained convinced to the end of his life that the school did him little but harm.5 He would recall how he had been beaten and humiliated as an eight-year old for the "disgusting crime" of bed wetting, and how capricious cruelty was an integral part of the learning process of the "poorer" boys who, like himself, belonged to the lowest of the school's "castes" and were often further humiliated over clothes and petty possessions.6 Unlike Connolly and the other well-to-do boys, Blair had come from a relatively poor Anglo-Indian middle class family. They could not afford to pay the full fees and it was arranged that young Blair would be accepted as a reduced fee student. To make up for this it was hoped that he would work hard and bring honour to St. Cyprian's by winning a scholarship to one of the renowned public schools. The "secret" of his reduced fee status was frequently thrown at him by the headmaster who, proclaiming that "You are living on my bounty," joined the headmistress in never letting young Blair forget that as "one of the poor but 'clever' boys" he was there under sufferance. The effect of all this on Blair was to produce in him a resentful but fearful submissiveness:

Whenever one had the chance to suck up, one did suck up...I accepted the codes that I found in being. Once, towards the end of my time, I even sneaked to Brown [deputy headmaster] about a suspected case of homosexuality. I did not know very well what homosexuality was, but I knew that it happened and was bad, and that this was one of
the contexts in which it was proper to sneak. Brown told me I was "a good fellow", which made me feel horribly ashamed. Before Flip [headmistress] one seemed as helpless as a snake before the snake-charmer. She had a hardly-varying vocabulary of praise and abuse, a whole series of set phrases, each of which promptly called forth the appropriate response. There was "Buck up, old chap!", which inspired one to paroxysms of energy; there was "don't be such a fool!" (or, "It's pathetic, isn't it?"), which made one feel a born idiot; and there was "It isn't very straight of you, is it?", which always brought one to the brink of tears. And yet all the while, at the middle of one's heart, there seemed to stand an incorruptible inner self who knew that whatever one did - whether one laughed or snivelled or went into frenzies of gratitude for small favours - one's only true feeling was hatred.

The result was that Blair seldom if ever rebelled. His burning resentment of the pressure to conform would last all his adult life. It would infuse his memories of his early school days with an extraordinary and intense bitterness, and would help shape his major work. Made to feel different as a way of forcing him to work especially hard in the scholarship class, he became convinced that according to the "armies of unalterable law"...The schoolmasters with their canes, the millionaires with their Scottish castles, the athletes with their curly hair...I was damned. I had no money, I was weak, I was unpopular, I had a chronic cough, I was cowardly, I smelt. This picture, I should add, was not altogether fanciful. I was an unattractive boy. St. Cyprian's soon made me so, even if I had not been so before. But a child's belief in its own shortcomings is not much influenced by facts. I believed, for example, that I "smelt", but this was based simply on general probability. It was notorious that disagreeable people smelt, and therefore presumably I did so too. Again, until after I had left school for good I continued to believe that I was preternaturally ugly. It was what my schoolfellows had told me, and I had no other authority to refer to. The conviction that it was not possible for me to be a success went deep enough to influence my actions till far into adult life. Until I was about thirty I always planned my life on the assumption not only that any major undertaking was bound to fail, but that I could only expect to live a few years longer.8

Despite his hatred of the school, indeed largely through his fear of it, Eric Blair at thirteen followed the traditional expectation of his Edwardian school and, pending a vacancy, won a scholarship to Eton in 1916 as England, with enthusiasm still high, entered the second year
of the first world war. He took up residence in Eton in 1917 after vacancies became available because of the increasing enlistment of Etonians in the Army. 9

Whatever his feeling about his earlier school, its fervent patriotism during the war years had rubbed off on Blair and would stay with him. As a pupil of St. Cyprian's, his first published work in October, 1914, "Awake! Young Men of England," was an unabashed call to arms. Two years later at Eton, despite his remark to his friend that "Of course, you realize, Connolly, that, whoever wins this war, we shall emerge a second-rate nation" and his rejection of "the war, the Empire, Kipling, Sussex, and character,"10 he wrote another equally exuberant and patriotic poem, "Kitchener." The poems were an early sign of a strong sense of patriotism, of being an Englishman no matter what. This patriotism would repeatedly surface through Blair's, and later Orwell's more pessimistic, and at times Hobbesian, view of a world wherein men's motives were solely motivated by the lust for power.

The daily experience of witnessing patriotism, the reading of honour rolls in Eton's chapel and the like, left Blair and the others too young to fight with a feeling of guilt. He would tell his friend Richard Rees that "his generation must be marked forever by the humiliation of not having taken part" in the war. This guilt about non-participation in the war helps explain what Stansky correctly calls "one of the curious aspects" of Orwell's St. Cyprian's memoir, namely "that he made no specific references to his having been there during the first two years of the war."11

Despite the publication of "Kitchener" Blair did not distinguish himself academically at Eton, beginning a slacking off period which he had promised himself after the enforced rigours of St. Cyprian's scholarship
class. But it was here that he became a voracious reader, memorizing Shaw, Chesterton, and A.E. Housman among others. He did gain some notoriety, however, as a leader in the "anarchic, questioning, and anti-authoritarian" atmosphere that was part of the mixed emotional climate of the immediate post-war period. Recalling this time of disillusionment, during which he had joined fellow Etonians on November 11, 1918 in demanding the resignation of the Commander of the Officer Training Corps, Orwell would later refer to himself as "an odious little snob." Though he was probably not much different in his snobbery than other Etonians there is ample evidence that he was telling the truth, from "running down his own father and mother" to the mean and flashy cynicism which he displayed upon being instructed, apparently without objection, in the Anglican Catechism before being confirmed in the Church of England.12

But Blair's cynicism belonged more to the head than the heart, more to his polemical streak than to the patriotic. Later he would write, those years, during and just after the war; were a queer time to be at school....For several years it was all the fashion to be a "Bolshie," as people then called it. England was full of half-baked antinomian opinions....And of course the revolutionary mood extended to those who had been too young to fight, even to public schoolboys. At that time we all thought of ourselves as enlightened creatures of a new age, casting off the orthodoxy that had been forced upon us by those detested "old men".13

Significantly, however, despite their "enlightened" opinions, Orwell adds that although "it seemed natural to us to be 'agin the Government'....We retained, basically, the snobbish outlook of our class, we took it for granted that we could continue to draw our dividends [though Orwell had none] or tumble into soft jobs."14

The tameness of the schoolboy's revolutionary stance in Blair's case is revealed in his decision in 1922, at age eighteen, to join the Indian Imperial Police. It was an unusual choice for Etonians who, if
they sought a career in the overseas Empire, usually chose the more prestigious Indian Civil Service. It is true that Blair's family could not have afforded to send him to university without scholarships, even if he had wanted to go, but his decision to be a policeman stemmed largely from his being tired of school. He told fellow Etonian Runciman that he wanted to go out into the world. By this he meant the non-academic world, wherein some of his contemporaries of the exceptional 1916 Election, like Runciman and Connolly, would remain before distinguishing themselves in the world of arts and letters. George Orwell, the "late developer," would not enter, or more accurately would not become known in, this world for another ten years. The impression he left among his contemporaries at Eton was that of a youth who though friendly and active enough in the school's activities was never intimate, was never "close" to anyone. His reticence about his private life and thoughts placed him more towards the periphery of camaraderie than at its center — without, rather than within.

In 1922 Blair left England as Probationary Assistant Superintendent of Police for Burma which although it was considered the poorest province in the Indian service was the region where his family had so many roots. If he had been unable to fight for England in the war perhaps some of the humiliation could be worked off in the service of Empire. Although he had declared himself against Empire and Kipling he greatly admired Kipling as a writer, particularly favouring *Kim*. This recalls Malcolm Muggeridge's comment that there was "a Kiplingesque side to his characters which made him romanticize the Raj and its mystique." One should be careful not to make too much of a young man, then nineteen, who joined an organization which he had recently criticized, for it is a common enough hypocrisy. Nevertheless one cannot ignore it in a man whose reputation was to rest
so heavily on the claim that his intellectual preferences and actions meshed more closely than most or who, in Trilling’s phrase, was one of those "who are what they write." If nothing else, the inconsistency of Blair should alert us to some telling and not always flattering inconsistencies in Orwell on some of those occasions when he moves "from the abstract and general to the concrete and personal." "

In October, 1922, Blair, like so many young administrators of Empire before and after him, began "the voyage out." In his case the destination, different from most, was Rangoon but his passage out was remarkably similar to that of Leonard Woolf who had gone out to Ceylon fifteen years before. Indeed Blair's entry into Empire was little different from the entry of all those who, in the words of E.M. Forster, would

go forth into a world that is not entirely composed of public school men or even Anglo-Saxons, but of men who are as various as the sands of the sea; into a world of whose richness and subtlety they have no conception. They go forth with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts. And it is the undeveloped heart that is largely responsible for the Englishman abroad. An undeveloped heart – not a cold one....For it is not that the Englishman can't feel – it is that he is afraid to feel.

In Burma, however, "the tall, thin, and gangling" Blair could not help but feel for the Burmese who, he believed, were being shamefully exploited. But set against the expression of such feeling he also felt a pressure to conform, a guilt-ridden solidarity which he believed stemmed from the imperialist's efforts to hide the knowledge that it is clearly "wrong to go and lord it in a foreign country where you are not wanted." As the pressure to conform and its attendant mysteries at St. Cyprian's were to find release in Such Such Were the Joys, the Burmese experience for Orwell would result in an outpouring of feeling in his first novel, Burmese Days.

Despite enjoyable periods such as the Kipling-inspired romance of
his tours of Mandalay where he underwent early training, Blair was clearly unsuited for the imperialist's life in Burma. He had acquired the reputation of not being "'a good mixer'...'cared little for games, and seemed to be bored with the social and Club life'" that was so much a part of the imperialist's life. Blair was unhappier in the outposts of Empire than he was in Mandalay. In the field he was to come face to face with the realities of police work, of implementing British rules on Burmese subjects despite the official ideal of minimum interference with local custom. Of this time Orwell would write,

I had begun to have an indescribable loathing of the whole machinery of so-called justice....The Burmese themselves never really recognized our jurisdiction. The thief whom we put in prison did not think of himself as a criminal justly punished, he thought of himself as the victim of a foreign conqueror. The thing that was done to him was merely a wanton meaningless cruelty. His face, behind the stout teak bars of the lock-up and the iron bars of the jail, said so clearly. And unfortunately I had not trained myself to be indifferent to the expression of the human face.

Blair never did get used to what he believed was the "monstrous intrusion" of the British and though he did not speak of his sympathy for the Burmese, his sympathy no doubt made it hard for him, unlike his colleagues, to fit into the imperialist structure. In the face of what he felt was the white man's code of silence in the East his sense of "shame" found release in ineffectual rebellions in his off-duty hours.

From the more civilized society of Mandalay to the mosquito-ridden isolation of Myaungmya in the Irrawaddy Delta, to Twante in the Hanthawaddy district where as Sub-Divisional Police Officer his duties would include anything from murder investigation to ensuring routine surveillance of known criminals, Blair was considered "somewhat eccentric." It became known, for example, that he attended the religious services of Christian converted Karens and spent his spare time talking with Buddhist priests.
He was, in the words of one of his fellow officers, "obviously odd man out with other Police Officers, but longing, I think, to be able to fit in." His eccentricity stayed with him even when he moved out of the Delta in 1925 to the much more agreeable climate of Insein near Rangoon where he had the opportunity of enjoying a more normal and civilized existence only ten miles from Rangoon. Indeed in public he seemed the typical imperialist policeman, making "his obligatory appearance" in the Club each evening, but in private he continued to indulge his empathy with those over whom he had power.

Between 1926 and 1927 Blair was stationed at the port of Moulmein with a relatively large white population, and finally at Katha, a small town in Upper Burma. It was Katha which, despite its much better climate, became the model for Kyauktada, the sweltering outpost town of Burmese Days. Falling ill in Katha he asked for leave six months early, and left Burma for England, arriving home in August, 1927.

When I came home on leave in 1927 I was already half determined to throw up my job, and one sniff of English air decided me. I was not going back to be a part of that evil despotism. But I wanted much more than merely to escape from my job. For five years I had been part of an oppressive system, and it had left me with a bad conscience. Innumerable remembered faces - faces of prisoners in the dock, of men waiting in the condemned cells, of subordinates I had bullied and aged peasants I had snubbed, of servants and coolies I had hit with my fist in moments of rage (nearly everyone does these things in the East, at any rate occasionally: Orientals can be very provoking) - haunted me intolerably.

In the early years of his long pilgrimage of expiation and as part of his latent desire to become a writer Blair wrote the novel Burmese Days in the summer of 1932 while on holiday from a teaching post at a private school for boys. The book was published in 1934 after he had begun using the name Orwell in 1933, itself an attempt to break free of the past. Though by temperament he was in the tradition of the nineteenth century
liberal-radical writers like Hazlitt, Cobbett, Dickens and Gissing in attacking what he saw as the injustices of the established social and political order, in this case the imperialist exploitation of the Burmese, Orwell at this point was in the early stages of his long search for the right form. This is important for our purposes not for the literary interest but because it reflects the increasing social and political tensions which had been growing in England during Blair's absence in the twenties. Orwell would be propelled into this world through his bitterness and disillusionment over Burma. He would later list as the "four great motives for writing":

1. Sheer egoism...2. Aesthetic enthusiasm. Perception of Beauty in the external world,...3. Historical impulse. Desire to see things as they are,...4. Political purpose...Desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's idea of the kind of society that they should strive after.33

Orwell goes on to acknowledge how these "impulses must war against each other and how they must fluctuate from time to time" and concedes that his natural inclination was to follow the dictates of egoism and aestheticism, claiming that "in a peaceful age I might have written ornate or merely descriptive books." He notes that when he was younger

I wanted to write enormous naturalistic novels with unhappy endings, full of detailed descriptions and arresting sentences, and also full of purple passages in which words were used partly for the sake of their sound. And in fact my first complete novel, Burmese Days, which I wrote when I was thirty, but projected much earlier, is rather that kind of book.34

But Orwell did not live in a peaceful age and even the "purple," or aesthetically inspired passages of Burmese Days were to be countered by a new impulse among writers in the crisis-marked thirties. The impulse was that of "political purpose," to attack the mounting problems of the day with a new and dynamic realism. To be silent was to collaborate with
those of the old reactionary order who were held responsible for many of the problems. Orwell's political purpose in his first novel was born out of the desire to convince the reader that imperialism is morally wrong. This purpose intrudes to the point of dominating the Lawrencean descriptions of the Burmese countryside which "so appalled me...that I was obliged to write a novel about them to get rid of them." The presence of Orwell's aesthetic impulse, though overshadowed by his political purpose, demonstrates what has aptly been called the "unformulated quarrel between the orthodoxy of Symbolism [coming out of the aesthetic movement] and the surviving elements of an empirical utilitarian tradition."

Although the symbolist movement of the nineteen twenties, with its "contempt for the external world," was reaching a climax in the nineteen thirties, when the unknown Orwell began to write it was being challenged head on. Soon it became apparent that the beliefs behind it, behind the old aesthetic revolt begun by William Pater in the 1870s against the moralizing of the high Victorian age, were in serious decline. In continuing the aloofness of the "arts for art's sake approach to life" exemplified in writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce the symbolist movement had risen to prominence while Blair was a policeman in the jungles of Burma. Blair was no stranger to the aesthetic tendency and indeed it would remain in his writing. "I could not do the work of writing a book, or even a long magazine article if it were not also an aesthetic experience." Even so, two years after Burmese Days was published Orwell's growing disdain for the aesthetics' intent to divorce themselves from the political realm was expressed by him in a review of Philip Henderson's The Novel Today:

On the last occasion when Punch produced a genuinely funny joke, which was only six or seven years ago, it was a picture of an intolerable youth telling his aunt that when he came down from the
University he intended to "write." "And what are you going to write about, dear?" his aunt enquires. "My dear aunt," the youth replies crushingly, "one doesn't write about anything, one just writes."

Orwell adds:

This was a perfectly justified criticism of current literary cant. At that time, [the end of the twenties] even more than now, art for art's sake was going strong..."art has nothing to do with morality" was the favourite slogan....To admit that you liked or disliked a book because of its moral or religious tendency, even to admit noticing that it had a tendency, was too vulgar for words.39

Out of the oscillating battle between realism and aestheticism, impulses often evident in the same writer, as in Joyce, the Thirties in England emerged as the decade of commitment to social and political causes.

Changes in the form and content of literature were not due to the whims of accidental aesthetic fashion or to racial, national or geographic traits, but were determined by the economic structure of society. Literature was a form of social consciousness, a reflection of social reality, and a revolutionary agent for the transformation of that reality.40

Such commitment, noticeable particularly among the young, was not confined to writers. Despite the pessimism born out of the inability of the National Government to do much about the ravages of an economic depression begun in the twenties and the feeling that there was an increasing "paralysis of foreign policy," there was generally a hopeful if angry introspection.41

In the Evening Standard's celebrated cartoons by David Low the mood was not apathetic but caustic. Neither the dictators, representing the crisis from without, Ramsay MacDonald's vacillation reflecting the crisis of economic depression within, nor Colonel Blimp was spared a slashing satire. While force seemed to be overwhelming reason, as the League of Nations' principle of collective security floundered in the face of Mussolini's and Hitler's arrogant aggression, there was on the literary scene a movement of young poets, including Auden, Spender, Lewis and MacNeice, towards Marxist...
or near Marxist positions. John Strachey's widely influential book *The Coming Struggle for Power* (1932) warned that in the face of Fascism, Communism was the only alternative and that to shrink from its birth pangs was to choose "the agony of death." By 1934 the *Left Review*, formed in response to the central committee of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers in Moscow, issued its call "for militant Communism and against individualism and metaphysics in the arts." The growing interest in the Russian experiment gained new respectability with the publication in 1935 of the Webbs' two volume *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization*.

Whatever positions writers and social commentators were taking, be they sympathetic to the Marxist stance like Auden and Spender or to the Catholic side like novelists Greene and Waugh, the significant fact was that they were taking positions. Like many of Auden's poems they were saying that society had to be changed and the artist should do as much as possible to effect that change. Accordingly Day Lewis addressed himself to the modern condition, proclaiming that

Drug nor isolation will cure this cancer.
It is now or never, the hour of the knife,
The break with the past, the major operation.

While Orwell, recently back from Burma, would breathe the same air, he was not to belong to what has been called the "Auden Group" or any other group. He belonged to himself. As in Burma, he would become the odd man out for although like other writers he believed in greater freedom as part of society's general improvement he also believed that freedom for a writer meant "the freedom to criticize and oppose," not just the opposing side but your own. Sympathetic to the new mood of commitment he was not sympathetic to the power of orthodoxy, either social or political, which
through appeals for unity against Fascism, for example, could so easily corrupt the truth and stifle the dissenting opinion. This theme of the individual versus the group being central to this study I turn now to *Burmese Days* for a consideration of his views on the orthodoxy of Imperialism in an outpost of Empire.

*Burmese Days* is set in Kyauktada, a small and "fairly typical Upper Burma town," that had not changed greatly between the days of Marco Polo and 1910, and might have slept in the Middle Ages for a century more if it had not proved a convenient spot for a railway terminus. In 1910 the Government made it the headquarters of a district and seat of Progress — interpretable as a block of law courts...a hospital, a school and one of those huge, durable jails which the English have built everywhere between Gibraltar and Hong Kong.50

The protagonist of the novel is John Flory who, it should be remembered, was called George Orwell in one of Orwell's early drafts of the book.51 Flory is a timber merchant of about thirty-five whose youth has been sapped by the trials of living in Kyauktada. The only other Europeans in the population of four thousand-odd are the heavy-set, middle-aged Macgregor, Deputy Commissioner of Kyauktada district; Mr. Lackersteen, a middle-aged, alcoholic manager of a timber firm; his wife, whose complaints against the natives are as frequent as Macgregor's anecdotes; Westfield, the soldierly District Superintendent of Police; Maxwell, the young Forest Ranger with a blood lust; and Ellis, another timber merchant whose dialogue is nearly always offensive to someone and whose vehemence against the natives is never ending. Later in the novel the Lackersteens' niece, Elizabeth, and Verral, an arrogant young cavalry officer, appear.

The plot revolves about the attempt of a corrupt native magistrate, U Po Kyin, to gain favour in the eyes of his British superiors and thereby to make himself eligible for membership in the hitherto all-white Kyauktada
Club. To do this, however, U Po Kyin must first rid himself of an unwitting competitor, Dr. Veraswami, an Indian doctor and good friend of John Flory. U Po Kyin's scheming is often inspired by a clumsy kind of inventiveness such as using an ex-mistress of Flory's to publicly disgrace him before the eyes of Elizabeth Lackersteen whom Flory had fallen in love with and planned to marry. Flory's plans of a reinvigorated life with Elizabeth, however, are dashed, as are Dr. Veraswami's hopes of joining the Club, by U Po Kyin's intrigue. More important to the story than U Po Kyin's attempt to gain prestige, however, are Flory's thwarted attempts to preserve a sense of right and wrong in an outpost of empire where questions of morality are often buried beneath concerns about "hanging together" in the face of a much larger, if subservient, population.

The success of U Po Kyin's scheming, Flory's love-hate feelings about Burma in general and his special hatred of imperialism and what it does to ruler and ruled alike combine to cause the sensitive Flory to give up the battle between his conscience and the pressures of the small white community. In the final and consummate alienation from his original environment he commits suicide.

The novel is atypical of the main body of Orwell's work. Revealing his impulse for the aesthetic as well as his commitment to attacking an "oppressive system," the novel relies heavily on the "naturalistic" rather than "mechanistic" metaphor which is so often present in his later works such as *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where the imagery of the machine is savagely and depressingly dominant. The book is typical, however, in (1) its fundamentally moralist stance, (2) its treatment of individuals as embodiments of different world views, and (3) the way in
which it paradoxically concentrates on the most deviant individual of a
group in order to draw a picture of the conformist. In *Burmese Days*, the
conformist is the stereotype imperialist who justifies exploitation of
the natives through a firm conviction that he is superior in all respects.

The novel is at times clearly didactic and Orwell's hostility
towards imperialism is as evident as his familiarity with its grass roots
manifestations. His writing clearly shows that he "hated the imperialism
I was serving with a bitterness I probably cannot make clear" even
though the more vehement anti-imperialist passages are occasionally
tempered by a tone of commiseration as when he writes, about the English
of the East,

> after all, the poor devils are no worse than anybody else. They lead
> unenviable lives; it is a poor bargain to spend thirty years, ill-paid,
> in an alien country, and then come home with a wrecked liver and a
> pine-apple backside from sitting in cane chairs, to settle down as
> the bore of some second-rate Club.

Like Orwell who believes that "no man, in his heart of hearts,
believes that it is right to invade a foreign country and hold the population
down by force," Flory believes that imperialism is at root an evil system.
In his battle to retain his integrity within this system he finds solace
only in his friendship with Veraswami. But even in this he is painfully
aware of the distance between men, even between friends. If it is the
"hideous birthmark" on his face which is the daily symbol of his alienation
from his fellow Europeans, his disagreements with Veraswami are marked by
a fundamental difference in outlook. Whereas Veraswami is an Indian who
looks down on the Burmese and passively accepts the British presence as
an "advance," Flory sees it as an outrage against the Burmese. Yet when
Veraswami is nominated for membership in the white man's club, in a
begrudging response to a Rangoon directive, Flory buckles under the pressure
of his fellow Englishmen and fails to stand up for his friend. The fact that he does support Veraswami's nomination later, while it testifies to his integrity also reveals the see-sawing nature of the tensions within him. While he desperately wants to stand up for the principle of equality between whites and natives he just as desperately feels the need to belong to his own kind. No matter how much he might ridicule the conventions of his fellow Englishmen he knows that within those conventions there is the comradeship and sense of security which are essential if one is to survive in a foreign clime. But each time he approaches the Club, which is the focal point of events for the white community in Kyauktada, Flory recognizes that there is a price to be paid for such survival and the currency is hypocrisy. To him the most scurrilous hypocrisy of all is the way in which the whites justify their blatant exploitation of the natives by claiming that they are so backward that the white man has a moral obligation to help them develop their resources, as part of a larger obligation to bring progress to ungodly peoples.

When Elizabeth Lackersteen, a young, strongly willed woman of the lower middle class, arrives in Kyauktada, Flory immediately sees hope of salvaging his self respect in a lasting friendship, if not romance, based on the kind of mutual honest respect which he cannot find in the entrenched hypocrisy of the Club. But Elizabeth is a natural survivor, as responsive to fashion as a reed to wind, and she opts for the majority view of most things, including the view of the natives as inferiors. She behaves accordingly, relishing the prospect of being the upper class for a change. She shuts Flory out of her life upon the discovery, engineered by U Po Kyin, that he has had a native mistress, Ma Hla May. Elizabeth then sets her sights on Verral, the self-opinionated cavalry officer. Verral's arrogance
attracts Elizabeth, for not only does it exhibit a brash confidence absent in Flory but it reflects Verral's firm commitment to the English class system, however modified it may be in Burma. After an uninterested Verral leaves, Elizabeth finally accepts the proposal of Mr. Macgregor, the Deputy Commissioner. She ends up like her auntie, Mrs. Lackersteen, a domineering memsahib who orders the natives about, completely untroubled by questions of equality. Mr. Lackersteen, unlike Verral, is quite willing to treat the natives as equals and does so when his wife is not around. But like his wife he is not troubled by the inequality of imperialism and when it comes to keeping the natives in their place he finds it as easy to vote against Veraswami as to fraternize with the natives.

If Flory is the moral man and Lackersteen the amoral man, Macgregor, the Deputy Commissioner, is the well meaning imperialist. Unlike the Lackersteens and other members of the white man's Club, he really believes in the "white man's burden." The picture drawn of him recalls Orwell's essay on Kipling:

> The imperialism of the 'eighties and 'nineties was sentimental, ignorant and dangerous, but it was not entirely despicable. The picture then called up by the word "empire" was a picture of over-worked officials and frontier skirmishes, not of Lord Beaverbrook and Australian butter. It was still possible to be an imperialist and a gentleman, and of Kipling's personal decency there can be no doubt.57

But though he tries to be fair, unlike Ellis whose outbursts of rapacious capitalism and racism are as straightforward as they are reprehensible, Macgregor is ultimately as exploitative as all the rest, including Flory who can no longer withstand either his guilt or his subsequent isolation.

The story of *Burmese Days* unfolds amid the oppressive tropical climate of the Burmese jungle. Indeed the jungle becomes the central metaphor for the seemingly uncontrollable forces which encroach upon one's
sense of individuality. Whether or not one agrees with Orwell's choice of imagery, the constancy of the naturalistic metaphor is an early demonstration of the care with which Orwell selected the imagery which he thought would most accurately reflect his conception of a political régime. It was this concern which would spearhead his later attacks upon pretentious writing, particularly political writing, and establish him as one of the English language's best critics.

From the very beginning of the book Orwell uses naturalistic metaphors and imagery to create the atmosphere of evolutionary growth - of struggle.

By the roadside, just before you got to the jail, the fragments of a stone pagoda were littered, cracked and overthrown by the strong roots of a peepul tree. The angry carved faces of demons looked up from the grass where they had fallen. Nearby another peepul tree had twined itself round a palm, uprooting it and bending it backwards in a wrestle that had lasted a decade.

And we are constantly made aware that climate and vegetation play an important part not only in ageing a man more rapidly than in England but in forming his political beliefs and behaviour. As Flory walked down to the Club

the heat throbbed down on one's head with a steady, rhythmic thumping like blows from an enormous bolster....In the borders beside the path swaths of English flowers - phlox and larkspur, hollyhock and petunia - not yet slain by the sun, rioted in vast size and richness. The petunias were huge, like trees almost. There was no lawn, but instead a shrubbery of native trees and bushes - gold mohur trees like vast umbrellas of blood-red bloom, frangipanis with creamy, stalkless flowers, purple bougainvillea, scarlet hibiscus and the pink Chinese rose, bilious-green crotons, feathery fronds of tamarind. The clash of colours hurt one's eyes in the glare.

Amid this luxuriant growth, this undisciplined riot of colour, this disorder, which reflects nature's over-indulgence, there occurs a concomitant sapping of a man's will. There is a lack of discipline evident in Flory's increasing degeneracy, his gin-swilling before breakfast, his
refusal to shave and the gradual erosion of his integrity, measured in part by his growing reluctance to speak "seriously on any subject whatever." His behaviour constitutes a personal revolt against order, an order so often mirrored in the artificially created and highly ordered polity about him. It is a revolt which can find no other way of expressing itself beneath the omnipresent stare of the fellow imperialists than by a studied slovenliness. On the one hand this vulgarly asserts the remnants of his individualism and on the other it asserts his desire to be at one with the immediate environment of an unrestrained jungle.

The naturalistic image of the jungle continues to be dominant throughout the story, even in the final moments before Flory's suicide when he desperately asks Elizabeth, "Do try and understand. Haven't I told you something of the life we live here? The sort of horrible death-in-life! The decay, the loneliness, the self-pity?" (My italics.)

Only rarely does Orwell use a mechanistic metaphor and refer to imperialism as represented by the British Empire as "the machine" or as a "device." If his imagery for imperialism momentarily changes, however, his conviction that imperialism is moved by greed does not. More specifically, Orwell saw imperialism as largely a parasitic venture of the upper classes undertaken to create jobs for their sons as well as to maintain and increase their power at home. Accordingly, Flory describes the imperialists as constituting "a kind of up-to-date, hygienic, self-satisfied louse." And, presaging his sustained and spirited attack upon one of the most pervasive metaphors of his time, Orwell decried what he believed to be the guise of the "slimy white man's burden humbug." (My italics.) This, he says, perpetuates "the lie that we're here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them" and "corrupts us in ways
you can't imagine."\textsuperscript{64}

This, he argues, leads to "an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves night and day." He concludes that the imperialists' awareness of this condition is "at the bottom of half our beastliness to the natives."\textsuperscript{65} Orwell gives us examples of how the moral hypocrisy of imperialism corrupts Flory, having him sign the notice at the Club postponing discussion of electing his friend, Veraswami, to the Club. Flory, though ashamed of the latter action, gives in to the "kind of spurious good fellowship between the English and this country...hanging together, we call it. It's a political necessity." And later when Veraswami says to Flory, "If truly you disapprove of the British Empire, you would not be talking of it privately here. You would be proclaiming from the housetops," Flory answers, "Sorry, doctor...I haven't the guts. I 'counsel ignoble ease'....It's safer. You've got to be a pukka sahib or die, in this country. In fifteen years I've never talked honestly to anyone except you. My talks here are a safety-valve, a little Black Mass on the sly."\textsuperscript{66}

Flory's talks with Veraswami are not safety-valve enough, however. And it is Flory's acute awareness of his own guilt and the hypocrisy of the white community in general as expressed in their choice of self-justifying imagery which lead him to spend as much time among the natives as he can and to confess to Elizabeth during their visit to the bazaar that "I try - just sometimes, when I have the pluck - not to be a pukka sahib."\textsuperscript{67} Remembering that Flory was called Orwell in an early draft of Burmese Days it is interesting to note a particularly revealing passage in Stansky and Abrahams, The Unknown Orwell. Of Orwell's service in Burma they write,

But if in public he conformed to what was expected of him at
Headquarters and the Club, in private he could indulge his eccentricities. Beadon, who came out to see him one day when he was living at Insein, found his house a shambles, with "goats, geese, ducks and all sorts of things floating about downstairs." Beadon, who prided himself on his own neat house, was "rather shattered," and suggested to Blair that perhaps he might bear down on his houseman. The suggestion was shrugged aside: he quite liked the house as it was. Beadon changed the subject - was it true, as he had heard, that Blair was attending services in the native churches? Yes, it was true; it had nothing to do with "religion," of course, but he enjoyed conversing with the priests in "very high-flown Burmese" (Beadon's phrase); and he added in his sardonic (or leg pulling) way that he found their conversation more interesting than that he was forced to listen to at the Club. Whereupon he took Beadon off for a farewell drink - at the Club! - before he set off for Rangoon. (My italics.)

In his quest to expiate his guilt Flory attacks not only the traditional, often missionary-inspired, idioms and metaphors which had often been used to justify imperialism as a moral responsibility of the white man. He also ridicules those images which were almost entirely derived from an amoral and non-religious belief in the white man's all-round superiority in the natural order of things. Examples of this belief abound throughout the novel as when Mrs. Lackersteen irritably proclaims,

Really I think the laziness of these servants is getting too shocking. We seem to have no authority over the natives nowadays, with all these dreadful Reforms, and the insolence they learn from the newspapers. In some ways they are getting almost as bad as the lower classes at home,

or when Ellis vehemently asserts, "The only possible policy is to treat 'em like the dirt they are....We are the masters." Elizabeth displays her sense of superiority when Flory points out to her that statistically it is really more natural to have a brown skin than a white one. She concludes, "You do have some funny ideas." Just as Flory dismisses the idea that European skulls are supposedly more sensitive to sunstroke than those of the natives Orwell would later write:

But why should the British in India have built up this superstition
about sunstroke? Because an endless emphasis on the differences between the "natives" and yourself is one of the necessary props of imperialism. You can only rule over a subject race, especially when you are in a small minority, if you honestly believe yourself to be racially superior, and it helps towards this if you can believe that the subject race is biologically different. There were quite a number of ways in which Europeans in India used to believe, without any evidence, that Asiatic bodies differed from their own. Even quite considerable anatomical differences were supposed to exist. But this nonsense about Europeans being subject to sunstroke, and Orientals not, was the most cherished superstition of all. The thin skull was the mark of racial superiority, and the pith topi was a sort of emblem of imperialism.  

In any event it is important to note that Orwell was one of the first to warn political writers at large that "once you have the habit" (my italics) of using phrases invented by someone else, such as "white man's burden," without examining the appropriateness of the image then "if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought" because "a bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should and do know better." And when you think of something abstract [such as imperialism] you are more inclined to use words from the start, and unless you make a conscious effort to prevent it, the existing dialect will come rushing in and do the job for you, at the expense of blurring or even changing your meaning. 

At this point it should be noted that Orwell's tendency to think of imperialism as a "self satisfied louse," as being more or less synonymous with exploitation, and of it always turning a profit rather than (as others have claimed) being an economic burden on the home country, involves sweeping assumptions, to say the least, and invites a scrutiny which is beyond the scope and intentions of this study.

In constantly reflecting the belief that economic imperialism was synonymous with imperialism Orwell no doubt succumbed in part at least to that "habit" which he warned us about, one which "makes us think the likeness obvious." The likeness in this instance between economic
imperialism and imperialism tended to exclude the possibility of sincerity amongst those who espoused what was claimed to be the moral obligation of the white man's burden.\footnote{75}

Orwell knew better, as his essay on Kipling shows, but beyond Macgregor he chose not to suggest that any of those in Kyauktada may have been moved by the sincere belief that they were spreading civilization. Furthermore, his parents' finances, if nothing else, should have provided him with ample evidence that not all imperialists were out for rapacious gain, and alerted him to the fact that even with servants, "British officials in Burma," as John Atkins points out, were often "as much victims of circumstances in their way as the Burmese themselves."\footnote{76}

These deficiencies are best realized when one compares *Burmese Days*, Orwell's first novel, with E.M. Forster's last novel, *A Passage to India*.\footnote{77} Forster's character, Dr. Aziz, like Flory recognizes the tendency among the British to become the imperialist stereotype. "They [the British] all become exactly the same, not worse, not better. I give any Englishman two years....And I give any Englishwoman six months."\footnote{78} There is also contempt for the natives - "Why, the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die,"\footnote{79} - and talk of bribes taken by the English. But along with this and the defensive clichés of "the rest of the herd"\footnote{80} (club members) there is a recognition by Forster of honourable intent. The schoolteacher, Fielding, has come to India because he believes passionately in education, not in profit. "He did not mind whom he taught: public schoolboys, mental defectives, and policemen, had all come his way, and he had no objection to adding Indians." Though not religious, like the visiting Mrs. Moore who believes that "God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and to show it, and He is omnipresent, even in India," Fielding unpiously believes in
the duty to civilize those less fortunate than himself. "He had no racial
feeling" and though "neither a missionary nor a student, he was happiest
in the give and take of private conversation. The world, he believed, is
a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by
the help of good will plus culture and intelligence."\(^{81}\)

The importance, however, of reporting Flory's perhaps rather
simplistic assumptions about the nature of imperialism in this study is
that they reflect both the frustrations and confusion of a sensitive
individual when confronted by the orthodoxy of the pukka sahib's code in
an outpost of empire. And while Orwell ignores the possibility of the
benevolent imperialist in his novel, the fact that nowadays such phrases
and images as "the white man's burden" can no longer be used to camouflage
the profit motive, however small or large a part it played, is due very
much to those like Orwell who were prepared to attack what they saw as the
habitual invocation of the metaphor. His attack upon the language used to
rationalize the exploitation of a foreign country also showed that Orwell
was already well aware of the dangers of living with the lies of unconscious
propaganda, in this case, the slogans of imperialism. Flory warns of a
time to come when "all the gramophones would be playing the same tune."\(^{82}\)
And it was against this possibility that Flory fought and lost.
Notes to Section I - Chapter I

1. Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, *The Unknown Orwell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), pp. 26, 24-28. In my thesis much of the biographical information about Orwell's time at school and in Burma is taken from Stansky and Abrahams' book because, as the title suggests, it is the only work so far which has shed any real light on this early period of Eric Blair's life.


13. Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, pp. 120-21. Stansky and Abrahams properly note that "a peculiarity of Orwell's analysis of the mood of early postwar England is that it is based almost entirely upon Blair's experience of it at Eton - that was all that he knew at first-hand, for from 1922 to 1927 he was out of England..." (The Unknown Orwell, p. 124).


15. Stansky and Abrahams, *The Unknown Orwell*, pp. 151, 112, 148. Orwell, as we shall see, had his first professional piece published in 1928 but it was not until the thirties that his writing, especially the novels, was published with any regularity.


20. Stansky and Abrahams, *The Unknown Orwell*, p. 156. *The Voyage Out* is the title of Virginia Woolf's novel written in 1915 and based on a voyage which some of her friends took to Jamaica in 1907. Leonard Woolf describes imperialist days (as a magistrate) in the first volume of his autobiography.


40. Stuart Samuels, "English Intellectuals and Politics in the 1930s" (hereinafter referred to as "English Intellectuals"), in *On Intellectuals*, edited by Philip Rieff (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company Inc., 1970), p. 247. The dichotomies between aesthetic impulse and political purpose, symbolism and utilitarianism, and aestheticism and realism are not exactly the same of course. However, they do reflect the common tension between the belief that involvement in social and political affairs was vulgar and the belief that the proper function of the artist was to celebrate beauty and that "realism" was synonymous with the seamier side of life.

41. Charles L.M. Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars: 1918-1940* (hereinafter


43. Samuels, English Intellectuals, p. 238.

44. Mowat, Britain: 1918-1940, p. 526. Significantly, as a measure of the growing infatuation of the Left with Russia, the second edition title of the Webbs' book in 1937 did not have the question mark in it.


46. This is usually taken to include literary figures such as Christopher Isherwood, MacNeice, C. Day Lewis and Stephen Spender. Orwell referred to them as "Auden, Spender and Co." (CEJL, I, p. 561). For an objection to the term "Auden Group" in literary circles see Julian Symons, The Thirties, p. 16.

47. See Mowat, Britain: 1918-1940, p. 531, who writes of Orwell's Homage to Catalonia (written in 1937-1938) that "it belonged only to himself [Orwell] and not to any school."

48. See Julian Symons, The Thirties, p. 31 for how "freedom" was seen as "the absolute good" at the beginning of the thirties.

49. Orwell, CEJL, IV, p. 81.


52. Orwell, Burmese Days, p. 37.

53. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 126.

54. Orwell, Burmese Days, p. 65.

55. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 126.

56. Orwell, Burmese Days, pp. 16, 40.


58. It should be noted, however, that at times Orwell's use of metaphor in drawing analogies, say between the jungle and imperialism, is so persistent in Burmese Days that what Landau calls the "as if" proposition does indeed seem to have become the "'it is' statement of supposed fact." See Martin Landau, Political Theory and Political Science: Studies in the Methodology of Political Inquiry (hereinafter referred to as Political
Theory), (New York: Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 228. In short, such metaphors often appear to be actual explanations of the individual imperialist's behaviour rather than merely models for conceptualizing such behaviour.

59. Orwell, Burmese Days, p. 119.
60. Ibid., p. 66.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., p. 262.
63. Ibid., pp. 37, 38.
64. Ibid., pp. 37, 40.
65. Ibid., p. 37.
66. Ibid., pp. 37, 41.
67. Ibid., p. 118.
70. Ibid., p. 113.

71. Orwell, CEJL, III, p. 301. For the natives' acceptance of such myths as those expressed by Elizabeth see E.M. Forster, A Passage to India (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1936), p. 137, where Dr. Aziz, the native doctor, shouts to the two white women, "'Put on your topis at once, the early sun is highly dangerous for heads....Not for my thick head,' he laughed."


73. Although it seems that traditionally we have tended to associate the word "imperialism" with economic exploitation of non-whites, Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt in their book, Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word: 1840-1960 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 248-49, note how it was ironically the Boer War, a clash between whites, which "made the word [imperialism] an international slogan in Europe" giving "rise to the world-wide misinterpretation of the Boer War as a capitalist plot," an interpretation which "became the basis of all subsequent theories of imperialism."

74. Landau, Political Theory, p. 81.

75. H. Alan C. Cairns, in The Clash of Cultures (New York: Frederick
A. Praeger, 1965), p. 198, points out how some colonizers in fact believed that trade (though not necessarily exploitative trade) was very much a necessary tool of Christian progress, and how to Livingstone, for example, trade seemed to be "an ethical rather than an economic concept."


77. This excludes Maurice which is usually thought of as essentially an autobiography. Lawrence Brander in his study of Orwell, p. 78 (before the days of Woodruff) declares that "Astonishingly little English writing of any excellence has come out of India," and points out that apart from Kim and A Passage to India, the next best, though "not nearly so good," is Burmese Days.

78. Forster, A Passage to India, p. 13.

79. Ibid., p. 28.

80. Ibid., p. 62. See also pp. 26-27.

81. Ibid., pp. 61-62, 51, 62.

82. Orwell, Burmese Days, p. 40.
Chapter II - Individual Alienation, the Club and Group Pressure.

Flory's alienation from the imperialist system stems in part from an inability to live outside the comforting, security-assuring customs of a more industrialized society (i.e., Britain). At home in a pub one could seek private consolation among friends for the improprieties of one's public behaviour. But for Flory, confronted by the nagging insecurity and tension brought about by never really knowing whether one is doing the right thing in a foreign country, there is no such consolation. At one point he wants to help his friend Veraswami who is under insidious attack from U Po Kyin but he does not offer assistance "for he knew the uselessness of interfering in Oriental quarrels. No European ever gets to the bottom of these quarrels; there is always something impervious to the European mind, a conspiracy behind a conspiracy, a plot within the plot."1

And even if one does act, to Orwell there is no easy way of discussing the right or wrong of the situation because "one of the Ten Precepts of the pukka sahib" is "to keep out of 'native' quarrels." The observance of this precept, the lack of opportunity to speak one's mind, even to simply "admit that we're thieves and go on thieving without any humbug,"2 not only stems from but reinforces what Orwell calls the "pukka sahib's" code. The code, designed to ensure solidarity among the whites, is particularly strong in a small outpost of empire where the white minority does not have the benefit of a large garrison. This was particularly true at the time of Orwell's stay in Burma in remote locations where violence prevailed and during a time when the British in the "backward tracts" were making a desperate stand against any rumours of aspirations for freedom which might have come from Rangoon through educated Indian missionaries and British reformers.3
For all the moral outrage occasioned by his seeing a subject people consciously exploited by his own race, Flory is no stranger to the quest for solidarity. Well before the native attack upon the Club, Flory, in counselling "ignoble ease," expresses to his friend Veraswami his fear of being alienated from his fellows. It is a fear which Orwell believes permeates all the white men's lives and results in their submission to five chief beatitudes of the pukka sahib's code even if, like Flory, they do not believe in it. The five chief beatitudes are:

- Keeping up our prestige,
- The firm hand (without the velvet glove),
- We white-men must hang together,
- Give them an inch and they'll take an ell, and
- Esprit de Corps.

Such a code creates a sense of group safety, and has the effect of buffering the "cultural shock" for newcomers from England like Elizabeth Lackersteen. The observance of such a code in the Club also offers a refuge for those imperialists like Flory who feel alienated from the world at large. Whatever its failings, including its hypocrisy, the Club is at least a place to meet, to read newspapers from home, to reminisce. Here even Flory, who is painfully conscious of his facial birthmark - the stark physical symbol of his alienation - can seek relief in the gin and tonic rituals of apparent normalcy. The danger, however, is that like the occasional drink that turns to habit, what was once a temporary refuge can become a way of life. In his temporary effort to avoid censure from the rest of the white community the once occasional visitor becomes a permanent captive of the Club's hypocrisy.

It is a stifling, stultifying world in which to live. It is a world in which every word and every thought is censored....You are free to be a drunkard, an idler, a coward, a backbiter, a fornicator, but you are not free to think for yourself. Your opinion on every subject of any conceivable importance is dictated for you by the pukka sahibs'
code. In the end the secrecy of your revolt poisons you like a secret disease. Your whole life is a life of lies. Year after year you sit in Kipling-haunted little Clubs, whiskey to right of you, Pink'un to left of you, listening and eagerly agreeing while Colonel Bodger develops his theory that these bloody Nationalists should be boiled in oil. You hear your Oriental friends called "greasy little babus," and you admit, dutifully, that they are greasy little babus. You see louts fresh from school kicking grey-haired servants. The time comes when you burn with hatred of your own countrymen, when you long for a native rising to drown their Empire in blood. And in this there is nothing honourable, hardly even any sincerity. For, au fond, what do you care if the Indian Empire is a despotism, if Indians are bullied and exploited? You only care because the right of speech is denied you. You are a creature of the despotism, a pukka sahib, tied tighter than a monk or a savage by an unbreakable system of tabus.\(^5\)

The result, particularly in a small community like Kyauktada, is that the whites, through fear of being ostracized, become the stereotypes of imperialism, daily reinforcing and so perpetuating prejudices. The alternative to this life where acceptance is sometimes bought at the price of self respect is to opt out, which Flory finally does by committing suicide after having failed to console himself in a "secret" world of books and unuttered thoughts.\(^6\)

But Flory is the exception and the stereotypes survive. They go on moving like puppets in time to an unchanging tune for what Orwell shows us is that the strength of imperialism, at least at the local level, lies not in a readiness to change but in an unchanging allegiance to the pukka sahib's code. And because of every man's need to be accepted by his fellows, because, in Flory's words, "it would be better to be the thickest-skulled pukka sahib who ever hiccuped over 'Forty years on,' than to live silent, alone, consoling oneself in secret, sterile worlds," Orwell feared that the world wherein "every word and thought is censored" would grow unimpeded and through force culminate in the massive, all-embracing spectre of Nineteen Eighty-Four. Here, through the proliferation of the "gramaphone
mind." of Club-like Inner Party existence, group pressure would be continually mobilized to force the individual into adhering to the official line.

Among his descriptions of the stereotypes in *Burmese Days* Orwell's portrait of Mrs. Lackersteen has special significance in that it draws attention to how pressure is aggressively exerted not only by the men. It illustrates U Po Kyin's recognition of the "power of European women" in the imperialist structure. Mrs. Lackersteen's authority and influence over much of Mr. Lackersteen's action is exerted through her "burra memsahib" expectations. These almost solely condition her husband's behaviour, so much so that his dialogue always seems a slightly drunken echo of norms which his wife shares with the other members of the Club. His wife's expectations in turn are based upon the prohibitions and expectations which she has inherited from others like "our burra sahib at Mandalay" who warned of the natives' "insults and ingratitude," proclaiming "that in the end we shall simply leave India....We shall just go. When the natives come to us begging us to stay, we shall say, 'No, you have had your chance, you wouldn't take it. Very well, we shall leave you to govern yourselves.'"

The interesting point is that Mrs. Lackersteen did not nag her husband with such prejudices. She simply made it known that she held certain unalterable beliefs about the natives and expected her husband to support these views at all times. In this context Mr. Lackersteen is representative of all those imperialists who really did not care about politics at all but who perpetuated some of imperialism's evils for no other reason than they were afraid of their wives. Though he cavorts with natives as easily as with whites and is as unprejudiced as Flory,
Lackersteen, in front of his wife, enthusiastically announces to the Club members that they can "count on me to blackball the lot of 'em [the natives]." "He [Lackersteen] knew that his wife would guess that he had been drinking, and he felt that a display of sound sentiment would excuse him."

Lackersteen could always be replied [sic] upon for sound sentiments in a case like this. In his heart he did not care and never had cared a damn for the British Raj, and he was as happy drinking with an Oriental as with a white man; but he was ready with a loud "Hear, hear!" when anyone suggested the bamboo for disrespectful servants or boiling oil for Nationalists. He prided himself that though he might booze a bit and all that, dammit he was loyal. It was his form of responsibility.9

In the presentation of such characters Orwell has made a contribution to our understanding of how imperialism, in his time, produced social as well as political stereotypes. It is the restraint placed upon the Mr. Lackersteens by their kind of wives and by all the Clubs in the Empire which, because it did not question traditional norms, helped guarantee the stability of Empire at the grass roots.

Flory is only too conscious of the possibility, never far away in the outposts of Empire, of falling victim through loneliness to an "inner secret life." But he is just as aware of how marriage may not improve matters. On the contrary, life may be worse beneath the debilitating power of someone like Mrs. Lackersteen, "some damned memsahib, yellow and thin, scandalmongering over cocktails, making kit-kit with the servants, living twenty years in the country without learning a word of the language." Such is the woman who, through silent coercion, prevents her husband from even uttering, let alone practising, his capacity for tolerance. Instead, through the medium of the evil eye, she cajoles him into supporting her supremacist philosophy. Indeed it is the final despair of the book that rather than Elizabeth Lackersteen becoming someone who would help Flory "to
live with nothing hidden, nothing unexpressed" she ends up as yet another dull stereotype of imperialism:

Her servants live in terror of her, though she speaks no Burmese. She has an exhaustive knowledge of the Civil List, gives charming little dinner-parties and knows how to put the wives of subordinate officials in their places - in short, she fills with complete success the position for which Nature had designed her from the first, that of a burra memsahib.10

This, together with the pressure applied on the individual by the Club, calls to mind Woodcock's observation that the ruling elite of *Burmese Days* differs from that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four" in one important respect," namely that "it maintains its solidarity not by physical power, but solely by the strength of an amazingly inflexible public opinion."11

Apart from the social prohibitions that were in force at the local level Orwell argued that the reluctance of officials to discuss imperial policy stemmed from the fact that every Anglo-Indian was haunted by a sense of guilt which he usually concealed because merely to be overheard making a seditious remark may damage his career. All over India there are Englishmen who secretly loathe the system of which they are part, and just occasionally, when they are quite certain of being in the right company, their hidden bitterness overflows. " (My italics.)

He goes on to recall a night in Burma aboard a train when he met a stranger, a white educational officer, and how, after each had decided "that the other was 'safe,'" they talked for hours in the darkness, damning the Empire. But, adds Orwell, "in the haggard morning light when the train crawled into Mandalay, we parted as guilty as any adulterous couple."12

It has been charged that Orwell's conclusion that Anglo-Indians were afraid to criticize the empire is exaggerated. Even allowing for the fact that during Orwell's time in Burma the white communities in outlying districts tended to band together more than usual in the face of increasing political unrest it does seem that Orwell's own reticence to speak freely
about the administration in Burma, not uncommon among young subalterns, led him to believe that all officials acted as he did. Whether or not they all did behave in the same way, Flory's tragedy is undoubtedly caused by the absence of "right company" even though Dr. Veraswami affords temporary relief to an overburdened conscience.

Whether or not it is overdrawn, Flory's reluctance to criticize imperialism amongst fellow whites is revealing in that it alerts us to one of the main themes running through *Burmese Days*, namely that despite the division of the whites into two main parts: (1) the civil servants like Macgregor, Westfield the Police Officer, and Maxwell the Divisional Forest Officer, and (2) the entrepreneurs like Ellis, Lackersteen and Flory, all of them behave as if they had the same occupation, that of a bureaucrat. This is especially evident when, in response to Rangoon's directive that "in those Clubs where there are no native members, one at least shall be co-opted," Ellis, though not a bureaucrat, complains bitterly, "They've [Rangoon] no right to dictate to us when we're off duty." And the fact that Rangoon sent such a directive pertaining to Clubs shows how even the central authorities of the imperialist structure considered the Club an appendage of the administration. Even Flory, who irritates the others by saying "some Bolshie things sometimes," unhesitatingly acts in unison with his fellow Club members when the Club is besieged by natives who quite rightly demand retribution for Ellis' having struck and blinded a native youth. In this, the climactic irony of the book, it is Ellis, the man who most opposes Flory, who provides Flory with the chance to win the white community's friendship and admiration. Flory saves the Club from being overrun by first swimming down the river and then quietly organizing a small police detachment to thwart the angry mob.
The irony of Ellis having indirectly created such an opportunity for Flory to win the respect of his fellow whites is compounded by the fact that Flory's heroic action stems not from supporting the exploited natives, with whom he normally sympathizes, but results instead from him instinctively succumbing to the inviolable rule of the pukka sahib's code, that the white men must stick together. Conditioned by their everyday existence in Kyauktada "none of them [the whites] thought to blame Ellis, the sole cause of this affair" and "their common peril seemed, indeed, to draw them closer together for awhile." Consequently, if most of the characters in Burmese Days appear to be stereotypes of imperialists, this is not so much a reflection of Orwell's hostility towards imperialism or of a lack of imagination. Rather it is a reflection of his view of imperialism as an experience which, at the local level, forces people to conform to a rigid code of behaviour through the need for collective security.

The hotly debated issue of Veraswami's nomination for Club membership is a case in point. When an enraged Ellis makes the unusual demand for the black and white voting balls it is a measure of the seriousness with which members regard any deviation from the group's informal but set code of values. In this instance the potential deviation is a possible violation of the feelings of race prejudice which the Club, as focal point of the community, has solidified into a highly resilient policy faithful to the "Ten Precepts of the pukka sahib."

"No, no, no!" cried Ellis, dancing about in his rage. "Don't give in to him! Put it to the vote. And if that son of a bitch [Flory] doesn't put in a black ball like the rest of us, we'll first turf him out of the Club himself, and then..."18

As noted earlier, even the carefree and generally irresponsible
Mr. Lackersteen, who has no real sympathy with the British Raj, feels compelled to support the group's values and solidarity: "'Hear, hear!' said Mr. Lackersteen gruffly. 'Keep the black swabs out of it. Esprit de corps and all that.'" Orwell explains how common experiences of the whites reinforce such a stance: "Living and working among Orientals would try the temper of a saint...all of them, the officials particularly, knew what it was to be baited and insulted" by "yellow faces...full of that maddening contempt."19

Thus Orwell argues that the life of an imperialist moulds you, whether you like it or not, into a straight-jacket of conformity. In his view, no matter how independently you start out, the pressures and needs of mutual dependence as a way of guaranteeing a modicum of security and simple companionship make escape from the resulting "stifling, stultifying world" all but impossible. Indeed, the idea of escape seems so hopeless that when Flory can no longer stand the tension between the dictates of conscience and the inclination to live according to the Club's code, "with the stream of life, not against it"20 he shoots himself.

In considering Flory as an example of a man torn between the individual need to act morally and the group pressure to conform, it is appropriate to consider a later essay of Orwell's, Shooting an Elephant, which was prompted by his experience as a Police Officer in Moulmein, Lower Burma. The conclusion of the essay in which Orwell describes how he was called upon to execute an old elephant who had temporarily gone berserk and destroyed some native property is an excellent example of how even outside the Club group pressure was at work, how the secret world of the individual and the requirements of institutional imperialism continued to clash. Orwell writes:
All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in saecula saeculorum, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts.

Orwell adds that "feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism, ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty." 21

Going to find the by now passive elephant, Orwell is followed by an ever-growing crowd. Although he initially decides not to destroy the elephant who is now "peacefully eating...looking no more dangerous than a cow," upon looking around at the "immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute," he suddenly realizes that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it...and it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. 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.

Orwell thus argues that "when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys" and that "in every crisis he has got to do what the 'natives' expect of him." 22 (My italics.) He shows how the acts of those in authority can not only be modified by subjects' expectation but can actually be changed into a gesture of partial subjection rather than of dominance.

The pressure exerted by a subject's expectation over the personal characteristics of the imperialist official on such occasions meant that it didn't matter whether the assistant district officer was Eric Blair or John Smith - both would react in pretty much the same way.
Summary of Chapter II

Finally, it is this very predictability of the whites' master-slave behaviour towards the natives which more than anything else characterizes the stereotypes drawn from Orwell's imperialist experience in Burma and offers an early indication of his later rich-versus-poor view of the world. In this view, the stereotypes' victory over Flory would be repeated again and again and it is the novel's pessimistic though no doubt exaggerated pronouncement that, despite individual exceptions, the imperialist-totalitarian mentality would triumph over all who dared challenge it. As Woodcock notes, "the white society of Upper Burma, as Orwell portrays it, is the earliest prototype of the ruling elite of Oceania which he described fourteen years later in Nineteen Eighty-Four."23

Similarly, another writer has observed that Orwell shows how there can be "no compromise with imperialism."24 In particular Burmese Days shows us that the "secret world" of conscience is not sufficient to counteract an individual's guilt of willful hypocrisy in the outside world. It also shows how the unavailability of alternatives to the stereotyped imperialist code of behaviour sometimes led to personal tragedy. Such tragedy failed to make any difference to the administration of imperialism because imperialism's code was pervaded by the sense that no one was irreplaceable and by the belief that in front of the natives, whether shooting an elephant or confronting an angry mob on a Club veranda, the same code of behaviour must be followed in the same way. Any deviation might encourage the ruled to question the infallibility of the rulers, and thus cause the rulers to question their own infallibility.

The assumption of replaceability, together with the mandatory esprit de corps, often created, in even a slightly deviant individual, an
overwhelming feeling of being totally submerged by a changeless conformity. This conformity was so oppressive that it left such an individual with only two alternatives - either to capitulate totally to the system or to totally withdraw. Partial withdrawal, especially in a small outpost like Kyauktada, was impossible. In this situation Orwell sees the larger problem of the autonomous individual doomed to an anxiety-ridden existence, torn between what his conscience tells him is right and the expediency which is nurtured by the need for brotherhood. It is a theme which he would never leave. It is this sense of hopelessness in such circumstances which gave birth to Orwell's haunting fear of, and later obsession with totalitarianism. Here we would see the ultimate triumph, not of minorities, as amongst the white population of Kyauktada, but of the mass, the petty imperialists of self-interest. For them as well as the white minority in Kyauktada the sense of security is guaranteed by the growth of order and predictability but threatened by the deviant individual who dares mirror their own fears and doubts about the justice of the system they serve. In Flory's case Orwell shows us how an individual psyche struggled against collectivist norms and in so doing Orwell attacked some of the most deceptive metaphors of imperialism.

Flory lost the battle against the collective norm. In his case it was mainly a battle against "living the lie...that we're here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them." But in showing how this lie, the basis of imperialism as he saw it, "corrupts us in ways you can't imagine" 25 his experience became the seed from which one of his most arresting and pervasive ideas would grow; namely that
to be corrupted by totalitarianism one does not have to live in a totalitarian country. The mere prevalence of certain ideas can spread a kind of poison that makes one subject after
Orwell explains how the pressures to conform are so powerful that quite apart from forcing exploited and exploiter alike to conform to a bureaucratically imposed set of norms, the imperialist experience permeates not only the nine-to-five life of a colonial bureaucrat but the twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week existence of all those who come in contact with it.

One of those norms, as we have seen, is the attitude, not only of male officials but of their wives, towards the natives. When Mrs. Lackersteen says of them that "In some ways they are getting almost as bad as the lower classes at home," she invokes the widespread analogy between "natives" and the English "working class." This, together with the whites' frequent comparison of natives to children, seriously influenced many imperialist perceptions of non-white communities throughout the British colonies. It was his recognition of the pervasiveness of this native-working class analogy which later led Orwell to make some of his best contributions on the nature and role of class differences. These contributions came after and grew out of his simplistic conclusion that "the English working class...were the symbolic victims of injustice, playing the same part in England as the Burmese played in Burma."

His contributions on the nature and role of class differences will be considered in the next section. However, before leaving *Burmese Days* which has provided a focus for my discussion on Orwell's views of imperialism I would like to discuss what his first novel tells us about Orwell as political and social commentator.

The first thing that becomes apparent from his criticism is that the young Orwell is potentially a better journalist and essayist than
novelist. He has the polemicist's thrust, guided by a journalistic penchant for the exaggerated lead paragraph which grabs the reader's attention: "In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people." More interested in situations than in characters he uses the latter, like chess men, as representatives and victims of group attitudes. It is an approach which can quickly classify opposing forces in the short space of journalism but which dulls the sense of nuance so vital to the more literary device of the novel. Sociological categories, "characteristics rather than characters" as Alldritt points out, are what we see and of course these are easier to deal with with didactic purpose in mind.

Beyond the portrayal of Flory as victim there is a blind eye in *Burmese Days* to the exception among the "oppressors," an unwillingness to look beyond category to an individual of honourable intent, to the Fielding-like character in Forster's novel, for example. Instead, from Flory's view we get the impression that all imperialists are bad. As Jeffrey Meyers notes, "there are no redemptive characters...only 'dull boozing witless porkers.'" By contrast, in *A Passage to India* Fielding, looking back on his steadfast defence of his Indian friend, Dr. Aziz, notes without reproach how in later years he had thrown in his lot with the Anglo-Indians by marrying a countrywoman, and he was acquiring some of its limitations, and already felt surprise at his own past heroism. Would he to-day defy all his own people for the sake of a stray Indian? Aziz was a memento, a trophy, they were proud of each other, yet they must inevitably part.

It is an act of self-acceptance which Flory's rigid self-righteousness would never have allowed so that whereas Flory commits suicide beneath the crush of orthodoxy Fielding does not. Though as much an outcast as
Flory, having made the unpopular choice of siding with the arrested native Dr. Aziz who is accused of molesting a white woman, Fielding is not driven into the same kind of "either-or" despair which overwhelms Flory. He survives because while he is confronted with the same kind of group pressure - "the man who doesn't toe the line is lost" - he refuses, unlike Flory, to become the victim. This refusal is possible (and this is why Forster's novel is far superior to Orwell's) because Fielding clearly believes in Mrs. Moore's philosophy that while "everyone fails...there are so many kinds of failure." In Flory's view of the world you are either a failure or not a failure, you are either in or out; there is no middle ground. Fielding accepts what Orwell's protagonist never could, that there are acceptable and reasonable degrees of behaviour, that it is possible for the moral man to win contentment by working for improvement within an imperfect system. It is a position which Orwell himself could not accept in his own role of imperial policeman and which predisposed him to the simplistic master-slave, rich-poor world view of his early writings.

Unfortunately because Blair, the "odd man out," ignored the middle position, Orwell's subsequent pronouncements on imperialism ignore the possibility of the guilt-free happy imperialists as evidenced by the statement of one of his former colleagues that "I loved Burma and the Burman and have no regrets that I spent the best years of my life in the Burma police." The disregard by Flory for the middle ground, the sweeping master-slave generalizations, stem from Orwell's habit of assuming that his experience was typical, in this case that his experience in the outposts would have been duplicated in the headquarters of empire. As a result there is little or no attempt to suggest that Flory's criticisms of imperialism, so forthrightly stated that they gain the force of a condemnation of all
imperialists, are really only applicable to imperialism at the local level and not to imperialism as a whole. Though Orwell mentions the local whites' outrage at British M.P.s' criticism of the massacre by Dyer at Amritsar (where it is clear that higher-ups could be as malevolent as any Ellis) there is no sense that the higher imperialist officials could act differently, with their native subjects' best interests at heart.  

By contrast, in *A Passage to India* we read of a local imperialist official "fatigued" by the knowledge that the accused Dr. Aziz is not guilty until proven by law, and aware that "not only would the Nawab Bahadur and others be angry, but the [British] Government of India itself also watches." 38

Devoid of such qualification, the master-slave view not only of imperialism but of the world would travel back to England with Eric Blair in August, 1927.
Notes to Section I - Chapter II

1. Orwell, *Burmese Days*, p. 44.


13. Christopher Hollis, *A Study of George Orwell* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1956), p. 38. In *The Unknown Orwell*, p. 170, the authors write: "If Blair had arrived in Burma a few years earlier, he would have found a much more orderly, ordinary province, appearing to function in a smooth, untroubled way under a benevolent imperial administration. It is not inconceivable that the jarring, sometimes quite trivial events that stood out so painfully when he was there would have been less noticeable, less abrasive, less guilt-producing, if they had not taken place against a background of growing confusion and uncertainty for the once so self-confident British rulers in Burma. Paradoxically, it was the very attempts of the British government to liberalize its own administration and to allow the Burmese voice to be heard that made Orwell more conscious than he probably would have been otherwise of the Empire as a system in which he could not continue to participate and keep his self-respect." See also p. 172.


15. See James F. Guyot, "Bureaucratic Transformation in Burma," in *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*, ed. by Ralph Braibanti (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1966), p. 374. Guyot talks of how the Club is the place where "many of the important administrative decisions, particularly those affecting the big British firms, were made in an environment free from the restraints of formal bureaucratic routine." Forster makes the same point in *A Passage to India*. Turton, one of the Club members, approaches Fielding and says coldly, "I should be glad
if you will put in your appearance at the club this evening." Fielding answers, "I have accepted re-election, sir. Do you regard it is necessary I should come? I should be glad to be excused..." Turton replies, "It is not a question of your feeling, but of the wish of the Lieutenant-Governor. Perhaps you will ask me whether I speak officially. I do. I shall expect you this evening at six." (P. 268.)


17. Ibid., pp. 181, 225. The scene in which Ellis canes the Burmese boy almost certainly owes something to the following incident as described by Dr. Maung Htin Aung: "One afternoon, at about 4 P.M., the suburban railway station of Pagoda Road was crowded with schoolboys and undergraduates, and Blair came down the stairs to take the train to the Mission Road Station, where the exclusive Gymkhana Club was situated. One of the boys, fooling about with his friends, accidentally bumped against the tall and gaunt Englishman, who fell heavily down the stairs. Blair was furious and raised the heavy cane that he was carrying, to hit the boy on the head, but checked himself, and struck him on the back instead. The boys protested and some undergraduates, including myself, surrounded the angry Englishman ....The train drew in and Blair boarded a first-class carriage. But in Burma, unlike India, first-class carriages were never taboo to natives, and some of us had first-class season tickets. The argument between Blair and the undergraduates continued. Fortunately, the train reached Mission Road Station without further incident, and Blair left the train." (See p. 188, *The Unknown Orwell.*)

18. Ibid., pp. 75, 223.

19. Ibid., pp. 222, 33.

20. Ibid., pp. 66, 67.


22. Ibid., p. 95.


28. In *The Clash of Cultures*, p. 92, Cairns notes the existence of the same analogy in imperialist Africa and also mentions that "the most explicit indication of the denial of equality of racial and cultural status is seen in the very widespread comparison of the African to a child."


36. See Hollis, *A Study of George Orwell*, p. 38, where the author, in reference to the train journey during which he and the Educational Officer guiltily damned the Empire, writes, "Because he found it difficult to reveal himself to others, he thought that everybody found it difficult."

37. Philip Woodruff, in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Guardians*, II (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), p. 240, describes how "Amritsar city from April 10th to the 12th was in the hands of a mob" and how Brigadier-General Dyer, who arrived on the 11th, forbade public meetings. The population defied the order and subsequently Dyer ordered his troops to fire into a civilian crowd, killing over three hundred people and wounding about one thousand. His action, which was followed by his order that "any Indian" passing through a certain area "must crawl along the street where an English woman, a missionary teacher, had been attacked by the mob and left for dead," (p. 241) was fiercely debated, not so much in India but in England. In *Burmese Days* Ellis remarks, "Those cowards in England have got something to answer for." And "Even Mr. Macgregor, who detested bloodshed and martial law, shook his head at the name of Dyer. 'Ah, poor man! Sacrificed to the Paget M.P.s. Well perhaps they will discover their mistake when it is too late.'" Orwell does write in *The Road to Wigan Pier* that "Seen from the outside the British rule in India appears - indeed it is - benevolent and even necessary; and so no doubt are the French rule in Morocco and the Dutch rule in Borneo, for people usually govern foreigners better than they govern themselves." But then he adds, "But it is not possible to be part of such a system without recognizing it as an unjustifiable tyranny." (Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, p. 126.)

SECTION II - INDIGENOUS CONDITIONS: KYAUKTADA TO WIGAN - FROM ANTI-IMPERIALIST TO SOCIALIST

Chapter I - Background.

For Blair in the fall of 1927, on leave from Burma, the need to "expiate" the "immense weight" of imperialist guilt allied with his lifelong desire to be a writer forged the decision that he would not return to be a part of that "evil despotism." He resigned his commission in the Imperial Police, determined that he had "to escape not merely from imperialism but from every form of man's dominion over man." He wanted instead to sink into the world of the poor. Invoking the analogy between the Burmese and the working class he recalls:

I now realized that there was no need to go as far as Burma to find tyranny and exploitation. Here in England, down under one's feet, were the submerged working class, suffering miseries which in their different way were as bad as any an Oriental knew...it was in this way that my thoughts turned towards the English working class.1

The poor and the English working class had of course existed when Eric Blair left for Burma. Evidence of poverty and working class conditions abounded even for a relatively sheltered King's Scholar at Eton. In 1921, the year before he left for Burma, there had been a general strike and the birth of the "dole," and in 1922 unemployment already exceeded 1.5 million.2 There is no reason, however, to assume that Blair the schoolboy was either very conscious of or concerned with the obviously worsening situation in Britain.

But six years later when he returned to England the evidence of physical and psychic exhaustion which followed World War I had a profound effect on him. In one of his first articles as a professional writer Orwell claimed that whereas before World War I England had been "the winner today she is the loser. There in two words is the source of all the evil."3
The evil was unemployment, the losers the unemployed. After Burma, beginning his pilgrimage of expiation, he wanted to join the losers: "I wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed."\(^4\)

The nineteen-year old Blair who had left England on October 7, 1922 had not wanted to be an anti-imperialist or rub shoulders with the poor. This was the youth who had not only written "Awake! Young Men of England!" but who, after "his first adventure as an amateur tramp," concluded that while he was "very proud" of the "adventure" he would not repeat it.\(^5\) Blair would repeat it, however, and so would Orwell, not as a schoolboy looking at the world of tramps and unemployed from afar but as an adult who would go among the lower classes from a sense of duty rather than adventure. He would repeat it in an England where the collapse of the post-war boom amid the dramatic rise in England's trade deficit (exports declining by 47.9% in 1921 compared with 1920), the beginning of protective tariffs, the hunger marches\(^6\) of the unemployed, the stringent economies proposed by the Geddes' committee and the coal and general strikes of 1926 had left a bitter legacy. The dole in particular, which J.B. Priestley reported as characterizing the "fourth" England,\(^7\) had long ceased to be regarded simply as a legislative agent of relief. Instead it had become a way of life, a symbol of hated charity both by those who needed it and those who did not. A symbol of society's failure to provide jobs for all those willing to work, it fuelled the growing belief that men's lives were controlled by uncontrollable forces.

Blair noticed that "the word 'unemployment' was on everyone's lips" which "was more or less new to me after Burma."\(^8\) Still, while "unemployment" may have been more or less new to him the feeling that new social forces were at work in the breakdown of the old order was not.
George Bowling, the insurance salesman and protagonist of Orwell's novel *Coming Up For Air* (1939), recalls the time. Bowling, like so many of the demoralized and demobilized soldiers of World War I, had made the bitter discovery that Lloyd George's "land fit for heroes" was a land of rampant unemployment. He comments that "It's very strange, the things war did to people,"\(^9\) recalling how a few years before he had been a young grocery clerk in Lower Binfield, a quiet English country town. Then suddenly he was in uniform and soon in the officer class, "more or less keeping my end up among a crowd of other temporary gents....And - this is really the point - not feeling it in any way strange. Nothing seemed strange in those days...there was a temporary feeling about everything."\(^{10}\)

Just as suddenly as he had joined the Army he was out of it and out of work. Though trying to recapture the memory of a surer age by returning to Lower Binfield, he tells us that he is not in nostalgic search of an ideal time. Indeed he admits that life wasn't "softer" before the war, "actually it was harsher. People on the whole worked harder, lived less comfortably, and died more painfully."\(^{11}\) But the redeeming feature of life then, he argues, was the "feeling of security," above all, a "feeling of continuity." (My italics.) "All of them," says Bowling, knew that they had to die and a few of them even knew they faced bankruptcy "but what they didn't know was that the order of things could change."\(^{12}\) Bowling understands that much anxiety is relieved if the idea of death can be faced in the knowledge that "the things you care about are going to survive."\(^{13}\) The loss of such conviction in the thirties and the futility of his own "backward" journey to Lower Binfield in search of the old certainties is revealed when he remembers how "the war and the feeling of not being one's own master overshadowed everything."
If the war didn't happen to kill you it was bound to start you thinking. After that unspeakable idiotic mess you couldn't go on regarding society as something eternal and unquestionable, like a pyramid. You knew it was just a balls-up.\textsuperscript{14}

This feeling lingered, for even as the England of the twenties recovered slightly it was assaulted anew by the shock waves of the Wall Street crash.\textsuperscript{15} The latter helped to push Britain's unemployment to two and a half million in 1930 as the country entered the great depression, and the realization that the old pre-war order was never to return grew even more pervasive, particularly among young writers.\textsuperscript{16}

The year 1931 saw a revolution in Spain, the fall of Manchuria to the Japanese, and in England a series of crises which, amid increasing unemployment, a drain on gold, and the fall in the British pound, culminated in the resignation of the second Labour government under Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. And, to the Labour cabinet's "utter stupefaction,"\textsuperscript{17} this was immediately followed by the formation, under MacDonald's leadership, of a National government consisting of a coalition of Labour, Liberal and Conservative members. Apart from the sharp division this caused in the Labour Party, the divisions between left and right were made worse by the National government's subsequent attempts to drastically cut wages and unemployment pay. For the most part the middle classes had rallied to the government's side, responding to calls at year's end to "Buy British," to help shore up the weakened pound. And something of a patriotic determination to go along with the austerity cuts even reached the working class (who of course were by no means solidly Labour).\textsuperscript{18}

Part of the austerity program also called for a reduction of pay in the armed services. In the Navy this meant a pay loss of approximately twenty-five percent. The loss incurred by the enlisted men was to be
proportionally much higher than that of the officers. The result on the fifteenth of September, 1931 was a "mutiny," called a "strike," aboard the Atlantic Fleet in Cromarty Firth and though it ended quietly it helped move the government a year later to introduce the "Incitement to Disaffection act."\textsuperscript{19} It was in this climate of emergency that the Conservatives, using MacDonald, the former Labour Prime Minister, as their choice for a leader of a new National government, called for an election in October of 1931.

The result was an overwhelming victory for the National Government which won 556 seats, 472 of them Conservative as against only 46 seats for Labour. It was in essence a Conservative victory "under false colours" and "Once again, whatever the popular tides of feeling since the war, they [the Conservatives] were in power...the old ministers were back, the humdrum figures of the twenties, without even the need of seeking the new blood."\textsuperscript{20} For many in England it was not so much a vote of confidence as the lack of any viable alternative.\textsuperscript{21} In any event, the collapse of the Labour government was a devastating blow for the leftist reformers who had hitherto placed so much faith in the Labour Party. Recalling how \textit{New Signatures}, an anthology of poetry, was "related to the political events," one of its founders, John Lehmann, writes,

\begin{quote}
By the time of the General Election in 1931 I was already sufficiently converted [to Socialism] to share to the full the consternation and gloom that settled on all our circle at the collapse of the Labour Government....But even as I reached this point of intellectual conviction, I began to move away from it, further to the left. The discredit of Labour made even staunch supporters of the Party in Bloomsbury mutter that perhaps more radical measures of Marxism were necessary to defeat reaction and stop the drift towards a new war.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

Despite Lehmann's attraction to socialism most members of the intelligentsia had not yet moved to the left, indeed they had not moved
in any direction. Many of them, like Spender who wrote, "From 1931 onwards, in common with many other people, I felt hounded by external events," were still in the process of deciding whether or not to make the commitment to political and social purpose. Once the decision to make that commitment was made, the direction of the move would be "forward from liberalism" towards a "general radical revolutionary leftism." By 1933, with such decisions having been made, Michael Roberts, in the preface of New Country, another influential anthology, could write,

I think, and the writers of this book obviously agree, that there is only one way of life for us: to renounce the (capitalist) system now and live by fighting against it.

It is time that those who conserve something which is still valuable in England began to see that only a revolution can save their standards.

It is important to remember that though in most cases it was writers who articulated the left's disillusionment with the old order, such disillusionment was widespread in the general population. As two social historians note, "Years later ageing Labour supporters were still saying, 'I remember the time when Ramsay MacDonald went over,' as though nothing that had ever happened since had made an equal impression."

Such excerpts capture the growing impatience of the young towards the older members of society who, they believed, perpetuated the old political order. The gap between young and old was more noticeable because of the missing generation that had been killed in the war, a generation which might have acted as a kind of buffer zone between the experience of the old and the impatience of the young.

As a manifestation of their forward looking view and in more charitable extensions of what Orwell called the "curious hatred of old men," the younger writers, now preoccupied with revolt against the
authority and orthodoxy of the old order, inclined "towards a world view, social consciousness," and "a platonic affection for the proletariat." Into this world came Eric Blair, his nascent affection for the proletariat an inverse measure of his own disillusionment with the old order.

It is significant in viewing Orwell's entry into the post-war world of young writers that whereas the conflict between youth and the old order had largely come about through the disorder and uncertainties of a world war, Orwell's dislike of the old order had other origins. The ex-policeman's disillusionment was not nurtured in the trenches of France where the holocaust had been "conducted mainly by old men...with supreme incompetence" but by the old order's imperial stance in Burma where Flory describes the war as having merely "rolled on like a storm beyond the horizon." (My italics.)

And again, unlike so many other post-war writers, Blair, upon his return to England, had "no interest in Socialism or any other economic theory." In "Why I Write" (1946), Orwell says that while "the job in Burma had given me some understanding of the nature of imperialism...these experiences were not enough to give me an accurate political orientation." But the growing impatience of would-be reformists of the early thirties would lead Orwell to such an orientation. Indeed, as Zwerdling notes, it would be responsible for the "transition" from Orwell's "unformed political consciousness" to his "socialist faith." Part of this "unformed political consciousness" was Orwell's anti-imperialistic and self-confessed "anarchistic theory" which viewed all government as evil and divided the world up into the oppressed, who were always right, and the oppressors, who were always wrong.
The irrevocable political orientation was to come in 1936-37, the events of which "turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood." Nevertheless, between the time he resigned from his job in Burma and went to Spain where he fought with the Republicans, Orwell's disillusionment with the old order continued to vent its anger and guilt in an investigation of, and fascination with, poverty and unemployment.

In 1928, after a failing apprenticeship as a struggling poet in Portobello Road and occasional sorties into London's East End as the tramp, P.S. Burton, the aspiring writer went to Paris. Here his first professional piece ("Censorship in England") appeared in *Monde*, followed by other articles about unemployment in England, tramps, and Burma which were published in *Progrès Civique*. During the period 1928-29 in Paris, Blair was a dishwasher for a time, was hospitalized with pneumonia, wrote several unpublished short stories and two unpublished novels, all of which he later destroyed. At the end of 1929 he returned to England and tried his hand at writing reviews, poems and documentary sketches. These, with few exceptions, were all published between March, 1930 and August, 1935 in *Adelphi*, the "scurrilous [socialist] rag" Blair had used for target practice in Burma.

By January, 1933, *Down and Out in Paris and London* was published after T.S. Eliot had rejected it and a depressed Blair had left it with a friend with instructions to "throw it away." The book of course was saved, though Blair requested that it be published pseudonymously "as I am not proud of it" and thus the name George Orwell was used for the first time. Though Orwell had not as yet even nominally affiliated himself with any party he was convinced that only his descent into the abyss would exorcise his guilt.
What I profoundly wanted, at that time, was to find some way of getting out of the respectable world altogether....Once I had been among them [the "lowest of the low"] and accepted by them, I should have touched the bottom, and - this is what I felt: I was aware even then that it was irrational - part of my guilt would drop from me.40

But Blair was rational in that he understood that if you are to successfully exorcise your guilt, as Orwell only partially succeeded in doing by "writing it out" in *Burmese Days*, you need to rid yourself of the cause of that guilt, not merely the symptoms. You need some philosophy which will prevent you from repeating the old mistakes - in Orwell's case, the exploitative attitudes and acts of the imperialist.

I wanted to see what mass unemployment is like at its worst...this was necessary to me as part of my approach to Socialism for before you can be sure whether you are genuinely in favour of Socialism [or any replacement system] you have to decide whether things at present are tolerable or not tolerable, and you have got to take up a definite attitude on that terribly difficult issue of class.41

Thus while Blair knew that he did not want a prolongation of the days when he wore the policeman's uniform, when "those straps under the boot give you a feeling like nothing else in life,"42 and while he had formulated his "anarchistic theory" of government Orwell was not yet sure as to what system should replace the one Blair had spurned. The ensuing years, the indigenous period of poverty and semi-poverty in which Orwell, through choice, was for a time a struggling writer, tramp, tutor (1930-31), schoolmaster (1932-33), bookshop assistant (1934), and storekeeper (1936), was in effect an apprenticeship. It was a period of distillation for some of Blair's generalized, albeit firmly held, convictions about exploitation - most specifically about the working class and poor in England.

As Jeffrey Meyers notes, Orwell is a "literary non-conformist" who, because of the various forms he engaged in, is difficult to place in any particular genre. In his satirical attacks he has a strong affinity with
Shaw, Butler and Swift. In his writings on the working class he owes more to writers like Cobbett, Crabbe and Dickens, while the influence of Kipling, Wells, Lawrence and Joyce is evident in the early writings, particularly Lawrence in the naturalistic descriptions of *Burmese Days*, and Joyce in the badly done stream of consciousness chapter of *A Clergyman’s Daughter*. His writings about poverty, however, clearly fall into a long British tradition of inquiry into the lives of the underprivileged, beginning in novel form with Defoe and onwards through Gissing, Osborne and Pinter, and to the "sociological" tradition of Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1889-1903) and Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854). Ironically, however, he was mostly influenced in the way he went about descending into the world of the poor by the earlier investigations of the American, Jack London. Orwell thought that the investigation of the poor in the East End of London, recorded in *The People of the Abyss* (1903), "still has sociological value" and believed that London's book, *The Road*, describing the author's experiences on the road, was "brilliant." Of the beginning of his voluntary descents into the lower classes Orwell writes, "I knew nothing about working-class conditions. I had read the unemployment figures but I had no notion of what they implied...all this was *outside* the range of my experience." (My italics.) Orwell of course was not alone in his ignorance or confusion about what the unemployment figures really meant. Amid the myriad statistics for Britain's interwar years historians and economists show us that even with benefit of hindsight paradox runs rife, from the boom of 1918-20 through the ensuing depression (at its worst in 1933), and the thwarted recoveries of 1920, 1929, and 1937-38. Just as "figures showing the distribution
of the national income did not suggest that any large change [for the worse] had taken place in society in the twenties, statistics in the thirties showing a general rise in real income did not reveal the stark reality of massive unemployment. They did not reveal the fact, "as the uneasy conscience discovered," that thousands of families were still "ill fed, ill housed, ill cared for when illness struck." Even among those whose material well being was improved there were many for whom the effects of increased material benefit were negated by pervasively depressing social conditions.

In short, while in retrospect economists and historians can tell us that otherwise useful economic indicators in the interwar period were "up," large sectors of the population, particularly the two and a half million unemployed, did not experience an upswing.

Orwell's determination to penetrate the abstraction "poverty" began with the experiences he recorded in Down and Out in Paris and London (1933). His investigation of poverty reached a high point in 1936 with his journeys into the depressed coal mining areas of northern England at a time when the country's unemployment figure stood in excess of 2.1 million, and 23.9 percent of those receiving the dole had been out of work for more than a year.

Orwell would meet these statistics face on, particularly in Wigan (where in 1933 one man in three had been on the dole), and record his experiences in The Road to Wigan Pier (1937). The title of the book is significant in that Wigan, being inland in Lancashire, has no pier—the phrase "Wigan Pier" being a wry substitute for those workers unable to afford a holiday in Blackpool. Very few could afford Blackpool in 1936.
I turn now to a discussion of some of those factors examined by Orwell which led him to believe that the gap between privileged and underprivileged would grow in our century, and which might help us to understand not so much why the "disprivileged often rebel against the privileged, but why they do not rebel more often than they do." Before entering such a discussion the reader should be aware that although Orwell's indigenous period takes us to the Second World War and so goes beyond his Spanish experience, the latter has been accorded its own section rather than being included as part of the indigenous section. This has been done first because of a decision to follow through on Orwell's views on subjects, such as the British educational system, which he considered to be barriers to the attainment of a classless society in England. Secondly, but just as importantly, while his Spanish experience no doubt had its effect upon his writing in the last three years of the thirties, the hard lessons of Spain manifest themselves more, at least so far as his novels are concerned, in the global views of Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. In treating the Spanish experience separately as a precursor to the global view I not only believe that its lessons can be more clearly defined but I agree with Raymond Williams' assessment that in moving from England to Spain, from the world of Wigan Pier to Barcelona, George Orwell moved into another dimension.
Notes to Section II - Chapter I


3. The article was one of a series on unemployment which appeared in *Progrès Civique*, in Paris, between December, 1928 and May, 1929.


6. Probably the most celebrated of these, the "Jarrow Crusade," took place in October, 1934 under the leadership of Labour candidate Ellen Wilkinson who reported that the unemployment rate in Jarrow was "over 80 percent." See Symons, *The Thirties*, p. 55.

7. The other three Englands recorded in J.B. Priestley's *English Journey* (1934) are cited in Mowat, *Britain: 1918-1940*, pp. 480-81, as (1) the scenic southeast of guide books; (2) the industrial north; and (3) the chromium world of twentieth century suburbia.


England in the 1930s (hereinafter referred to as The Auden Generation), (Toronto: The Bodley Head, 1976), p. 66.

22. Ibid., p. 75.
23. Ibid., p. 65.
27. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 121.
28. Mowat, Britain: 1918-1940, p. 201. For comments on Orwell as a writer in the thirties see Mowat, pp. 486, 522, and 531.
29. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 121.
30. Orwell, Burmese Days, p. 64.
31. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 130.
34. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 129.
35. Orwell, CEJL, I, p. 28.
36. Ibid., p. 596.
37. Stansky and Abrahams, The Unknown Orwell, p. 207.
39. Named after a river he lived near in Suffolk.
40. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 131.
41. Ibid., p. 106.
42. Stansky and Abrahams, The Unknown Orwell, p. 178.
43. Meyers, A Reader's Guide to George Orwell, p. 80. Gissing's writings on poverty placed emphasis on what Orwell was to call the "respectable poverty" of the middle and lower middle classes, that is, the poverty of "underfed clerks, downtrodden governesses and bankrupt tradesmen." (See Meyers, p. 88.)
45. Ibid., p. 91.
50. Ibid., p. 502.
52. Mowat, *Britain: 1918–1940*, p. 433. Their numbers were greatest among men aged sixty to sixty-four for whom the dole would cease at age sixty-five. (See Mowat, p. 482.)
Chapter II - Poverty, Revolution and the Middle Classes

As we move on to a discussion of the "Poverty, Revolution and the Middle Classes" theme in Orwell's indigenous work it is appropriate here to clarify what he meant by the word "revolution."

While he did not shy away from the possibility of bloody change in his assault against the class system, noting that "at some point it may be necessary to use violence,"^1 Orwell clearly preferred the removal of privilege in society through effecting a fundamental shift in power through the pressure of public opinion, rather than through arms.

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. Nor does it mean the dictatorship of a single class.^2

Certainly he did not see violence as a pre-ordained policy of a revolution - only, like war, as a sometimes unavoidable, if necessary evil. And while he believed that the "structure" of society must be changed "from below," with violence if absolutely necessary, he believed just as strongly, even in time of war, in first trying the democratic process. This can be seen in a passage from *The Lion and the Unicorn*:

If during this winter the war settles into another stagnant period, we ought in my opinion to *agitate for a General Election*, a thing which the Tory Party machine will make frantic efforts to prevent. But even without an election we can get the government we want, provided that we want it urgently enough. A real shove from below will accomplish it. As to who will be in that government when it comes, I make no guess. I only know that the right men will be there when the people really want them, for it is movements that make leaders and not leaders movements.3 (My italics.)

Above all he would come to believe that the real beginning of revolution, of overthrowing privilege, lay in a change not only in "structure," however it was achieved, but in oneself. An attack upon the class system really began with an attack upon one's own class prejudices, and
that, as he demonstrates in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, is the most difficult revolution of all.

For to get outside the class-racket I have got to suppress not merely my private snobbishness, but most of my other tastes and prejudices as well. I have got to alter myself so completely that at the end I should hardly be recognizable as the same person. What is involved is not merely the amelioration of working-class conditions...but a complete abandonment of the upper-class and middle-class attitude to life. 

(My italics.)

I will now discuss (1) those aspects of poverty which, Orwell's indigenous writings suggest, will inhibit any urge for revolution, and (2) those attitudes which he believes are responsible for perpetuating poverty.

* * * * *

He wanted to submerge himself - to sink, as Rosemary had said.... He liked to think about the lost people, the underground people, tramps, beggars, criminals, prostitutes...beneath the world of money...where failure and success have no meaning; a sort of kingdom of ghosts where all are equal...where you could lose yourself for ever.

This is George Orwell describing Gordon Comstock, a struggling young poet and assistant bookseller in London. It is not long after Comstock has spent the night in jail, an incident which, based on Orwell's night in jail as described in "Clink," is a striking example of Orwell's penchant for conscripting his experience for use in his fiction.

Satisfying his perverse desire to be down and out, Comstock quickly discovered that "the first effect of poverty is that it kills thought" because "he had learned what it means to live for weeks on end on bread and margarine, to try to 'write' when you are half starved, to pawn your clothes, to sneak trembling up the stairs when you owe three weeks' rent." Above all he discovered that while one may be free in poverty from the restraints and responsibilities expected and imposed by the respectable "world of money" you do not escape from money pressures "merely by being moneyless." Ironically you are as much a "slave" of
money as you are in "the servitude of a 'good' job" from which Comstock tried to escape. 7

The discoveries of Gordon Comstock come directly from Orwell's experience. Apart from his intermittent descent into the world of the down and out between 1928 and 1931, when he was trying to "write" on very limited means, Orwell's most sustained experience of poverty, after a particularly prolific but commercially unprofitable period of writing in 1928-29, was a ten-week period in Paris in the fall of 1929. When his Burmese savings had all but disappeared he worked as a plongeur (dishwasher) in both a luxury hotel and a small restaurant.

In its implications for this study another of Orwell's most important discoveries of this transitional period of poverty was that poverty which "you thought...would be quite simple...is extraordinarily complicated." He describes how the drive to keep up appearances, to maintain dignity, creates a need for "secrecy" which can only be met and maintained by a habitual and often expensive lying. "You stop sending clothes to the laundry, and the laundress catches you in the street and asks you why; you mumble something and she, thinking you are sending the clothes elsewhere, is your enemy for life." And in the same way as Comstock in London studiously avoids meeting acquaintances in the pub, being too poor to buy a round, Orwell, writing of his Paris period, tells of how

you have strayed into a respectable quarter, and you see a prosperous friend coming. To avoid him you dodge into the nearest cafe. Once in the cafe you must buy something, so you spend your last fifty centimes on a glass of black coffee....Once [sic] could multiply these disasters by the hundred. They are part of the process of being hard up. 8

As well as the myriad connivances which the requirements of dignity
force upon you there is the sheer exhaustion which afflicts those who have always been poor and must work long hours for little pay. Describing the plongeur as "one of the slaves of the modern world...no freer than if he were bought and sold," working between sixty and a hundred hours a week, Orwell notes that "he lives in a rhythm between work and sleep, without time to think, hardly conscious of the exterior world."9

It is not surprising that, in an industrialized world, we most often think of such conditions as being the lot of the city worker but Orwell in *A Clergyman's Daughter* reminds us that the superficially idyllic country setting can camouflage an equally debilitating life. Based on his own experience in the hop fields Orwell writes of Dorothy Hare, the Reverend's daughter who through amnesia has drifted off into the "hard up" worlds of the seasonal agricultural worker in Kent and the unemployed in London. He tells us that while she was happy in the hop fields the work literally stupefied her. In London Dorothy is not working but again she experiences the blurring of perceptions, "the dazed witless feeling she had known on the way to the hop fields." Now the almost constant lack of cover, which is the lot of many unemployed, causes her condition to worsen and "all the while it is as though everything were a little out of focus, a little unreal." Even for the plongeur who is employed, "the world, inner and outer, grows dimmer till it reaches almost the vagueness of a dream."10

The dream is not a nightmare, because it is accompanied by extreme "apathy."11 The point which the above excerpts make clear is that on the one hand, fatigue through overwork, and on the other, lethargy through undernourished inactivity, often converge. Whether the world of poverty and unemployment is transitional or not, "the best intellects will not
stand up against it...you cannot command the spirit of hope in which anything has got to be created.” The result of this kind of experience for Dorothy Hare in her slave-like labour of the hop fields was that "More and more she had come to take her curious situation for granted, to abandon all thoughts of either yesterday or tomorrow...it narrowed the range of your consciousness to the passing minute.”

Orwell shows us how the petty details of poverty, all but insignificant in themselves, accumulate and how the resulting complexity of living from day to day drains you of all energy, which is already low because of lack of food. And whether or not being poor is caused by unemployment, or by low wages accompanied by long, dull, exhausting hours of work, the job of satisfying hunger and finding shelter leaves no time for anything else. Hence his remark that plongeurs never thought of forming a union or going on strike because they simply had no leisure for it. And from his living with miners in Wigan he was quick to see that after travelling time (to and from the actual work face where payment begins) and "washing up" time had been accounted for, some miners had less than four hours a day free time. This is an instance of how, with his eye for the concrete detail, Orwell alerted his readers to the qualifications which one has to place on official statistics which gave the impression, for example, that miners only work seven and a half hours a day.

His conclusion is simply that tired poor people are unlikely to resist exploitation, let alone to revolt. In any case, as we shall see in the section on class, Orwell believed that such a revolt would most likely be instigated and led by middle class intellectuals who had more free time than the poor.

In such conditions of poverty as Orwell describes wherein the
satisfaction of basic necessities poses a daily challenge to the dulled brains of the undernourished it would seem that people would readily agree to serve whoever can assure them food and shelter. The assumption that revolution is unlikely to come from these poor gains strength from Orwell's observation that together with the boredom of the unemployed comes "the great redeeming feature of poverty: the fact that it annihilates the future." If concern for the future is gone, so is any motive for resistance.

The annihilation of the future is largely possible because the need to satisfy immediate and essential needs makes the present and not the future the one thing worth thinking about. The resulting lack of anxiety about the future, says Orwell, is "a great consolation in poverty" and gives way to a sense of relief, almost pleasure, gained from knowing that you have reached bottom and have not gone to pieces. This is the world of the proles in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* who precisely because they do not go to pieces hold the only hope, weak though it is, of humanity surviving in a world of Big Brother.

But if the future is annihilated, what of the past? No matter how much hunger may exclude worry about the distant future, the past is embedded in memory and is not annihilated. Does it not present the poor with the idea of an alternative way of life, whose reinstitution they might see, however simplistically, as a solution to their poverty? In short, why do the lessons, the models of action in history from the revolt of Spartacus to the French Revolution and on, fail to move the poor to action? Instead of standing about on the dole, permitting apathy to take hold, why is it that those stories of the past about the revolts of people against their rulers fail to excite even the dream of a way out? The
answer is to be found in one of the most important insights of Orwell's indigenous novel, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, in that part which is clearly based on Orwell's experience as a private school teacher in 1932-33:

Dorothy had not realized till now how hard it is for children who come from poor homes to have even a conception of what history means...these children came from bookless homes and from parents who would have laughed at the notion that the past has any meaning for the present.¹⁹ (My italics.)

Because the poor do not read books they do not have a sense of history. Because they do not have a sense of history they are ignorant both of other ways of life and of blueprints for action for attaining other ways of life.²⁰ With this in mind there is little difference in Orwell's extrapolation from the particular to the universal, between the miners in Wigan who do not read books and only know of an acute housing shortage "when we were told about it"²¹ and the proles in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* who so docilely accept their wretched conditions because the history books have been written by the ruling class. In both cases Orwell believed that the lack of history condemned the underprivileged to a largely unquestioning and servile acceptance of an apparently immutable world of "them" and "us."

It should be stressed, however, that Orwell's emphasis on the lack of history among the poor should not be taken to mean that he thought the poor so abysmally ignorant as to be incapable of recognizing their plight, or so mentally deficient that they could never envisage a better future.²² The point is that the lack of models for realizing a better future encourages the poor to adapt to circumstances rather than to try to change them.

The tendency to adapt to circumstances rather than to challenge "them" is particularly evident in *The Road to Wigan Pier* when upon
investigating the chronic and severe unemployment in the North Orwell notes that because conditions were more or less the same for millions of unemployed and their dependents a sense of relative deprivation was lessened. Consequently "you have populations settling down, as it were, to a lifetime on the P.A.C....Take, for instance, the fact that working class think nothing of getting married on the dole."23 (My italics.)

The dole, however, hardly makes for contentment, even after the transition or the 'settling down' to poverty has been achieved.24 The contrary assumption made by many critics of the poor, that living on the dole spawns a contented and rampant laziness among its recipients who thus become unwilling to improve their situation,25 was vigorously attacked by Orwell. (Such an assumption led to the use, by those critical of the poor, of the term "unemployable" to designate unwillingness rather than incapacity.) For Orwell the assumption was grossly exaggerated, if not simply wrong in most cases. Drawing on his association with the down and out he suggests that quite apart from the money, the unemployed among the poor, far from being contentedly lazy, worry as much as if not more than anybody else about not having work. This is especially true, he argues, of the illiterate man who, having little or no other means of expression save his work habit, needs work "even more than he needs money."26 (My italics.) This questions whether the dole, or its modern equivalent, will in fact keep people (as C.L. Mowat claims it did in the "hungry thirties") "on the safe side of discontent and thoughts of revolution."27 Indeed it was not the dole, Orwell argued, that accounted for the fact that, amid the grinding poverty of the interwar years, the working class "neither turned revolutionary nor lost their self-respect,"28 but what the dole could now purchase.
The fact that the underprivileged had not risen up against the privileged, despite the initial postwar "wave of revolutionary feeling," was due, he said, to the advent of cheap luxuries which mitigated the humiliating conditions of poverty. This helps explain how, as Orwell noted earlier, people were able to accept the dole as a way of life rather than simply as a temporary measure.

Today in the face of the outsider's ignorance of how the "poor" or "unemployed" mind works the number of T.V. aerials cluttering the already cluttered slum disposes many an observer to regard the proliferation of luxuries among the poor as evidence of a parasitic irresponsibility. But to the insider the truth is that when you are depressed by poverty the same logic applies to appliances as it does to food, that is, you do not want the ordinary - that is all around you - what you want is the extraordinary - you want escape. "When you are unemployed...bored and miserable you don't want to eat dull wholesome food. You want something a little bit 'tasty.'" With more disturbing implications for our age he adds that "an aspirin is much better as a temporary stimulant than a crust of brown bread."

In particular Orwell discerned how post-war mass production resulted in the luxury often being cheaper than the necessity. The effects of mass production among the poor were most noticeable in the appearance of relatively cheap clothes which, Orwell claimed, along with movies made the greatest contribution to the mitigation of poverty. Ironically, while coal miners were thrown out of work by the post-war industrial advance which relied less and less on coal, the work-filled life of a miner's wife was eased by the advent of the rayon industry and the working miner's life made easier by cheaper and time-saving bathtubs.
Among the cheap luxury items which provided some respite for the poor in inter-war Britain, and in his view "averted revolution," Orwell talks of gambling as an agent of hope, "something to live for" amid the squalor of economic deprivation. Calling it "the cheapest of all luxuries" he notes that gambling "has now risen almost to the status of a major industry. Consider for instance the Football Pools, with a turnover of about six million pounds a year, almost all of it from the pockets of working-class people" and how

when Hitler re-occupied the Rhineland...the threat of war aroused hardly a flicker of interest locally [in Yorkshire] but the decision of the Football Association to stop publishing their fixtures in advance (this was an attempt to quell the Football Pools) flung all Yorkshire into a storm of fury.

Beyond viewing gambling as being an agent of hope lies the deeper conviction among the poor that life itself is dependent on chance and not on planning. This is expressed by Boris, the garrulous waiter in Down and Out in Paris and London who tells Orwell, the dishwasher:

"Waiting is a gamble...you may die poor, you may make your fortune in a year...you never know when a stroke of luck is coming." Again the lack of a conception of history plays its part because in not providing the poor with an historically identifiable villain it moves them instead to look for other answers to explain their underprivileged world. One answer is to believe in luck (another is religion which will be discussed later). One can revolt against an identifiable villain but one cannot revolt against luck. In any event, as Orwell's journey to Wigan suggests (though "It goes against the grain to say this"), the poor know that while

ideally, the worst type of slum landlord is a fat wicked man, preferably a bishop, who is drawing an immense income from extortionate rents...actually, it is a poor old woman who has invested her life's savings in three slum houses, inhabits one of them, and tries to live on the rent of the other two - never,
in consequence, having any money for repairs.\(^{37}\)

How can one revolt against old ladies who cannot afford repairs?

Orwell was aware, of course, that belief in luck was not confined to the poor. But he also saw that despite the upper and middle classes' indulgence in buying the "odd" raffle ticket and "occasional" drink, these classes held a disdainful view of the poor's preference for luxury over necessities. They saw the unemployed's preference for luxury not as a measure of the constant crushing boredom of unemployment but as evidence of the lack of the will to work, even though, as Orwell has shown, to the lowest educated, and hence the most likely to be unemployed, work was greatly desired, it being regarded as the sole measure of personal worth.

Again, as in \textit{Burmese Days}, hypocrisy is hidden in language. Although the upper and middle classes are attracted to luxury, to gambling, as are the poor, their indulgence is likely to be camouflaged by the use of "non-poor" words. Thus Reverend Hare in \textit{A Clergyman's Daughter} desperately trying to maintain the old pre-war lower middle class style

\begin{quote}
with one thumb in the belt of his cassock...frowned abstractedly ....His broker had advised United Celanese. Here - in Sumatra Tin, United Celanese and numberless other remote and dimly imagined companies - was the central cause of the Rector's money troubles. He was an inveterate gambler. Not, of course, that he thought of it as gambling; it was merely a lifelong search for a "good investment."\(^{38}\)
\end{quote}

Unless we are aware of such verbal camouflage we are apt to underrate or simply not notice the importance of the belief in "luck" in Orwell's work.\(^{39}\) The institutionalization of this belief by the rulers in \textit{Nineteen Eighty-Four} is captured in the following example of Orwell's ability to extrapolate from first hand experience to the universal postulation. Describing Winston Smith's passage through a working class or "proles" area he uses his British experience even down to the cockney
It was nearly twenty hours, and the drinking shops which the proles frequented ("pubs," they called them) were choked with customers. From their grimy swing doors, endlessly opening and shutting, there came forth a smell of urine, sawdust, and sour beer. In an angle formed by a projecting housefront three men were standing very close together, the middle one of them holding a folded-up newspaper, which the other two were studying over his shoulder. Even before he was near enough to make out the expression on their faces, Winston could see absorption in every line of their bodies. It was obviously some serious piece of ["low level"] news that they were reading. He was a few paces away from them when suddenly the group broke up and two of the men were in violent altercation. For a moment they seemed almost on the point of blows.

"Can't you bleeding well listen to what I say? I tell you no number ending in seven ain't won for over fourteen months!"

"Yes, it 'as, then!"

"No, it 'as not! Back 'ome I got the 'ole lot of 'em for over two years wrote down on a piece of paper. I takes 'em down reg'lar as the clock. An' I tell you, no number ending in seven—...They were talking about the Lottery. Winston looked back when he had gone thirty metres. They were still arguing, with vivid, passionate faces. The Lottery, with its weekly pay-out of enormous prizes, was the one public event to which the proles paid serious attention. It was probable that there were some millions of proles for whom the Lottery was the principal if not the only reason for staying alive. It was their delight, their folly, their anodyne, their intellectual stimulant. Where the Lottery was concerned, even people who could barely read and write seemed capable of intricate calculations and staggering feats of memory. There was a whole tribe of men who made a living simply by selling systems, forecasts, and lucky amulets. Winston had nothing to do with the running of the Lottery, which was managed by the Ministry of Plenty, but he was aware (indeed everyone in the Party was aware) that the prizes were largely imaginary. Only small sums were actually paid out, the winners of the big prizes being non-existent persons.40 (My italics.)

Here in a description of a world where even the most common anodyne of television has ceased to provide escape from the drabness, fear and inherent inequality of a police state the most significant lines are those which testify to the fact that the proles' faith in the lottery is more important than actual evidence of riches. What was the agency of hope for the starving sweepstake ticket holder of Wigan Pier41 has become the sole repository of hope for the proles. Like everyone else, they have lost the belief in a personal immortality as a reward for the trials of existence in
Oceania and so in a world of such patent inequality the only recompense, the only "believed in" equality, is that afforded by the hand of chance.

Although in his last novel Orwell sees gambling along with cheap gin houses as a means of Big Brother containing any proletarian discontent, he dismisses the idea that in inter-war Britain gambling, along with other cheap palliatives, was an astute manoeuvre by the governing class to keep the poor and unemployed quiet. He believed instead that while revolution was undoubtedly "averted" by the advent of cheap luxuries the latter's appearance was, in the main, the "unconscious" result of the interaction between post-war supply and demand. Furthermore he wrote that what he had seen of the governing class did not convince him that they were intelligent enough to conceive, let alone execute, any such "bread and circuses" plan.

But if Orwell viewed the servile-producing "weapon of unemployment" as simply the result of the vicissitudes of the world market rather than a willful policy of governing elites he did hold the more privileged population responsible for the continuance of existing inequalities. Here we move from Orwell's consideration of those aspects of poverty which "cowed" the revolutionary spirit to his consideration of those upper and middle class attitudes which in his view perpetuated poverty itself.

In considering his views on this subject I approach his discussion of the basis of the class system in general in Britain, a system which, through his novels Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, would culminate in the grossly unfair world of Big Brother where eighty-five percent of the population are deliberately kept poor. Orwell argued that the perpetuation of poorly paid "useless work" (as in the provision of non-essential services) in order to keep the working class poor too busy for revolution
was the indirect result of what he believed was the deep seated fear with which the rich regarded the poor. He argues that at the very root of this pervasive fear, and thus at the root of class structure, is the belief that quite apart from money "there is some mysterious fundamental difference between rich and poor, as though they were two different races" such as whites and natives in Burma or men and "animals" in England. He characterized this attitude as a "deep seated fear of the mob [the poor]."45

Unsophisticated as this view was, Orwell saw a direct connection between it and the servility he believed was endemic to the capitalist system and the class prejudices "which generally persist from birth to death" and from which everyone claims "that he, in some mysterious way, is exempt."46 He feared that those people who continue to believe that there is a fundamental difference between rich and poor at birth will not only perpetuate present inequalities but may well prefer "any injustice sooner than let the mob loose; sooner than allow the poor time to plan and eventually challenge privilege. "The mob (the thought runs) are such low animals that they would be dangerous if they had leisure."47 An intellectually honest rich man, writes Orwell, will admit 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. Hence, writes Orwell, the attitude of those well-to-do "intelligent, cultivated people" who side with the rich for no other reason than they believe that more liberty for the poor is less liberty for them.48

The importance of this observation is that it suggests how easily the existence of privilege, including greater freedom for some than others,
can be rationalized by appealing to the commercial mind; to the winner-loser, profit and loss view of the world which so pervades the marketplace. Here liberty can be thought of as being no less subject to the laws of scarcity than the supply of bread. That is, the lack of freedom for some can be excused by those who have more freedom by encouraging acceptance of the analogy between "liberty" and "goods," as if liberty was somehow a "non-renewable resource." The danger here is that this view hides the possibility of willful maldistribution even from those who may be duped into thinking of liberty in terms of supply and demand.

The fear of an undisciplined rabble storming the bastions of privilege is itself perpetuated, Orwell claimed, for no other reason than the rich, including those with potentially "liberal opinions," never mix with the poor and so never question their fear of the mob. 49

Though Eric Blair in 1928 was not rich or even well-to-do he was a member of the somewhat privileged "lower-upper-middle-class," and he well understood the fear of the mob, for he had it himself. His first real contact with the poor, that is, his first attempt to get "inside" the world of poverty before he wrote Down and Out in Paris and London, is recorded in The Road to Wigan Pier when he talks of his entry into a lodging house in Limehouse Causeway. The passage is a dramatic representation of the transition from Eric Blair to George Orwell who suddenly realizes that Blair's class-bred fear could not stand up against his experience with the down and out.

Heavens, how I had to screw up my courage before I went in! It seems ridiculous now. But you see I was still half afraid of the working class. I wanted to get in touch with them, I even wanted to become one of them, but I still thought of them as alien and dangerous; going into the dark doorway of that common lodging-house seemed to me like going down into some dreadful subterranean place - a sewer of rats, for instance. I went in fully expecting a fight. The people would
spot that I was not one of themselves and immediately infer that I had come to spy on them; and they would set upon me and throw me out — that was what I expected. I felt that I had got to do it, but I did not enjoy the prospect.

Inside the door a man in shirt-sleeves appeared from somewhere or other. This was the "deputy," and I told him that I wanted a bed for the night. My accent did not make him stare, I noticed; he merely demanded ninepence and then showed me the way to a frowsy firelit underground. There were stevedores and navvies and a few sailors sitting about and playing draughts and drinking tea. They barely glanced at me as I entered. But this was Saturday night and a hefty young stevedore was drunk and was reeling about the room. He turned, saw me, and lurched towards me with broad red face thrust out and a dangerous-looking fishy gleam in his eyes. I stiffened myself. So the fight was coming already! The next moment the stevedore collapsed on my chest and flung his arms round my neck. "'Ave a cup of tea, chum!" he cried tearfully; "'ave a cup of tea!"

I had a cup of tea. It was a kind of baptism. After that my fears vanished. Nobody questioned me, nobody showed offensive curiosity; everybody was polite and gentle and took me utterly for granted.\(^50\) (My italics.)

Though Orwell did not go to the lodging house as a rich man the truth which this representative passage of Blair's "duty"-felt descent to the poor makes clear is that there is no "mob." This is not to contradict the obvious fact that the "poor" are clearly identifiable as a group. But it does suggest that the poor do not constitute an actively hostile group. There is no widespread, collective and conscious anti-rich plot — or even anti-rich sentiment — ever ready to attack those who are clearly more privileged or even those with public schoolboy accents who are marginally more privileged. When the world is divided by the poor into "them" and "us" this denotes recognition of a money barrier, not permanent hostility towards the more privileged classes. Indeed Orwell sees even this recognition as an abjectly servile act.\(^51\)

When Orwell talks of the working class as a revolutionary "class" it is in terms of potentially revolutionary spirit — not in terms of a "mob" straining at the leash. An example of this is his statement that
guerilla methods...were perfectly well grasped by many of the men who listened to it." But only in such emergencies, during a war, for example, could Orwell see real possibilities for the potential revolutionary to become a revolutionary, as in 1941 when "somewhere near a million British working men now have rifles in their bedrooms and don't wish to give them up."52

Blair's descent into poverty not only taught him that there was no revolutionary "mob" as such but that the reason there was none was that those who are in a subordinate class are not necessarily altogether of it. In Paris as a plongeur, his eye for the concrete saw not only how the swing door between kitchen and dining room effectively divided rich from poor but also how the shadow of "caste" moved in and out with the waiters as the latter moved between the world of their origin and the world of their aspirations.

It is an instructive sight to see a waiter going into a hotel dining-room. As he passes the door a sudden change comes over him. The set of his shoulders alters; all the dirt and hurry and irritation have dropped off in an instant. He glides over the carpet, with a solemn priest-like air.

The waiter's outlook is quite different [from the rest of the workers]. He too is proud in a way of his skill, but his skill is chiefly in being servile. His work gives him the mentality, not of a workman, but of a snob...between constantly seeing money, and hoping to get it, the waiter comes to identify himself to some extent with his employers.

"Our staff, amounting to about a hundred and ten, had their prestige graded as accurately as that of soldiers, and a cook or waiter was as much above the plongeur as a captain above a private."53 The waiter's movement between the cursing, filthy world of the kitchen and the clean, subdued world of the dining room is daily so rapid and frequent that there is literally a constant tension between "coming" and "going." This tension, Orwell saw, was not conducive to solidarity with his fellow workers who themselves were graded according to skill.
Orwell was starting to recognize the importance of \textit{status}, having discovered that even in the world of the lower classes it was the desire for status, as much as for money, which ensured the continuance of some men's privilege through other men's servitude and helped create "this perpetual uneasiness between man and man, from which we suffer in modern England."$^{54}$

He would now pursue the implications of the drive for status in the middle classes as part of Blair's passage from a grasp of the essentially economic divisions between men to George Orwell's growing understanding of the social divisions between men. As we have seen when he began his pilgrimage amongst the down and out he had no notion of what unemployment figures implied. But "above all I did not know the essential fact that 'respectable' poverty is always the worst."$^{55}$ Though in this passage he meant "respectable" to refer to all those who worked, he was about to discover how much worse "respectable" poverty was for the middle class, and how in their terror of it, of the loss of status as well as money, they perpetuated inequality.

In terms of his books during the inter-war years this marked a definite shift from his preoccupation with the unemployed and poor working classes in \textit{Down and Out in Paris and London} (1933) to the impoverished middle classes of \textit{A Clergyman's Daughter} (1935), \textit{Keep the Aspidistra Flying} (1936), and \textit{Coming Up For Air} (1939). It was a shift from the master-slave, rich-poor concept of \textit{Down and Out in Paris and London} to the view that "to Dr. Goebbels' charge that England is still 'two nations,' the only truthful answer would have been that she is in fact three."$^{56}$ The third nation was that of the middle classes, the home of Eric Arthur Blair.

Paradoxically the middle classes were both the hope and despair of
Orwell's desire for social reform. A member of the middle classes himself, seeking to reform society by eliminating the gap between privileged and underprivileged, Orwell, as noted earlier, did not believe that such reform need necessarily be violent. But he did believe that the success of any movement aiming at removal of differences between rich and poor is dependent upon a coalition of working class and middle class interests. He did not disagree with those advocates of revolution who said that the ruling class needs to be removed in order that inequalities might be removed but insisted that what is generally called the "middle class" together with the working class had to be the movers. He considered the "middle class" "indispensable" to any such enterprise because it includes "practically the whole of the technocracy...without which a modern industrial country could not exist for a week." With typical Orwellian irony he correctly points out that it is this middle class which has largely been ignored as a revolutionary force by the middle class advocates of the "proletarian revolution" - an "old fashioned" concept which predates the rise of the modern technocrats. In Orwell's view, however, there is within the middle classes a major impediment to any blue-white collar coalition. Superficially this impediment is the snobbishness towards the working classes but such snobbishness is merely symptomatic of the drive for wealth and status.

Orwell does not suggest that such drives are confined to the middle classes. He notes in The Road to Wigan Pier, for example, that "one of the most desolating spectacles the world contains" is the trade union official who, though chosen to represent the working class, ends up on the bourgeois side because he sees his position as a way of stepping up in the world. Nevertheless Orwell believes that such drives for wealth
and status are much stronger in the middle classes. Ironically it was in the working class districts of the North that he was "struck by the profound differences that are still made by status." In Wigan he stayed with a miner who had nystagmus, a disease of the eyes fairly common to miners. The miner, who could barely see across his room, had been paid a small pension for nine months but now the colliery was talking of reducing even this by half. The importance of status was rediscovered by Orwell in the atmosphere of cap-touching servility which surrounded the miner's receipt of his miserable pension. Orwell writes of the "petty inconvenience and indignity of being kept waiting about, of having to do everything at other people's convenience" which he sees as being "inherent in working-class life." A member of the bourgeoisie may also have to suffer certain inconveniences but they are not visited upon him with the same sense of discrimination, for even when he is on the verge of starving, Orwell notes that he has certain rights attached to his "bourgeois status." This status, he adds, carries with it an expectation of civility and deference.

But for a working man it is different.

A thousand influences constantly press a working man down into a passive role. He does not act, he is acted upon. He feels himself the slave of mysterious authority and has a firm conviction that "they" will never allow him to do this, that, and the other.

He recalls how once, while picking hops, he asked the grossly underpaid pickers why they had not formed a union. He was immediately told that "'they' would never allow it." When he asked who "they" were he reports that "nobody seemed to know; but evidently 'they' were omnipotent."

For Orwell this explained why although the English working class had a flair for organization they "do not show much capacity for leadership."
It was, he believed, a capacity to which the person of bourgeois origin is more educated, so that "in almost any revolt the leaders would tend to be people who could pronounce their aitches." He laments the fact that despite his efforts against it even communist miners in Wigan insisted upon calling him "sir," and that although he and they were friends, all of them knew that he was essentially a "foreigner" in their midst. Thus he writes, "Whichever way you turn this curse of class difference confronts you like a wall of stone." Reflecting upon such experiences Orwell concludes that "Everyone, barring fools and scoundrels, would like to see the miner better off" and "in a sense it is true that almost everyone would like to see class distinctions abolished." But he argues, using his own case as an example of the general problem, that while it is easy for me to say that I want to get rid of class-distinctions ...nearly everything I think and do is a result of class-distinctions. All my notions - notions of good and evil, of pleasant and unpleasant, of funny and serious, of ugly and beautiful - are essentially middle-class notions...the products of a special kind of upbringing.62

It was this special kind of upbringing, including its emphasis on status as well as wealth, which Orwell saw as the chief obstacle to any blue-white collar coalition. In particular it explained why the middle class "have always tended to side with the capitalist class and against their unnatural allies, the manual workers. Such unnatural identification with the exploiters, argued Orwell, was largely the result of "an educational system designed to have just that effect."63 (My italics.) This education constituted the "largest item" of middle class expenditure,64 making the search for status much more pervasive than it was in the working class. It perpetuated, he believed, the social and economic gaps between the two classes and did its part along with the "bourgeois-baiters" in
directing attention away from the central fact that "poverty is poverty, whether the tool you work with is a pick-axe or a fountain pen." The fact that poverty is not a unifying force between classes is reflected in Orwell's celebrated remark that "the essential point about the English class-system is that it is not entirely explicable in terms of money." The example he gives of a naval officer and grocer who may have the same income but who "are not equivalent persons" and "would only be on the same side in very large issues...possibly not even then" illustrates his point that a "caste-system" exists within the middle classes.

Such a lack of middle class solidarity did not mean, however, that Orwell thought it would be easier to effect a middle class-working class alliance, for whatever their differences nearly all members of the middle classes aspire to rise to the upper classes. Indeed Orwell notes that amid the impoverished middle classes it is the determination to maintain status (to keep the aspidistra flying) and if possible to increase it which results in families devoting "practically the whole family income" simply to "keeping up appearances." But, says Orwell, for such families who know theoretically how to act, and yearn to act, like the upper classes, the sacrifices made to middle class rent, clothes and school bills in order to maintain a semblance of upward mobility form an unending nightmare. It is a nightmare which runs through all three novels of the indigenous period.

Describing his lower middle class neighbourhood, George Bowling, the insurance salesman in Coming Up For Air, declares that the long line of stucco, semi-detached row houses with such pretentious names as Mon Abri, Mon Repos and Belle Vue constitute nothing more than "a prison with the cells all in a row." In each house, argues Bowling, the breadwinner lives...
in fear of the "boss," the "sack" and is "never [psychically] free except when he's fast asleep and dreaming that he's got the boss down the bottom of a well and is bunging lumps of coal at him." The reason for the fear, "the basic trouble with people like us," says Bowling, "is that we all imagine we've got something to lose." Most of the people on Ellesmere Road, this insurance salesman tells us, harbour the belief that they own their own houses even while they are burdened by payments that keep them awake at night. This fear that some misfortune will make payments impossible, says Bowling, only bolsters the "illusion that we...have what's called 'a stake in the country.'"71 (My italics.)

Of course not all of the struggling middle classes were so bound to the upper class in terms of debts owing. But whatever the degree of sacrifice involved, the common result of the illusion of a stake in the country was a lack of empathy for the working class who were not party to the same illusion. Even Bowling, who is so disdainful of the fear on Ellesmere Road, says, in cavalier fashion, that

There's a lot of rot talked about the sufferings of the working class. I'm not so sorry for the proles myself. Did you ever know a navvy who lay awake thinking about the sack? The prole suffers physically, but he's a free man when he isn't working.72

Bowling's remark reflects Orwell's more general point in *The Road to Wigan Pier* that if you "suggest to the average unthinking person of gentle birth who is struggling to keep up appearances...that he is a member of an exploiting parasite class...he will think you are mad." Such a man, says Orwell, will point to a number of ways in which he considers himself much worse off than the working man. Furthermore such a man does not see the working class as "a submerged race of slaves" but as "a sinister flood creeping upwards to engulf himself...and his family."73
For such people the "mob" of *Down and Out in Paris and London* is a reality. Bowling's claim of "free" navvies, many of whom no doubt worried as much about feeding their families as the lower middle-class did in Ellesmere Road, is obviously a Depression-bred exaggeration.

Nevertheless, a theme which pervades *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *The Road to Wigan Pier* is the marked difference in anxiety which Orwell notices between those with "nothing" and those with "something" to lose. Such anxiety explains why "there is much more consciousness of poverty than in any working-class family above the level of the dole." The obvious question then, given the level and pervasiveness of middle class anxiety, is why doesn't the middle class dream of "bunging lumps of coal" at the boss become a reality? Why didn't the struggling inhabitants of Ellesmere Road overthrow the big landlords of the "Hesperides Estate"? Why wouldn't such sustained anxiety eventually explode in revolution?

The most obvious answer is that, its privations notwithstanding, the middle class's aspirations, like those of the waiters in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, are aligned with those of the rich. And Bowling's comment that every man on Ellesmere Road "would die on the field of battle to save his country from Bolshevism" because he believes in the "illusion" of achieving "a stake in the country" (along with the upper classes) goes some way in explaining the middle class's reluctance to rebel. But this does not explain why, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell finds it quite easy to imagine a middle class, devoid of the illusion, "crushed down to the worst depths of poverty...still remaining bitterly anti-working class." (My italics.)

Certainly the maintenance of bitter anti-working class feeling in
such circumstances has much to do with the maintenance of "status." No one likes to "come down in the world" no matter what class he is in. This is hardly surprising, but what is the underlying cause of the tenacity with which the middle classes cling to their status, the cause of what Orwell calls that "strange and sometimes 'heroic-snobbishness' that is found in the English middle classes."? For Orwell this tenacious snobbery not only qualifies the Marxist belief, expressed by Ravelston in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, "that ideology is a reflection of economic circumstances" but constitutes a serious impediment to social reform. This impediment both symbolizes and maintains that "perpetual uneasiness between man and man from which we suffer in modern England" and prevents the alliance of potential allies in the overthrow of privilege. In Orwell's work the underlying cause of the impediment to class convergence is the "educational system." More specifically it was the English "private" and "public" (as opposed to state) schools system which Orwell saw as "designed" to thwart a middle and working class alliance.

Recalling how "at fourteen or fifteen" he was a snob "but no worse than other boys of my own age and class" Orwell comments on how successful the English public school education is in training one in the subtlest forms of class distinction. He notes how you quickly forget the scholastic curriculum soon after leaving school "but your snobbishness, unless you persistently root it out...sticks by you till your grave." In *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, Comstock, a member of the shabby genteel "middle-middle classes" in which proportionately "huge sums" were sacrificed to education, was sent to private schools. Like Eric Blair he discovered that nearly all the boys were richer than he and that he had to
"suffer snobbish agonies such as a grown-up person can scarcely even imagine." In such schools both boys learned to hate poverty. Comstock voices Orwell's recollection of the countless humiliations caused by having relatively poor parents, of how the phrase "your parents wouldn't be able to afford it...pursued me throughout my schooldays." Orwell remembers bitterly "the contempt for foreigners and the working class, an almost neurotic dread of poverty, and, above all, the assumption not only that money and privilege are the things that matter, but that it is better to inherit them than to have to work for them." Given the "almost neurotic fear of poverty" it comes as no surprise that for Comstock the first seven months of his encounter with poverty "were devastating. They scared him and almost broke his spirit." Comstock realizes, however, that for the middle class to which he belongs it is "not poverty but the down-dragging of respectable poverty that had done for them." Like George Bowling "he had never felt any pity for the genuine poor. It is the black-coated poor, the middle class who need pitying." But why had "respectable poverty...done for them" more than the working class who annoyed the little old ladies in Brighton by thinking nothing of getting married on the dole? Orwell gives part of the answer in his description of how Comstock (like Blair), determined to break out of the money world, suddenly gives up a "good job." The immediate result of even this descent into poverty is that his family and relatives think that "Gordon must have gone mad," even though his descent was voluntary. Together with Bowling's description of life on Ellesmere Road, the relatives' reaction is a reflection of Orwell's general point that because of the expectations of the middle class family,
the prospect of poverty produces much more *psychic* trauma in middle class individuals than in those of the "lower" classes. What Comstock "realized" in the middle-class school, and realized

more clearly as time went on, was that money-worship has been elevated into a religion. Perhaps the only real religion — the only really *felt* religion — that is left to us. Money is what God used to be. Good and evil have no meaning any longer except failure and success. Hence the profoundly significant phrase, to *make good*.  

The autobiographical basis of Orwell's description of Comstock's beliefs is revealed in a poem, "St. Andrew's Day 1935." The poem, which appeared in *The Adelphi* five months before *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* was published, tells of London clerks scurrying under clouds of job insecurity.

They think of rent, rates, season tickets,  
Insurance, coal, the skivvy's wages,  
Boots, school-bills, and the next instalment  
Upon the two twin-beds from Drage's.  
Over them hangs "our rightful lord, the lord of all, the money-god"  
Who chills our anger, curbs our hope,  
And buys our lives and pays with toys,  
Who claims as tribute broken faith,  
Accepted insults, muted joys;  
Who binds and chains the poet's wit,  
The navvy's strength, the soldier's pride.  
And lays the sleek, estranging shield  
Between the lover and his bride.  

Similarly, Comstock's growing cynicism mirrors the bitter parody of I Corinthians xiii which prefaces the novel: "and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not money, I am nothing." For Orwell the sense of virtue and self-worth which once emanated from the belief in future rewards for present decency now shifts aimlessly under the push of expediency. Such a world is very different from that of pre-World War One Britain, as described in *Coming Up For Air* where, for George Bowling's parents, "good and evil would remain good and evil" and where "they didn't feel the ground they stood on shifting under their
feet." In the world of relative right and wrong, however, Gordon Comstock finally comes to believe that "money is virtue...and poverty is crime." Again Comstock's experience mirrors Blair's at St. Cyprian's where material possession was "mixed up in people's minds with the idea of actual moral virtue."

When such a belief is nurtured by the snobbishness of middle and upper class schools it is not surprising that the middle class grows away from, and not closer to, the working class. It is not surprising that young Comstock developed "a crawling reverence for money," or that young Blair felt "in the air I breathed that you were no good unless you had £100,000" and was taught that the working class were to be despised. Years later Orwell would remember the bullying sarcasm of this atmosphere, describing how the Headmaster and Headmistress of St. Cyprian's would talk as if the young scholarship boy Blair was not present. "I don't think he [Blair] wants to go to public school any longer...I think he's given up that idea. He wants to be a little office boy at forty, pounds a year."

Orwell of course came to despair of such snobbish attitudes in himself and others which because they "generally persist from birth to death" perpetuate the divisions between men. But then in a typically Orwellian stance he argues that you cannot blame the middle class for maintaining such attitudes. On the contrary, he claims that to a middle class parent such snobbishness is "necessary" so long as vulgar accents will doom children to inequality of opportunity. Indeed the inconsistency between Orwell's theoretical call for equality through "a uniform educational system for the early years" which would "cut away one of the deepest roots of snobbery" and his practical concern for his son's education is
Orwell, in a letter to Julian Symons (as late as 1948), writes of his son, Richard,

I am not going to let him go to a boarding school before he is ten, and I would like him to start off at an elementary school. If one could find a good one. It's a difficult question. Obviously it is democratic for everyone to go to the same schools, or at least start off there but when you see what the elementary schools are like, and the results, you feel that any child that has the chance should be rescued from them....I remember in 1936 meeting John Strachey in the street - then a C.P. member or at least on the staff of the [Daily] Worker - and him telling me he had just had a son and was putting him down for Eton [Orwell's secondary school]. I said, "How can you do that?" and he said that given our existing society it was the best education. Actually I doubt whether it is the best, but in principle I don't feel sure that he was wrong. (My italics.)

This is important to remember if we are to understand more clearly what Orwell meant by an educational system "designed" to keep the middle class closer to the rich than the poor. That is, the "design" is not one maliciously imposed from above. It is prompted by the impulse for self-defence in the middle class rather than by upper class vindictiveness. The middle classes as Orwell viewed them were caught between rich and poor and were merely trying to stay closer to the rich. Thus they took care to absorb and maintain upper class manners and traditions, keeping their children at school, for example, much later than the working class to whom "the notion of staying at school till you are nearly grown-up seems merely contemptible and unmanly." It is Comstock's frustration with the defensive posture of his class which moves him to exclaim of his family that "They had never had the sense to lash out and just live, money or no money, as the lower classes do."

It was this defensive posture of the middle classes, expressing the fear that they had "something to lose" and could fall prey to the "sinister flood creeping upwards," which accounted for Blair's expectation...
of a fight when he first descended into the world of the poor below Limehouse Causeway. And it was the presence of this posture which led Orwell to suggest that it is from the poorer sections of the middle class, "the shock absorbers of the bourgeoisie" who are forced into close contact with the working class, that "the traditional upper class attitude [of "sniggering superiority"] towards 'common people' is derived." The suggestion that upper class attitudes are as much derived from the middle class as imposed upon them by the upper class is not only a claim of a symbiotic relationship between the two classes but more importantly it does much to explain Orwell's dismissal of upper class conspiracy theories. He believed that, despite often harshly felt internal divisions, England was still a family in a way which other countries were not. He believed that while ignorance and inefficiency were rife in the hierarchy of the country, wickedness was not.

Orwell, however, as noted earlier, did not hold the upper class completely blameless in the perpetuation of inequality and in the case of the educational system he singled out the powerful influence exerted in middle class schools by the example of upper class hierarchy. Indeed as part of his conviction that the middle class is educated against the working class he held the upper classes guilty of actively creating an acceptance of inequality through what he calls "deliberate incitement to wealth fantasy." Such incitement to wealth fantasy, says Orwell, is made possible through the "completely shameless" snob appeal of upper-class owned, youth-orientated, and "political vetted" publications, such as the widely read Gem and Magnet. He believed that we are much more influenced by novels, films, and serial stories than we admit and that "the worst books are often the most important because they are usually the ones that
are read earliest in life." In Boy's Weeklies he writes,

> It is quite clear that there are tens and scores of thousands of people to whom every detail of life at a "posh" public school is wildly thrilling and romantic. They happen to be outside that mystic world of quadrangles and house-colours, but they yearn after it, day-dream about it, live mentally in it for hours at a stretch....Recently I offered a batch of English papers to some British legionaires of the French Foreign Legion in North Africa; they picked out the Gem and Magnet first. (My italics.)

Based upon his experience as a school teacher in two private schools (1932-33), Orwell notes that unlike the rich "public" school boys who stopped reading the likes of Gem and Magnet when they were about twelve, the middle class "private" school boys kept reading them, "still taking them fairly seriously when they were fifteen or even sixteen." He reports that the basic political assumptions of such publications are that "nothing ever changes" (including inequality) and that foreigners and the working class are "funny." When the working class are not "comics" they are "semi-villains" and such things as "class friction, trade unionism, strikes, slumps, unemployment, Fascism and civil war" are never mentioned.

It could be argued that any ill effects among the poorer classes which this kind of "deliberate incitement" can have (by raising expectations which cannot be fulfilled under the existing system) are mitigated by other mass publications which stress that being poor but honest is a happier fate than being rich and dishonest. Not surprisingly, Orwell was against such mollification as much as he was against incitement to wealth. He wrote that while "in any form of art designed to appeal to large numbers of people, it is an almost unheard-of thing for a rich man to get the better of a poor man...this business about the moral superiority of the poor is one of the deadliest forms of escapism the ruling class
has evolved." Such escapism, while not a deliberate attempt to perpetuate exploitation, is a "sublimation" of the "real facts" of inequality, of "class struggle." Film magnates and press lords, notes Orwell, "amass quite a lot of their wealth by pointing out that wealth is wicked."\(^{108}\)

While concerned about the role of mass publications in contributing to the acceptance rather than the questioning of widespread economic disparities, Orwell was as concerned with the way such publications foster the unquestioning acceptance of hierarchy - of disparities in power.

Again in Boy's Weeklies he writes,

> Nearly all the time the boy who reads these papers - in nine cases out of ten a boy who is going to spend his life working in a shop, in a factory or in some subordinate job in an office - is led to identify with people in positions of command...above all with people who are never troubled by shortage of money.\(^{109}\) (My italics.)

Whether or not they informally derived many of their examples of the outside world from such papers, pupils' identification with the hierarchy of the rich, with an apparently unchanging and unchangeable world of authority patterns, was particularly marked in the more formal middle class educational system. Of learning his early winner-loser catechism at St. Cyprian's, Orwell recalls

> Life was hierarchical and whatever happened was right. There were the strong, who deserved to win...and there were the weak who deserved to lose and always did lose, everlastingly.

> I did not question the prevailing standards, because so far as I could see there were no others. How could the rich, the strong ...the powerful be in the wrong? It was their world, and the rules made for it must be the right ones...it was not easy, at that date, to realize that in fact it was alterable.\(^{110}\) (My italics.)

Such training (1) exacerbated middle-working class divisions, (2) provided a pool of willing middle class administrators, such as Assistant Superintendent Blair, to administer the Empire, and (3) encouraged the view, as expressed in Burmese Days, that natives were no
better than the working class. Such education also seriously qualified hopes that Britain's new wartime militias would be the "'nucleus' of a genuinely democratic army" let alone the nucleus of revolution. Orwell certainly did not hold much hope for such an army for he believed that so long as "nearly everybody who has been to a private school has passed through the O.T.C." and so long as the bourgeoisie form the pool of officer recruitment then "every increase" in military strength effectively means an increase for "the forces of reaction."  

An ominous synthesis of the effect of the educational system and what Orwell believed was the failure of religious belief to sustain the old beliefs in absolute right and wrong emerges as Orwell shows how such training with its unquestioning obedience to those in power and celebration of relative right and wrong, at once nurtures and is nurtured by the "cult of realism," the cult of "expedience" or power worship. He held firmly to the idea that the "modern cult of power worship" was inextricably bound up with the failure of the belief in immortality, "with the modern man's feeling that life here and now is the only life." And when generations like those of young Comstock and young Blair see that because "good and evil have no meaning except failure and success," that "God is money," then it is hardly surprising that Power becomes God. This, of course, is precisely the religion of Nineteen Eighty-Four where O'Brien asserts, "We are the priests of power," and where the implications of power worship for the perpetuation of, and increase in, inequality would be most dramatically discussed by Orwell.

Following his criticism of the English educational system and his repeated concern about the decline in religion, how both contributed to the feeling that "might is right," the question which naturally presents
itself is what would Orwell put in their place? Given the fact that he
was so critical of the educational system and that he did not wish the
belief in life after death to return, did he have anything with which
to fill what he called the "big hole" that had been left by the disap­
pearance of a belief in the hereafter that for all its faults had set
moral limits and had given meaning to "the belief in human brotherhood"?
Did he have a non-religious system designed to combat inequality rather
than perpetuate it, which he had charged the educational system of
doing? The answer is yes, he did. In Nineteen Eighty-Four, O'Brien,
interrogating Winston Smith (the symbol of union between privileged,
"Winston," and underprivileged, "Smith"), asks,

"Do you believe in God, Winston?"
"No."
"Then what is it, this principle that will defeat us [the "priests
of power"]?"
"I don't know. The spirit of Man."  

For Orwell this spirit was the idea of human brotherhood, and
unless we can reinstate the belief in human brotherhood without
the need "for the next world" to give it meaning...we are moving
towards ...something more like the Spanish Inquisition, and probably far worse thanks to the radio and the secret police.  

Orwell did not want to reinstate the Church's influence for he
believed that because the idea of submission to God and the idea of
human control over nature are felt to be inimical, the Christian churches
are on the whole hostile to reform, especially to "any political theory
tending to weaken the institution of private property." The system
which Orwell chose as having the best chance of salvaging civilization
through the propagation and manifestation of the spirit of brotherhood
was "democratic socialism." In this system, the main goal of life is
not the pursuit of money and power by those who no longer believe in the
heavenly paradise as a reward for the kind of heroic and pathetic perseverance of the Pithers in *A Clergyman's Daughter*. The goal of this system to which Orwell turned "more out of disgust with the way the poorer sections of the industrial workers were oppressed... than out of any theoretical admiration of a planned society" is the attainment of a "world state of free and equal beings." Therein private possessions such as clothes and furniture would be kept by the individual but the means of producing such "private" possessions would belong to the state. As such, "Socialism is in the last analysis an optimistic creed" whose adherents hold "the earthly paradise to be possible." It reflects the concept of a society "in which men know they are mortal and are nevertheless willing to act as brothers."

It was with this vague vision, troubled by its inadequacies, that Orwell, early on in 1936, hoped to mobilize the sense of decency which he believed was common to us all but commonly unexerted. With this vision he sought to give the lie to Dorothy Hare's despairing conviction at the end of *A Clergyman's Daughter* that "either life on earth is a preparation for something greater and more lasting, or it is meaningless, dark and dreadful." Orwell's vision of course would darken in the torture chambers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* but in its more optimistic days it was to do away with the kind of exploitation which had bred Dorothy's despair. As such, socialism for Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) was to mean nothing less than "justice...common decency...and liberty."

**Summary of Chapter II**

In summary, from the writings of his indigenous period Orwell shows us that poverty, non-urban as well as urban, is so physically and
psychically debilitating that action by the exploited against the exploiters is unlikely. The possibility of revolt is made even more remote in a highly industrialized country where (1) the existence of cheap luxuries, including gambling, mitigates the effects of poverty, (2) even appalling working conditions are accepted because work is an uneducated man's sole form of self-expression and self-respect, and (3) there is the lack of a clearly identifiable villain other than "them."

When a villain can be found it is as likely to be a little old lady whose sole source of income is rent from one or two flats. Beyond the old lady there are the rich who exploit through ignorance and whose exploitation is in part rationalized by the belief that the poor are a "mob." This "mob" does not exist except as a potential force in time of war when large numbers of the lower classes are armed. The exploitation of the poor is also made possible through the working class ignorance of history which denies them models for attacking the system which exploits them. But even if such models were available it is unlikely, for the reasons given above, that a revolt by the exploited would be initiated and also because of the lower classes' misplaced loyalties. Orwell, for example, talks of the middle class socialists' disgust with the poor whose chalked slogans, though they read "Down with the Landlord," were prefaced by "Long Live the King."132

Believing that social reform must come "from below," Orwell considered the middle class essential to such change because it contained the technical expertise and managerial leadership without which any modern industrial nation would come quickly to a halt, and which the working class would need if it was to become a force to be reckoned with. But in order to forge an alliance with the working class the barrier of class
distinctions must first be removed. In essence this meant the removal of the educational system which perpetuated the social as well as the economic divisions between the classes and even such divisions within the middle class itself. The educational system is difficult to dislodge, however, armoured as it is with (1) its contempt for the poverty it fears, (2) the emphasis on material goods and status which is reinforced by the upper class's incitement to wealth fantasy, and (3) the general decline in religious belief and the concomitant growth in relative morality. The problem in attacking this educational system is compounded not by the lack of will on the part of would-be middle class social reformers but rather that they do not realize that to rid society of the snobbish distinctions it is not enough to speak out against them. First the would-be reformers have to rid themselves of the deep-seated notions of superiority to the lower classes. This is extremely difficult, for such notions, as learned by Eric Blair and Gordon/Comstock, were part of the very education which moved the would-be reformers to move closer to the upper rather than to the lower classes. Such an education developed the reformers' intellect but not the temperament to the point of recognizing how capricious and persistent was their emotional attitude towards the lower classes.

What needed to be done was to "reinstate" the belief in brotherhood, the belief that no matter what the differences between us we are responsible for each other: "We have got to be the children of God, even though the God of the Prayer book no longer exists." If we do not act as brothers then the divisions between men will widen into the yawning chasms of totalitarianism. Orwell did not believe that the spirit of brotherhood was dead but that it lay dormant - hence his use of the word
"reinstate." The way to do this politically so that it may have the power to do good was to turn to a movement which had traditionally appealed to the spirit of universal brotherhood as a basis for a fairer distribution of work and its rewards. For Orwell this movement was Socialism.
Notes to Section II—Chapter II


2. Ibid., II, p. 108.

3. Ibid., pp. 108, 125.

4. Orwell, Wigan Pier, pp. 141-42.


11. Ibid., p. 135.

12. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 73.


15. Ibid., p. 34.


17. Ibid.


20. It is unlikely that television and movies would improve this situation very much. While the media may certainly lead to an awareness of other ways of life and may create hope through the creation of illusions and myth, their often superficial treatment does not provide many, if any, clues to the details of how certain historical changes were effected.

22. Despite his remark that the memory of working class homes "reminds me that our age has not been altogether a bad one to live in," (p. 104, *The Road to Wigan Pier*) Orwell, because he knew that adaptation to circumstances is not the same as contentment with circumstances, did not discount the poor as potential revolutionaries. In a typically striking scene which, though it is hardly insightful, is symbolic of his appreciation of how the poor often have a grim realization of their poverty despite their adaptation to it, Orwell describes a face of poverty in the wintry and dismal slag-heaped North. Travelling past a row of slum houses, he saw a woman in sacking apron and clogs trying to clean a clogged drainpipe. The woman, "her arms reddened by the cold," looked up at the passing train with "the exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks forty....I saw it, the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen. It struck me then that we are mistaken when we say that 'It isn't the same for them as it would be for us'...that people bred in the slums can imagine nothing but slums. For what I saw in her face was not the ignorant suffering of an animal. She knew well enough what was happening to her - understood as well as I did how dreadful a destiny it was to be kneeling there in the bitter cold, on the slimy stones of a slum backyard, poking a stick up a foul drain pipe." (Pp. 16-17, *The Road to Wigan Pier*.)


24. To think otherwise is to fall into a statistical trap which Orwell warned of, first in *Le Progrès Civique* and later in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. The trap, Orwell points out, is that whenever we read unemployment figures it is fatally easy to believe that the population less the unemployed are relatively "comfortable" (*Wigan Pier*, p. 67), because the figures do not reveal the number of dependents of the unemployed. In Wigan, for example, he found that of about 36,000 insured workers approximately 10,000 were unemployed at the beginning of 1936 which, allowing for dependents, meant that out of Wigan's total population of nearly 87,000, more than one in three were living on the dole (*Wigan Pier*, p. 68).

The matter of dependents is important in trying to understand why the poor might not rebel, for while each unemployed worker might be regarded by some as a potential revolutionary, he has dependents who would suffer even more if he was away at the barricades. Even so, the argument that dependents (along with ignorance of historical models for improvement) act as an unseen brake upon discontent among the poor can only be taken so far because of the large numbers of unemployed single men who have no dependents.

25. Of course the critics of the poor would be the first to object if "laziness" gave way to revolutionary activity.

26. Orwell, *Down and Out*, p. 160. Or, as Minogue says in his criticism of C.B. Macpherson's general argument for a more "fully human life" outside of their work, unemployed people are unhappy in part because "they feel that some of their capacities are not being used." (*Down and Out*, p. 8.) See also *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p. 77, where Orwell remarks
on the part in Greenwood's play, Love on the Dole, where the "poor, good, stupid working man beats on the table and cries, 'O God send me some work.'" Orwell says that far from being a dramatic exaggeration this cry "must have been uttered...in tens of thousands...of English homes, during the past fifteen years."

27. Mowat, Britain: 1918-1940, p. 484.


29. Ibid., p. 121.

30. Ibid., p. 80.

31. Ibid., p. 86.

32. Ibid., p. 79.


34. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 81.

35. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

36. Orwell, Down and Out, p. 23.

37. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 50. This is typical of the kind of remark which causes Orwell to be so consistently and rightly praised as one of the most honest writers of the age.

38. Orwell, A Clergyman's Daughter, p. 27.

39. In Coming Up For Air, for example, the whole train of events hinges on the protagonist, George Bowling, risking ten shillings on a horse race. And he bets the "ten bob" on a horse which has been chosen by a fellow worker's perusal of a book entitled "Astrology Applied to Horse-racing." (Coming Up For Air, p. 9.)


41. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 79.

42. Ibid., p. 81.

43. In The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 111, Orwell wrote that through the "weapon of unemployment" in the interwar years, "the English working class have grown servile with a rather horrifying rapidity."

44. Orwell, Down and Out, p. 106.

45. Ibid., pp. 106-07, 106.

46. Orwell, Wigan Pier, pp. 197, 137.

48. Ibid., pp. 106-07.

49. Ibid., p. 107.


51. Ibid., pp. 43-44.


53. Ibid., pp. 61, 68-69, 63.


55. Ibid., p. 131.

56. Orwell, *CEJL*, III, p. 34.

57. Ibid., II, p. 108.


60. Ibid., p. 44.

61. Ibid., pp. 43, 44-45.

62. Ibid., pp. 75, 44, 137, 140, 141.


64. Orwell, *CEJL*, III, p. 36.


66. Ibid., p. 107.

67. This recalls Laslett's observation in *The World We Have Lost*, p. 227, that "only if imitation, mimesis, is taken to constitute 'solidity' can the phrase 'the solid middle class' be made to apply to any substantial part of the population" and that "the truth seems to be that for the whole of this century some millions of people have been aspiring to live as only a few hundred thousand...could in fact afford to," forming "a large marginal area between upper and lower [classes], a *penumbra*...to the privileged minority." (My italics.)

68. In his review of Alec Brown's *The Fate of the Middle Classes*, Orwell criticizes Brown for lumping "into the middle classes the entire block of the population between dividend-drawers on the one hand and the
wage-slaves on the other...as though there were no serious distinctions between them except the size of their incomes. It is a method of classification about as useful as dividing the population into bald men and hairy men." (Adelphi [May, 1936], p. 128.) Orwell, however, uses the term "middle-class" often enough (for example, see The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 199) and although qualification is often nearby, and he does use middle-classes to show he is aware of "serious distinctions," some circumspection needs to be used when dealing with the term in Orwell's work.

69. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 108.
70. Ibid.
71. Orwell, Coming Up For Air, pp. 14, 14, 14-16.
74. Ibid., p. 108.
76. Orwell, CEJL, I, p. 81. See also Wigan Pier, p. 131.
77. Alec Brown, "The Fate of the Middle Classes," review by George Orwell, in Adelphi (May, 1936), p. 128.
78. The "private" schools are mostly middle class versions of the rich's "public" schools. In North America the "public schools" of England would be called "private schools."
80. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 120.
81. Orwell, Aspidistra, pp. 45, 46.
82. Orwell, CEJL, IV, pp. 389, 407.
83. Orwell, Aspidistra, pp. 56, 49, 77.
84. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 78.
85. Orwell, Aspidistra, p. 54.
86. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 103. There is undoubtedly inconsistency between Orwell's claims that on the one hand a "middle class person goes utterly to pieces under the influence of poverty" (Wigan Pier, p. 130) and on the other that in times of stress the middle classes "tend to come to the front," (Wigan Pier, p. 44) and his beliefs about the "heroic
snobbishness" of the middle classes. However, the inconsistency is more apparent than real if one remembers that times of stress are not necessarily times of poverty. In any case, Orwell's phrase that the middle classes go "utterly to pieces" is plainly an exaggeration to convey his belief that the middle classes are much harder hit psychically by poverty than the working class. See also *Wigan Pier*, pp. 73, 103, 108.


89. Orwell, *Coming Up For Air*, p. 108.


96. Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, p. 197. Occasionally some students such as Orwell rebelled against the incitement to wealth and thus "success" but the dutifully taught attitude of superiority towards the working classes remained. For Orwell a measure of this was that, although as a schoolboy he saw himself as a revolutionary, like Comstock, and could manage to "agonize" over working class sufferings, he still "hated them and despised them when I came anywhere near them" and was "revolted" by the working class accent. (Wigan Pier, p. 122.) Such disgust extended to the physical revulsion expressed in the "four frightful words...the lower classes smell...even 'lower class' people whom you knew to be quite clean." (Wigan Pier, pp. 112-13.) It was this revulsion which not only affected schoolboys but travelled abroad, in this case with Assistant Superintendent Blair, to Burma where he beat Burmese and where his stomach turned at the "lower-class sweat of the private British soldiers." (Wigan Pier, p. 125.)

The persistence of his middle class conditioning is particularly evident in Christopher Hollis' recollection of his visit with Blair at Syriam in 1925. Hollis recalls how Blair was "at pains to be the imperial policeman. If I had never heard or read of Orwell after that evening I should certainly have dismissed him as an example of that common type which has a phase of liberal opinion at school, when life is as yet untouched by reality, but relapses easily after into conventional reaction." (Stansky and Abrahams, *The Unknown Orwell*, p. 192.)


99. Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, p. 120.


108. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 230, 230-31. In this vein, Blair's first article to appear in England, "A Farthing Newspaper" (1928), was prompted by the publication of a mass daily, *Ami du Peuple*, being sold in Paris for less than a farthing a copy. Fascinated by its success at such a clearly unprofitable price, Orwell discovered that the paper, whose widely proclaimed intent was to "make war on the great trusts, to fight for a lower cost of living and above all to combat the powerful newspapers which are strangling free speech in France," was owned by Monsieur Coty. The latter was not only "a great industrialist capitalist" but also owned *Figaro* and the *Gaulois*.

Though he liked the idea of a cheap mass paper for the poor, Orwell was concerned that mass circulation, made possible by a rich owner charging a low price, would lead to a decline in free speech, the very thing which Monsieur Coty said he wanted to foster. He warned that precisely because one paper is so cheap it can crowd out less prosperous, smaller, and, most importantly, differently opinionated competitors who cannot afford to sell any paper for a farthing. (*CEJL*, I, p. 36.) While his general point is well taken, Orwell undoubtedly confuses here the right to free speech with the opportunity to be heard.


116. Orwell, CEJL, III, p. 127. Orwell was convinced that because the belief in personal immortality, which nurtured the old sense of right and wrong, had disappeared, "man is not likely to salvage civilization unless he can evolve a system of good and evil which is independent of heaven and hell." (Orwell, CEJL, III, p. 127.) Here we are reminded of Alan Sandison's recent point that while Orwell's instinct is undeniably that of the "homo religiosus," critics of Orwell have failed to see the central role (the "rich matrix") of the Protestant dialectic in his "creative vision." (Alan Sandison, The Last Man in Europe [New York: Macmillan, 1974], p. 6.)

For example, Sandison, taking George Woodcock to task for saying that A Clergyman's Daughter is the "novel in which Orwell had his say about religion," writes, "Professor Woodcock's remark is, in fact, very misleading and it would be compounding a critical felony to fail to take the issue further. Orwell's concern with religion is fundamental to his creative vision and consequently pervades all his work. A Clergyman's Daughter (1935) is not his only statement on the subject; neither is it his most serious, characteristic or creative." (Last Man in Europe, p. 126.)

But even though, as Sandison says, Orwell "out-Protestants the Protestants in disregarding the institution and getting back to first principles, reviving and reasserting them with fundamental passion," (Last Man in Europe, p. 6) one must be wary of those who, like Jeffrey Meyers, go beyond and, seeing Orwell in something of an evangelical light, claim that he saw his primary task as "restoring the soul" in a soulless world. (Meyers, A Reader's Guide to George Orwell, preface.) Such a view can no doubt claim tentative, if vague, support from Orwell's comment that when people so glibly quote Marx's "Religion is the opium of the people" they either fail to remember or don't know that Marx preceded the famous phrase with the equally telling phrase that "Religion is the sigh of the soul in a soulless world." (Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 33.) This, however, must be put alongside Orwell's belief that "It was absolutely necessary that the soul should be cut away. Religious belief, in the form in which we had known it, had to be abandoned." (Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 30.)

117. Orwell, CEJL, p. 127.

118. Ibid., II, p. 33.


120. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, p. 217.

121. Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 33.


123. Orwell, CEJL, IV, p. 425. Also see A Clergyman's Daughter, pp. 50-51, where to Mrs. Pither's complaint, "Ah, Miss, it's a weary world we lives in, ain't it, Miss? A weary, sinful world," Dorothy
replies, "But of course we must never forget, Mrs. Pither, that there is a better world coming. This life is only a time of trial...for Heaven when the time comes." Orwell writes, "At this a sudden and remarkable change came over Mrs. Pither. It was produced by the word 'Heaven'.... It was extraordinary how constantly Heaven reigned in her thoughts... the vividness with which she could see it.... Heaven supported and consoled her, and her abject complaints about the lives of 'poor working folks' were curiously tempered by a satisfaction in the thought that, after all, it is 'poor working folks' who are the principal inhabitants of Heaven." (My italics.)

125. Ibid., II, pp. 102, 100.
127. Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 32.
128. Ibid., p. 504.
129. Orwell, Aespidistra, p. 259.

131. Ibid., p. 189. If The Road to Wigan Pier sounded the first trumpet blasts of his increasing commitment to democratic socialism, as he understood it, the overture had begun as early as 1928. It is necessary to point this out because most readers of Orwell have only come into contact with his ideas on socialism through his books and much later collections of selected journalism. Unless his earlier and now generally unavailable works are taken into account, the reader who suddenly comes across the pot-pourri of socialist ideas in The Road to Wigan Pier is apt to view Orwell's affiliation with socialism, after his early novels, as more the result of revelation in the late thirties than of gestation during the thirties.

In 1930 Blair had been a journalist for the radical periodicals, New English Weekly and more importantly The Adelphi, which became the more or less official organ of the ILP intellectuals. The Adelphi, edited for a time by Richard Rees (the model for Ravelston, the socialist editor of Antichrist), published Blair then Orwell. And as Peter Sedgwick has noted, themes which we detect as being peculiarly Orwell's in his work, such as the close identification with the proletariat and the drive to establish a brotherhood which transcends class barriers, reflected ideas in the pages of The Adelphi. Indeed, some of Orwell's guides during the time he was travelling and writing about conditions in the North were writers who had also been published in The Adelphi. (See Peter Sedgwick, "George Orwell International Socialist? 1: The Development of Orwell's Socialism," International Socialism [June-July, 1969], p. 32.)

133. Ibid., II, p. 33.
Chapter III - Orwell's Socialism - Ends and Means and Impediments.

Orwell believed that in matters of property few men "will behave any better than they are compelled to do." Even so, because he was convinced that most people do not want to see English miners exploited or foreign proletariats held down by force, he believed that the injustices of exploitation, like poverty, existed more from economic maldistribution than from a willful lack of decency.

Accordingly, the idea of socialism for him arose largely from the simple view that "the world is a raft sailing through space with, potentially, plenty of provisions for everybody; the idea that we must all cooperate and see to it that everyone does his fair share of work and gets his fair share of provisions." To Orwell this basic proposition of socialism was so "blatantly obvious" that "no one could possibly fail to accept it unless he had some corrupt motive for clinging to the present system." Corrupt motives (as in matters of property) aside, he believed that socialism's failure to appeal to the masses, particularly those without property, was due largely to the use of ideological cant. This spawned a widespread ignorance of what socialism could mean in everyday life. It was to remove this widespread misunderstanding of what socialism meant that Orwell devoted much of his writing after he had visited Wigan in 1936.

Orwell claimed that the problems of production and consumption, of "wasted surplus" and "unemployment," which caused and perpetuated inequality, would not exist in a socialist economy provided that common ownership of the means of production would be founded upon "nationalized industry, scaled down incomes," a "classless educational system" and "political democracy." Writing at a time when he believed that the
establishment of socialism in England and winning the war were mutually dependent, he outlined how these prerequisites might be achieved. In summary, he said (1) Nationalisation essentially means that "nobody shall live without working" but that previous owners and managers would be kept on as state employees. Small traders, particularly farmers, would be allowed to go on as before but a limit would be placed on land ownership of around fifteen acres. The ownership of land would be forbidden in urban areas. (2) Incomes. While equal incomes are unrealistic, a minimum wage would come into effect based solely on the amount of consumption goods available and would probably require rationing. Monetary incentives would be necessary but as in the ownership of land by smallholders a limit would be set. This limit would be based on a ten to one "maximum normal variation." This variation would allow "some sense of equality." (3) Education. All children must attend some schools up to the age of twelve after which they will be separated into more gifted-less gifted student categories. The main thrust of educational policy must be to erect a "uniform" system for the early years so as to "cut away one of the deepest roots of snobbery." To begin this, autonomy of the public schools ("festering centres of snobbery") would be abolished while state-aided students, selected solely on ability, would flood the universities. This would do away with the expensive public (i.e., private) school education which in effect is a tax that the middle class pay for the right to make inroads into upper class professions. The "vast majority" of England's 10,000 "private" schools "deserve nothing but suppression" as not only do they exist solely because of snobbery but their educational level is generally very low. In all three areas the prime concern is a shift in emphasis "from privilege to competence." (My italics.)
Beyond these realistically few concrete proposals we learn more about Orwell's ideas for moving away from poverty and unemployment towards greater equality by noting not so much what he thought socialism should be, but what he thought it should not be. He claimed that in order to remove the "current distaste for Socialism" you had to get "inside the mind of the ordinary objector to Socialism" which meant that "paradoxically, in order to defend Socialism it is necessary to start by attacking it." This belief is particularly evident as we shall see in his celebrated and often vindictive attacks upon the left and leftist intellectuals, and explains why he is often viewed as much a critic of socialism as an advocate of it.

Though he realized that the difference between socialism and capitalism went well beyond mere differences in technique, Orwell would have immediately understood the Russian joke that the difference between capitalism and communism is that whereas under capitalism man exploits man, under communism it is the other way around. In the same spirit, believing that "beyond a certain point...Socialism and Capitalism...merge into one," he warned that "Socialism in itself" may not be any improvement over capitalism and that "it cannot be said too often...that collectivism is not inherently democratic" or "equalitarian." Discerning an irreversible trend towards centralism which he saw as "an essential precondition" but not necessarily a guarantor of socialism, he presaged the gloomy world of Nineteen Eighty-Four. He warned that centralized (and common) ownership has little meaning unless steps are taken to assure that the governed have some control over the government and that all people are "living roughly on the same level." Without these safeguards, he predicted, "'the state' may come to mean no more
than a self-elected political party, and oligarchy and privilege can return." Because of more or less equal incomes, such privilege, as Comstock and Blair saw daily about them, would not be based on money but on power. The capitalists would weaken but the "priests of power" would grow stronger, and exploitation would continue. The fundamental nature of exploitation would not have been changed, only its technique.

Similar warnings have of course been sounded by others but they have an overriding significance in Orwell's case, for they point to a view of socialism as more a means than an end. Socialism, he claims, "is not in itself the final objective, and I think we ought to guard against assuming that as a system to live under it will be greatly preferable to democratic Capitalism." But while repeatedly making this point Orwell just as often talks of socialism as an end in terms of "justice" and "liberty," which makes for a marked inconsistency in his writings on the subject. The confusion is maintained by his failure to define concretely what he means by such terms as "justice" and "liberty." Wherever they are used there is an implicit and naive assumption that not only are such objectives immutable but they are the same for all men in all places.

In making this assumption he ignores one of the most simply stated yet profound lessons of a wide experience from Imperial policeman to tramp, namely his discovery of "what different universes different people inhabit."

One of the most frequently used words to describe Orwell is "honest." This is appropriate, for he was markedly honest, unwilling to bend facts to fit ideological straitjackets. But in the seductive repetition of such a laudatory word as "honest" in describing him, the
consistency of his honesty often creates an assumption of a consistency of ideas. This is false. A man's ideas, like his life, like life itself, are of course inconsistent — honesty notwithstanding, indeed often because of it. Orwell's inconsistencies in his views of socialism, largely through his failure to define such terms as "liberty" and "justice," constitute a serious flaw in his "socialist" views, given that these terms are accorded such prominence and elasticity in sudden, unexplained shifts from a view of socialism as a tool to a view of it as a goal.

But despite his oscillation between the view of socialism as a means and an end there is the implicit and constant conviction that the real value of the socialist movement is that it constitutes a mobilization of the idea of equality. Calls for "liberty," "justice," and "decency," for all their vagueness, do signify an intent to improve the quality of life, to move away from inequality wherein privilege takes precedence over ability. That is, while "Socialists don't claim to be able to make the world perfect ["certain evils cannot be remedied"] they claim to be able to make it better." In 1941 Orwell wrote that even should England be defeated, the introduction of the "beginnings of Socialism" which might "turn the war into a revolutionary war" was of vital importance for "while no political programme is ever carried out in its entirety... it is always the direction that counts." Once people are shown that direction, then even in defeat the "idea" of equality will survive. If such a socialist goal was not put before the nation, he argued, England's surrender, unlike that of the Republicans to Franco, would be as total and, for the future, as devoid of the will to resist "the German power-dream," as was that of Vichy France. The idea of equality need not be preserved in a doctrinaire manifesto; it may be carried in a simple song
like the Marseillaise, from which a man who cannot be appealed to by "any learned treatise on dialectical materialism" can at least "grasp the central fact that Socialism means the overthrow of tyranny."\textsuperscript{21} Orwell lamented the lack of such songs in England for to him "to preserve is always to extend."\textsuperscript{22} This belief goes some way in explaining why at times Orwell's writings - despite their occasional cries for revolution - reveal a resilient, and at least small "c," conservatism.

Again, despite the oscillation between viewing socialism as a means and end, between warning us that socialism "in itself" may not work any improvement and talking about it as an end meaning no less than "justice and common decency," there is another steady conviction, namely that changing the structure of society will not automatically improve the quality of life. In this regard, Orwell's comment on Dickens was equally applicable to himself: "his whole 'message' is one that at first glance looks like an enormous platitude: If men would behave decently the world would be decent."\textsuperscript{23} Orwell, though he was against certain institutions, was, like Dickens, more against "an expression on the human face." It is the face of the fanatic addressing the "West Bletchley revolutionaries" at the Left Book Club meeting in \textit{Coming Up For Air}. It is a face full of hatred with a gramaphone voice and its message is that "we must all get together and have a good hate," and its vision is "a picture of...smashing people's faces in with a spanner...the bones cave in like an eggshell and what was a face a minute ago is just a great big blob of strawberry jam...and it's all O.K. because the smashed faces belong to Fascists."\textsuperscript{24} In \textit{Nineteen Eighty-Four} this face of hatred becomes omnipotent and is kept so by each day beginning with the televised hate sessions.
Concerned more with character than structure Orwell said that what frightened him most about the modern intelligentsia was their inability to see that human society must be based on decency, *whatever the political and economic forms may be*...Dickens without the slightest understanding of Socialism etc., would have seen at a glance that there is something wrong with a regime [the "Russian régime"] that needs a pyramid of corpses every few years. 25 (My italics.)

It is his concern with the leftists' preoccupation with changing the "form" of society - its structure rather than the "character" of its members and institutions - which ranks Orwell among the most important critics of the English socialist movement. Within his passionate and often vindictive attacks upon the left, he time and again aims his best shots at what he calls the "inherently mechanistic Marxist notion" that moral advance necessarily follows technical advance, that a more decent life pants at the heels of modern "progress." 27 Even when good intentions are present he notes that modernization may exact a high price in human terms. Talking of the modern housing development initiated by an administration in which socialist and conservative policy were indistinguishable he writes, "When you walk through the smoke-dim slums of Manchester you think that nothing is needed except to tear down these abominations and build decent houses in their place. But the trouble is in destroying the slum you destroy other things as well." 28 While a new housing estate for workers might provide better homes, the rules of the estate, from banning Yorkshire miners from keeping homing pigeons in their back yards to the prohibition of pubs on the estate, strike serious blows at the old communal, family based life. 29

Orwell believes that at its worst, the failure to see that moral advance ought to precede technical advance and changes in the form of a
state creates what he calls the "Theory of Catastrophic Gradualism."

Prominent in its use to justify the often horrific changes of the Stalin régime, this theory harbours the belief that "nothing is ever achieved without bloodshed, lies, tyranny and injustice." It holds that "history necessarily proceeds by calamities," and that one "must not protest against purges, deportations, secret police forces...because these are the price that has to be paid for progress."30 (My italics.)

Orwell was suspicious of claims of "progress." To those, like the exponents of Catastrophic Gradualism, who persistently claimed that one cannot reach a just society, that one cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs, he persistently addressed the question, "But where is the omelette?"31 For him, the word "progress," as used in his time, conjured up visions not of a moral advance upon inequality but a mechanistic and materialist utopia which at root was hostile to the non-mechanistic and creative impulse.32 It is this vision which Flory attacked so vigorously in Burmese Days, highlighting the tension that exists between the view of change as a sign of cultural vigour - an extension rather than a rejection of tradition - and the view of change as a symptom of breakdown, of cultural discontinuity. It is this latter view which pervades the down and out trials of Dorothy Hare, causing her to dwell on the hymn line "Change and decay in all around I see."33 It is the same view which accompanies George Bowling who discovers that the pastoral Lower Binfield of his youth is irretrievably lost - swallowed up by new factories, acres of bright, red-roofed housing estates and a huge cemetery replete with "machine-made" angels.34

Orwell, however, does not counsel a blanket opposition to technological advance, to any form of modernization, or advocate a return to
a "state of nature - meaning some stinking palaeolithic cave: as though there was nothing between a flint scraper and the steel mills of Sheffield."

He knew from first hand experience as a manual labourer how welcome the machine might be: "It makes one sick to see half a dozen men sweating their guts out to dig a trench...when some easily devised machine would scoop the earth out in a couple of minutes." And he argued that an "equal" standard of living for all required a state "at least as highly mechanized as the United States," recognizing that some mechanical advances, while they may be initially invented for a few, ultimately benefit all, because a millionaire can hardly leave others in darkness while lighting the streets for himself.35

In any event he said that there can be no question of accepting or rejecting machine-civilization, for the "beehive [computer] state," whether we like it or not, is here to stay because "every Western man has his inventive faculty to some extent developed." Orwell admits that he found himself "perpetually seeing, as it were, the ghosts of possible machines that might save me the trouble of using my brain or muscles."36

But while he maintained that blanket hostility towards the machine was "unrealistic," he believed that a suspicion of mechanization was healthy insofar as it might act as a much needed brake upon the blanket acceptance of technology. His own caution was based on his observation of what he called the "huge contradiction" which marked the idea of progress, that whereas those "qualities we admire in human beings can only function in opposition to some kind of disaster, pain or difficulty...the tendency of mechanical progress is to eliminate disaster, pain and difficulty." But because the process of mechanization is so deeply habitual in us we follow the apostles of "progress" with the "blind
persistence of a column of ants."\(^{38}\)

Orwell believed that such columns constituted a mindless army marching towards the kind of socialist vision envisaged by H.G. Wells wherein "there will be no disorder, no poverty and no pain."\(^{39}\) The problem with such a vision, he says, is that even when Wells, for example, does entertain the possibility that "inequality" could occur in the mechanized Utopia, with "one class grabbing all the wealth and power and oppressing the others," he suggests that all we have to do is to overthrow privilege, to switch from capitalism to socialism, and "all will be well...the machine-civilization is to continue, but its products are to be shared out equally."\(^{40}\) But, charges Orwell, this sole reliance on a socialist-controlled redistribution of goods to solve the problems of inequality ignores the possibility that "the machine itself may be the enemy."\(^{41}\) (My italics.) It ignores the very real probability that once we have the habit of using machines we will forever think of more machines as more progress. When this happens mechanization is seen as the end of socialism rather than the means and it is precisely this vision which most readily alienates the sensitive and creative minds which socialism sorely needs to humanize it. It is this vision which also harbours the belief that once "you have got this planet of ours perfectly into trim you start upon the enormous task of reaching and colonizing another."\(^{42}\)

But, argues Orwell, such Wellsian inspired visions do not come to grips with the \textit{dangers} of the machine. Rather all they do is "push the objective" of mechanization "further into the future," and "for the foolproof world you have substituted the foolproof solar system."\(^{44}\) And the colonized planets themselves will sooner or later have to confront the dangers of unbridled technological advance.\(^{45}\)
Quite apart from the effect which a vision of mechanization had upon alienating potential converts to the socialist cause, Orwell, reflecting upon his down and out period, cautions that the headlong rush towards mechanization ignores the fact that men "need" work as a measure of self esteem and self expression. He also notes that the belief that machines, in doing away with "work," will automatically provide more leisure time overlooks the simple but important fact that beyond the most odious manual tasks, what is one man's work is another man's play.

In short it is not dishwashing machines that the ex-dishwasher is against but the degree of mechanization. As in the moral realm, if there are no limits then the impulse to invent and improve which has now become "instinctive" means that if you set a pacifist working in a bomb factory he will very soon be inventing a new type of bomb. And soon "there are millions of people to whom the blaring of a radio is not only a more acceptable but a more normal background to their thoughts than the lowing of cattle or the song of birds."

Orwell admits that the machine can make us economically freer. But the question which continues to posit itself in the face of the impulse towards unlimited mechanization is how can new-found freedom from material need be translated into freedom to act more as individuals?

The dilemma posed by man being economically wealthier but less free is one which Orwell, like so many, could not solve. What he does do, however, is alert us to the dangers inherent in the assumption that because science, through labour-saving devices, can solve men's material problems it can solve his psychological problems as well. When neurosis, or "the discontented cutting edge of mankind," comes to be thought of as no more invulnerable to science than diptheria it is only a matter of time
before Big Brother's state seeks not simply to cure the personality with electric shock but to dominate it. For if "thought corrupts science, science can also corrupt thought," and, as with language, a "bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should and do know better."Winston Smith, political prisoner, becomes Winston Smith, victim of science.

On this theme Orwell, in What is Science?, wrote of the danger to our very existence (let alone our political freedom) if we accept certain assumptions, implicit in "the demand for more scientific education." One assumption is that "if one has been scientifically trained one's approach to all subjects will be more intelligent than if one had had no such training." Another assumption is that "a scientist's political opinions...on sociological questions, on morals, on philosophy, perhaps even on the arts, will be more valuable than those of a layman." Rejecting both assumptions Orwell argues that such misconceptions result from the "partly deliberate" confusion which arises when people believe that to be more scientifically educated means to "be taught more about radioactivity...the stars...their own bodies, rather than that they should be taught to think more exactly." For him, the fact that "scientific workers of all countries line up" and support their governments' policies much more readily than do writers and artists helps illustrate the point that "a mere training in one or more of the exact sciences...is no guarantee of a humane or sceptical outlook."

The danger of all classes being enslaved rather than liberated by science, says Orwell, stems once again from ignorance rather than malice, from the habit of mechanization in all classes that will quickly move them to devise new machines even if old ones are deliberately destroyed.
Such a habit both reflects and is responsible for the "frightful debauchery of taste that has already been effected by a century of mechanization."\textsuperscript{50}

The concern over the standardization of goods, which Orwell sees as a direct cause of the decay of taste and which worries him so much, is not confined to his theorizing in \textit{The Road to Wigan Pier} where he goes beyond the indigenous condition to a world condition. Such concern has its origins in the oft-repeated fears of John Flory's vision of modern progress - seeing and hearing all the gramophones playing the same tune. It is the impact of standardization in the world of goods alone which causes Orwell to conclude that in the long run we may find "that tinned food is a deadlier weapon than the machine gun."\textsuperscript{51} And it is presence of "standardized" goods, maintained by the use of cheap substitutes, which so thoroughly depresses George Bowling. The decay in taste signalled at Bowling's breakfast table by a label informing him of the existence of "neutral fruit juice" for Orwell is symptomatic of a decaying and endangered world; not just a world headed for a second world war but heading for the "after-war, the food queues...the secret police and the loudspeakers telling you what to think."\textsuperscript{52} It is from this vision of Nineteen Eighty-Four that Bowling, in one last desperate effort, attempts to flee and come up for air by returning to his boyhood home.

In a cameo of the modern decay of taste we see Bowling, for lack of any other suitable eating places, entering a "streamlined" milk bar and asking himself, "Why am I coming here?...no real food at all...sort of phantom stuff that you can't taste and can hardly believe in the existence of." He places his order for coffee and frankfurters amid the shine of chrome, mirrors, and against the noise of a radio, altogether "a sort of propaganda floating round." Then there is the shock of biting
Suddenly - pop! The thing burst in my mouth... A sort of horrible soft stuff was oozing all over my tongue. But the taste! For a moment I just couldn't believe it....I was still rolling the stuff round my tongue, wondering where I could spit it out. I remembered a bit I'd read in the paper somewhere about these food-factories in Germany where everything's made out of something else. Ersatz, they call it. I remembered reading that they were making sausages out of fish, and fish, no doubt, out of something different....I'd bitten into the modern world and discovered what it was really made of. That's the way we're going nowadays....Everything slick, and streamlined, everything made out of something else. Celluloid, rubber, chromium-steel everywhere, arc-lamps blazing all night, glass roofs over your head, radios all playing the same tune, no vegetation left, everything cemented over, mock-turtles grazing under the neutral fruit trees. But when you come down to brass tacks and get your teeth into something solid, a sausage for instance, that's what you get. Rotten fish in a rubber skin. Bombs of filth bursting inside your mouth.\(^5\)

The wider implication of Bowling's concern is that the habit of mass produced standardization made possible through substitutes not only threatens to render the distinction between natural and "filthy chemical" beer difficult to make, but more significantly the "ersatz" habit makes such a distinction seem unimportant. The danger is that ultimately because "what applies to food applies also to...books, and everything else that makes up our environment,"\(^5\) the distinction between ideas is in danger. As we are conditioned, indeed we condition ourselves, not to be concerned about the degree of difference between natural and artificial beer or cheese so do we become uncaring of the degree of difference between those governments with power over us. In short, as standardization of goods dulls the critical ability to distinguish between manufactured goods so, by osmosis, does it dull the critical ability to distinguish between régimes and ideas. As one soap seems as good, or bad, as the next, soon "all politicians are the same." The result is that in time the decay of taste which allows indifference to
pose as tolerance leads even sections of the intelligentsia to argue that:

after all democracy is "just the same as" or "just as bad as" totalitarianism. There is not much freedom of speech in England; therefore there is no more than exists in Germany. To be on the dole is a horrible experience; therefore it is no worse to be in the torture chambers of the Gestapo.55

In addition to the "decay of taste" which the concentration upon mechanization has produced, Orwell argues that an equal danger to hopes of greater equality emerges from the parent and mistaken conviction that redistribution of goods will of itself make life better - will eliminate the uneasiness between man and man. His concern here is that the apostles of socialism, because of their preoccupation with the "materialistic utopia," with "mechanization, rationalization, modernization" and the host of attendant "economic facts," will continue to proceed "on the assumption that man has no soul." The danger is not merely that scientific method will be thought to be the only solution to all problems but that in ignoring the spiritual side of man, socialists will perpetuate the "spiritual recoil from socialism."56 To Ravelston's question, "But what would Socialism mean, according to your idea of it?" Comstock's recoil is evident in his reply:

Oh! Some kind of Alduous Huxley, *Brave New World*; only not so amusing. Four hours a day in a model factory, tightening up bolt number 6003. Rations served out in grease proof paper at the communal kitchen. Community-hikes from Marx Hostel to Lenin Hostel and back. Free abortion clinics on all the corners. All very well in its way, of course, only we don't want it.57

Marching in the train of such recoil, says Orwell, will be Fascism, a movement which might well be accepted through its appeal to the spiritual side of man, to such things as "tradition" and "Christian belief."58 As such, Fascism addresses itself to all those like Dorothy Hare who are
confronted by the central dilemma of A Clergyman's Daughter, that "Faith vanishes, but the need for faith remains the same as before." Orwell's concern is echoed in K.P. Minogue's comment that "It is one of the major difficulties of much socialist thought that it must yoke together two quite different things: material provision on the one hand and spiritual development or happiness on the other."

Beyond the immediate impediments to a better life which Orwell saw posed by too heavy a reliance of the socialism of his day upon technology, a further impediment arises in his discussion of the class question. It is that if you place too much faith in merely changing the shape of society you are not only apt to believe, as noted earlier, that redistribution of goods through technology is all that is needed to achieve "equality" but you are not apt to realize that the "issue of class as distinct from mere economic status, has got to be faced more realistically." (My italics.) The question which has to be faced, so far as technology is concerned, is why is there still so much exploitation of others as evidenced by continuing class division when the machine has effectively replaced the servant?

Obviously, in order to remove such exploitation, or at least reduce it, more has to be done than merely pressing for the removal of an unqualified belief in technology. What is required, and here Orwell returns to a favourite theme, is radical and "uncomfortable change" in the "habits and 'ideology'" of individuals in the upper and middle classes. If this does not happen as a prerequisite to abolishing class distinctions, then technology will not only belong to the upper class but will actually strengthen class division, for while technological advance tends to "some
form of collectivism," this form, as we have seen, need not be "equalitarian." Presaging Nineteen Eighty-Four, Orwell finds it all too easy "to imagine a world-society economically collectivist...but with all the political, military and educational power in the hands of a small caste of rulers and their bravos [sic]...the slave state...the slave world."

This world, he claims, may very well be a "stable" society and, given the "enormous wealth" of natural resources, one could expect the "slaves" to be "well-fed and contented." But, he says, it is precisely against this possibility that we must "combine." The idea that technology may well end up serving as the guarantor of totalitarianism is reflected in his observation that past despotisms have not been totalitarian only because their "repressive apparatus" was simply inefficient. But in the modern world, just as the telegraph in Burmese Days brought district officers under more direct control of the "office babus" in Whitehall, so does technology bring Winston Smith under the ever increasing control of Big Brother's ever watchful telescreens. The ultimate in such control of the individual is, of course, thought control wherein "Freedom" is believed to be no more than "Slavery."

It is true, however, that technological advance can occasionally erode the more visible signs of class structure and friction. This helps us to understand the inconsistency in Orwell's views about whether or not class distinctions and differences were decreasing in England. In 1941 he wrote that one of the most important developments in modern England had been the "upward and downward extension of the middle classes."

This had been so marked in his opinion that the "old classification of society into capitalists, proletarians and petit bourgeois" was all but "obsolete." An example of this was the way in which the sudden
requirements of a large and modern air force had dealt a serious blow to the class structure in England by cutting across class lines in the urgency of its recruitment. As late as 1946 in *The English People*, talking of how mass production of consumer goods, especially clothes, makes it more difficult to determine class by appearance, Orwell notes that though class distinctions do remain, the "real differences between man and man are obviously diminishing." Thus, despite the "glaring" contrasts which he says in England, more than most countries, still exist between wealth and poverty, he believed that English society was moving towards "greater social equality."

The later appearance of *Animal Farm* in 1945 and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1949 constitutes a pessimistic and drastic reassessment of Orwell's earlier hopes for the disappearance of class. A year after *Animal Farm* was published he was claiming that "class distinctions are probably re-establishing themselves in a new form" and that "individual liberty is on the down-grade." True, the Air Force's urgent recruitment, necessitated by modern technological war, might have ridden roughshod over class lines, and modern clothing techniques had removed the outward signs of class. Yet as early as 1944, with war victory in sight, Orwell had to admit there was a swing back towards the old divisions. Evening dress was reappearing and "while two years ago it had practically lapsed ...the distinction between first class and third class on the railways is being enforced again." In addition, "Commercial advertisements, which I told you a year or so back were rapidly disappearing, are definitely on the up-grade again, and make use of the snobbery motif more boldly."

However much his opinions may have changed on the degree to which class barriers had come down due to technological advances, Orwell's
fundamental attitude to the class question remained unchanged. Always and everywhere he was consistent in his belief that whatever the degree of class snobbery, the real evil was that such snobbery should exist at all.

In his efforts to combat class difference Orwell, as we have seen, tried to convince the stage rebels of socialism that it was necessary for them to make a determined effort to change themselves in order that they might change society. He did so not only because he thought that everyone should make such a commitment but because he argued that, as with Christianity, the worst advertisements for socialism - for "equality" - are its adherents. This was so because, paradoxically, "Socialism in its developed form is a theory confined entirely to the middle classes" who are educated to be snobbish and so at heart are unprepared to change themselves. Instead, they seek to realize their good intentions by talking about a classless society at a safe distance from the working classes with whom Orwell says they should be acting out their good intentions. It is in Ravelston, the socialist editor of *Antichrist* in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, that we see the gap between leftist intellectualism and right wing temperament which Orwell believed plagued so many parlour socialists - particularly writers.

Ravelston felt rather uncomfortable. In a way of course, he knew - it was precisely this that *Antichrist* existed to point out - that life under a decaying capitalism is deathly and meaningless. But this knowledge was only theoretical. You can't really feel that kind of thing when your income is eight hundred a year. Most of the time, when he wasn't thinking of coal-miners, Chinese junk-coolies, and the unemployed in Middlesborough, he felt that life was pretty good fun.

Likewise he argues that even for Dickens, who is "quite genuinely on the side of the poor against the rich...it would be next door to
impossible for him not to think of a working-class exterior as a stigma."
This is particularly interesting, given how Dickens' wide appeal reinforced the image which the rich had of the down and out and of the poor. Orwell notes how Dickens, in an autobiographical piece, writes, "No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship, [in the blacking-factory]... But I held some station... my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us..."74

While Orwell admitted that it was "silly," "childish" and "even contemptible" to be dissuaded from the good purpose of a movement because of the hypocrisy of the adherents, he said that because "it happens"75 it had to be dealt with if socialism was to advance. It was against such hypocrisy, unconscious or not, that he turned with full force in The Road to Wigan Pier. Throughout his life Orwell's attacks upon what can be called the hypocritical left alternated between broadsides against the middle class left and the intellectual left which were not always one and the same. The middle class left sometimes included writers but refers here mainly to middle class members and supporters of the socialist party. The intellectual left often included the middle class members and supporters of the socialist party but referred, at least in Orwell's view, much more to left wing writers.76 Failure to distinguish between these two targets in Orwell's work can lead us into erroneously lumping together his attacks on the middle class leftists in the thirties, which stem from his Adelphi days,77 and his attacks in the forties upon the intellectual left and intellectuals in general, such as occur in "Inside the Whale" (1940) and "The Prevention of Literature" (1946). With this in mind I will be mainly discussing in this chapter his criticism of the
middle class socialist. Later, in the Spanish section, I will discuss
the attack upon the intellectuals in general for it was largely the
result of his experience in Spain that Orwell was to view the intellec­
tuals with a deep and permanent suspicion.

Though Orwell wanted the middle class socialist leadership to
rid themselves of the "habits" and "ideology" which make a hypocrisy of
their protestations of brotherhood with the less privileged, he warned
against the "summer school" approach, where the "proletarian and repentant
bourgeois are supposed to fall upon one another's necks and be brothers
for ever." Such attempts only succeed, he believed, in spotlighting and
intensifying differences. Just as the summer school method failed, so
did the "doctrinaire" approach in its outpouring of socialist cant.
Orwell was not against propaganda. At the B.B.C. (Nineteen Eighty-Four's
Ministry of Truth) during the war he would be a propagandist himself, but
he was against deliberately dishonest and, in this case, ineffective
propaganda. He was against bourgeois socialists who in their "bourgeois
baiting" showed that they knew more about what they were against than
what they were for, and who succeed in alienating and antagonizing
potential middle class recruits by telling them that they are inferior
because they don't work with their hands. What the socialist movement
needs instead, Orwell writes, is "less about 'class consciousness',
'expropriation of the expropriators', 'bourgeois ideology', and proletarian
solidarity" and "the sacred sisters, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis;
and more about justice, liberty, and the plight of the unemployed." 80

The danger in the use of such jargon for Orwell, quite apart from
making socialism's aims unintelligible to the working class man, is that
by soothing the conscience of the speaker it draws his or her attention
away from the underlying problem, that while "we all rail against class distinctions...few people seriously want to abolish them," including socialists. (My italics.) The anti-imperialist, like the British Labour Party with its "Socialist phraseology," rails against imperialism while depending upon sweating coolies for a standard of living which is the "very last thing" these imperialists would want to give up. Similarly, most of the middle class "cling like glue" to their class while vociferously advocating the classless society.

Furthermore, many would-be socialists were drawn to the socialist vision not from any love of their fellow man, because class distinction and unemployment bothered them, but because of what Orwell called their "hypertrophied sense of order." For such people (like Shaw) he said poverty and its habits are not only more disgusting than wrong but are to be abolished "from above." Revolution is not seen as a movement of the masses below but as rules imposed by "we,' the clever ones...upon 'them.'" This, charges Orwell, explains Shaw's worship of powerful men like Stalin and Mussolini.

Such a view, however, Orwell claims, does not mean that the "clever" socialists are devoid of antagonism against the "bourgeoisie." Indeed because of their often more literary natures they are capable of the most impassioned outrage. The "bourgeois baiting" literature is to the point. Here one can see the proclivity of socialist writers to "lash" themselves into "frenzies of rage" against the class to which they belong. This great outpouring of hatred leaves no doubt that its authors are theoretically against exploitation but is devoid of constructive suggestions on how to improve the lot of the exploited. The result, according to Orwell, is that such diatribes convince potential recruits to socialism
that socialism is little more than the voice of hatred. It is viewed in the same way as a new bottle of colonial burgundy would be to a few spoonfuls of Beaujolais - conjuring up a vision of a future tasting only of "iron and water."^84

It is from this nexus of thought, order and unqualified hatred of exploiters, says Orwell, that so many people are repelled, especially artists and writers whose creative talents are sorely needed to counter the dullness of the socialist vision. ^85 The drive for order of course largely manifests itself in worship of the machine and I have discussed the dangers which Orwell considered were attendant on this. But as important in its implications for the freedom of individual conscience, and thus ultimately of action, is the danger of socialist orthodoxy which grows out of the obsession with order. The vision of the socialist world being "above all things an ordered...efficient world" rests so heavily upon the vision of an "immensely organized" and "completely mechanized" world that belief in mechanical progress as the guarantor of order and efficiency becomes an article of faith - "almost a...religion." Consequently any attempt to check the machine's advance is considered as "blasphemy." The power of orthodoxy is evident in Orwell's frequent analogies between educated communists and Roman Catholics who can even regard the "liquids you drink" as "orthodox or heretical."^86 Most disturbingly it is evident in the power it has over the very socialists who presumably abhor the exploitation carried out by "all the smelly little orthodoxies which are now contending for our souls."^87

By way of example of the power of socialist orthodoxy, of how even anti-mechanistic feeling could be regarded as an anti-progressive "heresy," Orwell recalls how a "prominent I.L.P.'er confessed" to him,
with "a sort of wistful shame...that he was fond of horses." The existence of such orthodoxy, when a man can actually feel guilty because he harbours any sentiment for the un-socialist "agricultural past," says Orwell, is enough in itself to explain why so many "decent minds" have been alienated from the socialist cause. The wider and darker implications of the power of such orthodoxy would become evident to Orwell in Spain.

In addition to the above complaints against middle class socialists, Orwell deplored, in markedly bitter attacks, the "horrible - really disquieting - prevalence of cranks" among socialists and the population in general. With "magnetic force," the very word socialism, he said, along with communism, seemed to attract "every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist, and feminist in England." George Bowling's disgust with one such "crank" could well be mistaken for a section from The Road to Wigan Pier. As Bowling comes across the Upper Binfield Estate he meets one of the "cranks":

I began to wonder whether he was someone who'd escaped from Binfield House. But no, he was sane enough, after a fashion. I knew the type. Vegetarianism, simple life, poetry, nature-worship, roll in the dew before breakfast....He began to show me round the estate. There was nothing left of the woods. It was all houses, houses - and what houses!...You could see in your mind's eye the awful gang of food-cranks and spook-hunters and simple-lifers with £1000 a year that lived there. Even the pavements were crazy....I got rid of him, went back to the car and drove down to Lower Binfield....God rot them and bust them! Say what you like - call it silly, childish, anything - but doesn't it make you puke sometimes to see what they're doing to England, with their bird-baths and their plaster gnomes, and their pixies and tin cans, where the beechwoods used to be?

Because such people are so often associated with socialism, says Orwell, the "ordinary" man is also driven away from the socialist cause in his belief that "socialism" is little more than a synonym for eccentricity.

At first sight it would seem unlikely that such "eccentrics" and
the proponents of order could tolerate each other, let alone combine in the socialist quest for equality. But what emerges from Orwell's discussions of both types is that both the bourgeois sandal wearer and the bourgeois white collar worker are attracted not simply by the vision of a better life in the future but by a life cut off from the past — from tradition. This is what makes the socialist order the new order and it is from this vision that non-socialists flee, pursued by the charge of "bourgeois sentimentality," not because they believe that socialism "would not work" but because they believe that "it would 'work' too well." And when they flee, Orwell is afraid they will end up in the waiting arms of Fascism. Fascism offers more than discipline and order. It offers respite from the hedonistic vision of the materialist utopia by posing as the keeper of tradition. It offers men security gained through their link with the past. After a "bellyful of the more tactless kind of Socialist propaganda," writes Orwell, "even the Fascist bully probably feels less a bully and more like "Roland in the pass at Roncevaux, defending Christendom against the barbarian." In light of his harsh attacks upon socialists in the indigenous period, particularly in The Road to Wigan Pier, Orwell gives the impression that the socialist movement of his time was composed almost entirely of ineffectual cranks and machine-worshippers. But he was after all more concerned with diagnosing what he felt was wrong with socialism than with praising what he felt was right with it. This is often forgotten by critics who point out, correctly, that he did not pay enough attention to "good and self-forgetful action which many middle class socialists have shown." Despite the pessimism of his novels, however, and his fear that
Fascism might win, that George Bowling's vision of "the after-war...the barbed wire! The slogans! The enormous faces! The cork-lined cellars where the executioner plugs you from behind!" might come true, Orwell did not spend all his time writing about those things which created class divisions. Writing in the dark dusk of the thirties he believed that the only hope of establishing socialism lay in winning the coming war against Hitler and for Orwell this necessitated the declaration, "My country, Right or Left." In short, the hope of socialism lay in an appeal to the most traditional of values - patriotism.

Not only would the appeal to patriotism be essential for the defeat of Hitler but hopefully it would bring the middle and working classes close enough together so that even if a firm alliance between the two against the upper class was not effected, at least the technocratic middle class, "indispensable" to any modern industrial nation, would not be hostile to revolution. "The question is not so much whether the men in key positions are fully on your side as whether they are sufficiently against you to sabotage." More specifically, if socialism, through revolution, was to come to England, then that revolution must be supported and defended by the British Fleet. And if the British Fleet was to be won over for such a revolution its officer class must be won over - which meant the middle class must be won over through the appeal to middle class patriotism which Orwell believed was stronger than that of the upper classes.

Despite his sudden resurgence of patriotism, Orwell did not claim that there was no anti-war feeling; after all, this was the decade of the Oxford Union's declaration not to fight for King and Country, and of the Peace Pledge Union. He did claim, however, that beneath the natural
and healthy reluctance to be involved in war, which he had shared, there was a deep current of loyalty that would quickly draw men to the defence of England and her empire. It is the belief expressed by George Bowling in *Coming Up For Air* as he recalls Lower Binfield's attitude towards the Boer War:

"Well now! Listed for a soldier! Just think of it! A fine young fellow like that!" It just shocked them. Listing for a soldier, in their eyes, was the exact equivalent of a girl's going on the streets. Their attitude to the war, and to the Army, was very curious. They had the good old English notions that red-coats are the scum of the earth and anyone who joins the Army will die of drink and go straight to hell, but at the same time they were good patriots, stuck Union Jacks in their windows... even the Nonconformists used to sing sentimental songs about the thin red line.103

Orwell believed that this attitude was unchanged in 1941. Englishmen, he said, were as contemptuous of military bombast as ever but just as patriotic. It was one of those constancies behind his statement, "What can the England of 1940 have in common with the England of 1840? ....What have you in common with the child of five whose photograph your mother keeps on the mantelpiece? Nothing except that you happen to be the same person."104

Patriotism was the "invisible chain" which transcended class lines, drawing together the latent sense of brotherhood which was heightened by the threat of invasion and which was essential for the establishment of socialism. It is this common emotion, this "emotional unity" amid all the patent injustice and inequality which Orwell said socialism should appeal to. While he no doubt regarded such an appeal as a strategic move, his was not an appeal of cynicism. He believed that patriotism was a virtuous thing, declaring, for example, that despite the flirtations of the British ruling class with Fascism, the "one thing" which showed that they were morally sound was that this class was "ready enough" to die in England's
In one of the most moving passages he wrote, he talks of how the emotional bond to country, stirred by the threat of aggressive nationalism from without, can transcend class barriers, can be transmuted to a sense of family (even "a family with the wrong members in control").

Beneath Mr. Muggeridge's seeming acceptance of disaster there lies the unconfessed fact that he does after all believe in something - in England....I am told that some months back he left the Ministry of Information to join the army....And I know very well what underlies these closing chapters. It is the emotion of the middle-class man, brought up in the military tradition, who finds in the moment of crisis that he is a patriot after all. It is all very well to be "advanced" and "enlightened," to snigger at Colonel Blimp and proclaim your emancipation from all traditional loyalties, but a time comes when the sand of the desert is sodden red and what have I done for thee, England, my England? As I was brought up in this tradition myself I can recognize it under strange disguises, and also sympathize with it, for even at its stupidest and most sentimental it is a comelier thing than the shallow self-righteousness of the left-wing intelligentsia.

The appeal to patriotism as a rallying point for the implementation of socialist ideas was of course made strictly with the view of establishing socialism in England, of reducing the "grosser injustices" in "the most class-ridden country under the sun." The appeal was not meant to promote international socialism, as is evident from Orwell's comments about the famed insularity and xenophobia of Englishmen (particularly that of the working class) and his belief that while patriotism is "stronger than class-hatred" it is also stronger "than any kind of internationalism."

In 1944 Orwell freely admitted that he had been wrong in viewing the victory over Hitler and the victory of socialism in England as mutually dependent. His appeal to patriotism nevertheless demands attention, for it demonstrates his awareness of qualities which hold men together as well as those which drive them apart, and it reveals his understanding of the importance of tradition. For Orwell, patriotism, as part of the observance of tradition, does not automatically imply reverence for the
past but is more a "devotion to something that is changing but is felt
to be mystically the same." Above all, it fills a "spiritual need...for which no substitute has been found."\textsuperscript{110} And despite his suggestion
to the contrary, Orwell's own patriotism, his readiness to declare, "My
country, right or left," reveals a conservatism that is itself a
"connecting thread" through his work. As one cannot simply be rid of
the old religious needs in the presence of mechanistic visions of the
future, one cannot be rid of the old need for loyalty in the presence
of new causes. Such needs may change their dress but they will not
easily disappear, despite the urging of the intellect to do so. As the
old need of loyalty in \textit{Keep the Aspidistra Flying} stays with Ravelston,
the rich young editor of \textit{Antichrist}, after he has transferred his
allegiance "from God to Marx,"\textsuperscript{111} so it stays with the member of the
middle class intelligentsia who, though having "ceased to love his own
country [England]," transfers his loyalty to another country because he
"still feels the need of patriotism."\textsuperscript{112}

Drawing on personal experience Orwell explains how such patriotism,
the preference for old loyalties above new ones, is largely an emotional
reaction to long training, no matter that one's later intellectual choices
may endorse its utility. In the late thirties during the bitter despondency
among leftists over the Republican defeat in Spain Orwell had become
extremely cynical about the coming "imperialist war" with Hitler.\textsuperscript{113} He
doubted whether it "can do the slightest good or even that it makes much
difference who wins."\textsuperscript{114} Then he dreamed of war the night before the
Russo-German Pact was announced. He declares that, Freudian analysis aside,
he became conscious of two things:

first, that I should be simply relieved when the long-dreaded war
started, secondly, that I was patriotic at heart, would not sabotage or act against my own side. ... What I knew in my dream that night was that the long drilling in patriotism which the middle classes go through had done its work.\textsuperscript{115} (My italics.)

Alongside his recollections in the same essay of his early training in private school cadet corps and public school O.T.C., and his assertion that the middle class is "trained...morally" for war from birth onwards, the central fact that emerges is that in the midst of common danger Orwell's socialist intellect had been usurped by Blair's bourgeois patriotism.\textsuperscript{116}

Even so, large bodies of men do not determine to fight solely from patriotism and they certainly do not do it from coercion. They determine to fight, said Orwell, from a "half-conscious" awareness that they are part of "some organism greater than themselves, stretching into the future and the past, within which they feel themselves to be immortal."\textsuperscript{117} Full awareness of this fact, he says, only comes in battle. Thus he had hoped in The Road to Wigan Pier that "when the widely separate classes who, necessarily, would form any real Socialist party have fought side by side, they may feel differently about one another. And then perhaps this misery of class-prejudice will fade away."\textsuperscript{118}

Of course there is an enormous paradox in this, namely that to fully realize brotherhood one needs to fight. Orwell does not address himself to the contradiction other than making a distinction between patriotism and nationalism. Patriotism, he says, means loyalty to a "particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world, but has no wish to force upon other people." Nationalism, on the other hand, while it draws its power from the individual's sense of being a
part of a larger organism and also moves men to fight, is not defensive but is essentially *aggressive and competitive*. Nationalism, unlike patriotism, is "inseparable from the drive for power." That is, while a fully moral sense of brotherhood may be gained from patriotism it cannot be gained from nationalism.

Though Orwell suggested in 1937 that a strong sense of brotherhood between classes might be realised by men who were under fire together, he had no experience to confirm him in this. His suggestion was nothing more than an extension of his belief that once men of different classes work together, act together rather than merely mingle at forced social gatherings, they would realize that they had more in common than they thought. Confirmation of this belief came within the year. After he had joined the Independent Labour Party (rather than the Labour Party who, he believed, had compromised itself over socialist principles as in its implicit support of imperialism) he went to Spain and fought with the Republicans. Here he was to witness the classlessness of the P.O.U.M. and in a letter of reaffirmation to Cyril Connolly, one of the "stage rebels" of Eton, he wrote from Barcelona in June, 1937, "I have seen wonderful things and at last really believe in Socialism."

Of the search for the brotherhood among classes that might paradoxically come from War, Symons, in his comment on the Thirties, could well have been speaking for Orwell when he wrote:

What were they looking for, those members of the intelligentsia who went out and fought beside these men? One unconscious motive behind their action was the wish to obtain that contact with the working class which was denied to them in their ordinary lives. The practical difficulties of association with what was, in the Thirties mythology, a great source of good, were great. What meeting point was there between poets like John Cornford and Julian Bell, scientists like Lorimer Birch, writers like Hugh Slater, and miners from Durham, cotton-workers from Lancashire? War melts
away the barriers between classes and also creates shared interests, bonds of knowledge and affection.121

Some comments on Orwell's indigenous writings are given below before I move on to his experience in Spain.

**Summary of Chapter III and Overview**

In summary, for Orwell socialism is the answer to those problems of inequality caused more by maldistribution than scarcity or deliberate injustice. Socialism means that everyone gets his "fair share." We are not told, however, what constitutes a "fair share." All we know for sure in Orwell's sketch of what a socialist Britain might look like is that he who is able to work but does not, will not receive anything. There is talk of stressing competence above privilege but the graduation of incomes suggests a belief in meritocracy. This is not incompatible with the parcelling out of fair shares, even in a nation which is to institute common ownership over the means of production. But it does suggest that Orwell erroneously equates "equality," the unequivocal aim of his socialism, with "meritocracy." It poses a potential confusion which, together with his failure to define the terms "justice" and "liberty" in his discussion of socialism, is never answered. He does say that if people are not living on approximately the "same level," the phrase "collectivist society" is an empty one and can simply be a smokescreen for a savagely unequal society.

Technology may help us to get close to the unrealizable ideal of equality, indeed it should be used as much as possible to relieve us of menial tasks, but it can only help if we realize that scientific knowledge does not necessarily make us more humane. We must realize that an easier and more equal distribution of goods is no answer in itself to all inequality. Beyond the purely economic inequalities, social inequalities,
which do not derive entirely from differences in income, cannot be attacked effectively until we realize that structural changes and scientific advances in society will achieve little if the morality, autonomy, creative urge and spiritual needs of the individual within society are ignored. Insofar as technology is concerned Orwell has no suggestion as to what kind of restraints, if any, should be applied to man's inventive faculties for he realizes that what is one man's work is another man's pleasure. Nor does he have an answer to the dilemma posed by the fact that while the machine makes man physically freer it does not free him of the psychic need he has to win over odds so as to win esteem from his fellows and sustain his self-respect. All Orwell could suggest was that our awareness of the problem may prevent us from making a headlong rush into the mechanistic belief that all problems, even those of social inequality, can be solved by technology, as if better hospitals will somehow finally thwart death. He also warns that increased technology without decreased class differences will mean that the upper classes, intentionally or not, will strengthen their position and may even create wider gaps between classes because their wealth will only be increased by their continuing control of the means of production, of increasingly sophisticated and more efficient technology.

Apart from the dangers to socialism's vision of a society of free and equal beings which are posed by a blind faith in technology and the standardization of ideas through the standardization of "everything else that makes up the environment," there is the danger of the (largely middle class) socialists themselves. While many middle class socialists oppose snobbery intellectually they harbour it emotionally. Words soothe the outraged brain but a highly conscious and radical change in habits
rather than mere fraternization with the lower classes is what is needed to counter the emotional prejudices. Such prejudices, along with "ideological cant" and the unqualified hatred of the bourgeois "bourgeois-baiters," will surely drive off potential converts to socialism. Furthermore, the attractiveness of order and orthodoxy as guarantors of security must be countered by the realization that the quest for brotherhood is undermined by enforcing the conformity of orthodox and highly ordered political structures on one's fellows. Evidence of this is found when members feel guilty of harbouring nostalgia for the past or show disaffection with utopian visions of efficiency and mechanization.

On the other extreme, socialism should not be a haven of (1) eccentrics whose prime purpose is to propagate their own vision of progress (and whose only common ground with fellow socialists is a self-indulgent contempt for tradition) and (2) those who, having no hope of attaining power, naively condemn all forms of power. The banishment of any belief in tradition, argues Orwell, will not only alienate potential recruits to socialism but may well drive them towards Fascism which strongly appeals to the sense of history and was the greatest danger of the day. War with Fascism seemed inevitable and it was crucial in Orwell's view that the middle classes not be lost to the forces of the far right. Orwell asserts that in order to attract recruits, particularly those from the middle classes, socialism should itself turn to one of the most traditional values of all, namely patriotism. He cautions against nationalism, however, claiming that while like patriotism it brings men together, unlike patriotism it is essentially destructive. The importance of Orwell's desire to mobilize patriotism is not simply that it is a unifying force
in the service of self defence but that it reflects his larger view that, for all its horror,

war is the greatest of all agents of change. It speeds up all processes, wipes out minor distinctions, brings realities to the surface. Above all, war brings it home to the individual that he is not an individual....People who at any other time would cling like glue to their miserable scraps of privilege, will surrender them fast enough when their country is in danger.\textsuperscript{123}

Orwell did not want war but when it happened he saw an opportunity to galvanize class unity into the basis for a socialist state. This hope of Orwell's, first stated in \textit{The Road to Wigan Pier}, became a conviction after his experience in Spain.

Orwell's early works in the indigenous period were written from the point of view of a guilt-ridden observer rather than that of an analyst of social conditions. This is especially true of \textit{Down and Out in Paris and London} where Orwell gives nearly all of his attention to the symptoms, rather than the causes, of unemployment and poverty and almost no attention to possible remedies. The reader is struck by the lack of political focus and naivety of the young writer, recalling the comment of Richard Rees, socialist editor of \textit{Adelphi}, that he "found it extraordinary that Blair should make no connection between the plight of the men on the road or in the spikes and the sickness of the society that could find no function for them."\textsuperscript{124} As Orwell admitted, he was still trying to find out what the unemployment figures meant in terms of human suffering.

This naivety, his hatred of himself and of his class, and his resulting desire to identify closely with the lower classes all combine in the absence of any theoretical base\textsuperscript{125} to produce what can only be called a romanticization of the working class. We are given the impression
that "justice" and "liberty" are so endemic to the working class that all the rest of society has to do is to imitate the inherent goodness of the working class (but not the poor) and all will be well. Of course Orwell's guilt-bred, sentimental view of the proletariat was something that he shared with many of his contemporaries and like them he would take it to silly and extraordinary lengths. Just as Spender in Germany had tried to expiate his guilt (of belonging to the privileged classes) by allowing himself to be "cheated and exploited by the unemployed" and Isherwood consumed "vile tea" and "enormous quantities of chocolates to ruin his teeth, a malady he identified with the working classes," so Orwell would slurp his tea from a saucer in order to identify with the working classes, taking childish delight in shocking his companions. So strong was his desire, like that of all his fictional characters, to break free of his class and his past — which neither he nor they ever did — that his affection for the proletariat approached a sophomoric idealization which even lapses into the more remedial and analytical approach of *The Road to Wigan Pier*. In what can only be called a celebration of ignorance he applauds the working class disdain for education, noting how the working class youth cannot wait to leave school and to start doing "real work" instead of "wasting his time on ridiculous rubbish like history and geography." He also writes,

I have often been struck by the peculiar easy completeness, the perfect symmetry as it were, of a working-class interior at its best...when the fire glows in the open range and dances mirrored in the steel fender, when Father, in shirtsleeves sits in the rocking chair at one side of the fire reading the racing finals, and Mother sits on the other with her sewing...the children are happy with a pennworth of mint humbugs, and the dog lolls roasting himself on the rag mat — it is a good place to be in.

And while the middle and upper classes are constantly attacked for
their prejudices, the working class appear not to have any. Orwell is incapable of seeing that the working class can be as self-interested as any other, that its members might gladly embrace the privileges of the middle classes, given half the chance. Similarly, after he had overcome his own apprehensions of "the mob," he often saw the intellectual limitations of the working class world as evidence of a virtuous choice to stay close to the reality of manual labour where he believed illusions of power over others do not grow. He does not see that such a decision would involve a sophisticated view of the world in itself or that the reason so many of the working class remained uninterested in upward mobility could have been the result of the very apathy of undernourishment and overwork which he describes so well. It is this apathy which he sees at a meeting in his visit to Wigan Pier. He records it in his diary but does not do so in his book: "I suppose these people represented a fair cross-section of the more revolutionary element in Wigan. If so, God help us. Exactly the same sheeplike crowd - gaping girls and shapeless middle aged women dozing over their knitting - that you see everywhere else."  

Such statements are in blatant contradiction to his usual view of the working class, that view which makes the reader wonder why, if the working class is not such a bad place to be in, Orwell presses so hard for social reform. If the working class boy is wiser than the educated middle class youth, why talk of sweeping educational reform, let alone of revolution? The answer lies in Orwell's belief in "'solidarity with the working class."' As Zwerdling says, while this phrase "suggests some of the worst left-wing cant of the thirties...for Orwell it had a precise meaning." It meant imitating the working class values.
Accordingly, in Orwell's view "revolution" in part would guarantee full employment and the *preservation* of present working class values. It is, as Samuel Hynes suggests, a peculiarly conservative vision for a socialist. But it is one which accommodates Orwell's belief that the fully employed working man "has a better chance of being happy than an 'educated' man. His home life seems to fall more naturally into a sane and comely shape" and that the middle class may hopefully soon "sink without further struggles into the working class where we belong...after all, we have nothing to lose but our aitches." (My italics.)

Hence while Orwell shared his affection for the proletariat with his contemporaries he stood apart from them in that he did not advocate, as did the Marxist writers, that the working class had to be changed, had to be radicalized out of their passivity. Instead he argued that the middle and upper classes had to descend to embrace working class values, that, as John Mander observes, "the principles of justice and liberty, the underlying ideals of Socialism, were already incarnate in the working class. It was merely a question of persuading the rest of the community to embrace these principles." It is true, as one reviewer points out, that Orwell argued for class cooperation more than class merger but even in this he continued to believe that the rest of society should descend from the pedestals of privilege. This runs counter to his persistent call for revolution "from below." Unfortunately the contradiction between Orwell's sentimentalization of the working class and the call for revolution "from below" cannot be resolved because Orwell's early writings are vague about the means whereby a socialist society is to be created. As Zwerdling notes, Orwell's failure to answer Gollancz's criticism that he did not bother about "the means of transition" constitutes nothing less than
"intellectual laziness." It is a laziness which excuses itself in the naive assertion that "It seemed to me then [immediately after Burma] it sometimes seems to me now, for that matter - that economic injustice will stop the moment we want it to stop, and no sooner, and if we genuinely want it to stop the method adopted hardly matters."

Much of Orwell's vagueness about the methods to be used in creating a socialist society out of a capitalist one stems from the vagueness of socialism's aims, at least those aims expressed by him. After all, a political platform based on the demand for "liberty and justice" is hardly distinguishing as it could accommodate any number of movements along the political spectrum. Finally, the inattention to methods of transition reflects his most serious failure as a political commentator, namely that while he was sure of what the state should not be he never clearly defined what the role of the state should be in men's affairs, beyond saying that on occasion it has to use violence to protect people from violence.

His failure to bother about the role of the state derives from his disdain for the belief that structural change itself will not bring moral improvement in society and from what Zwerdling correctly calls "his hatred of hierarchy in any form." What he fails to face up to is that just as men need to be protected from violence so do they need administration. To have faced this, however, would have meant facing the possibility of inequality, even of managerial "classes" in the classless society, and Orwell was not yet fully equipped to do this, despite his insistence upon the necessity of winning over the technocratic middle class to the cause of revolution. He suspected the Russian myth of equality but hard evidence was slow in coming. Even when it did come ("By 1940 no doubt remained") he would write more of state irresponsibility than responsibility.
Despite the failings of his early work, however, including what one critic calls his "Gissingesque genius for finding the dingiest house in the most sunless street"\(^{142}\) and his old habit of taking his experience, with the miners in Wigan this time, as typical of the experience of a whole class,\(^ {143}\) the thing that Orwell got right from *Down and Out in Paris and London* to *The Road to Wigan Pier* was the atmosphere of poverty and unemployment, what Hoggart calls the "spirit of misery."\(^ {144}\) It is difficult today to understand the importance of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, especially when the detailed tables and figures of its first part are now so outdated. What is not fully appreciated by the contemporary reader is the great gap which existed between the classes of Orwell's day, and how difficult it was to cross that gap which Orwell did, however temporarily. As Toynbee points out,

> to most middle-class people the industrial working-classes were as remote as the pygmies, and the unemployment figures meant nothing at all in human terms. Today the situation has changed at least in this - that there is no longer any excuse for ignorance.\(^ {145}\)

One of the reasons that there is no longer any excuse for such ignorance is because of Orwell's writing about the industrial working class. Though the tables may soon be forgotten or ignored, the human situations are unforgettable in their squalid details. As Woodcock comments:

> Orwell's enterprise in going among the tramps of London seemed almost as daring as that of Tom Harrison, who had lived among the head-hunters of the Solomon Islands....Today most of those documentaries, which seemed so absorbingly interesting thirty years ago, are completely forgotten....Orwell was in fact the only writer who gave permanence to what is normally the most ephemeral of literary crafts. Literate Englishmen of the 1960s gain their impressions of the almost extinct tramp from *Down and Out in Paris and London*, and of the conditions of the unemployed of the 1930s from *The Road to Wigan Pier*.\(^ {146}\)

Despite the deficiencies of his writings on poverty and unemployment,
his descriptions make it impossible for anyone who reads them to "retreat," as one critic notes, "into pseudo-stupidity, the innocence of ignorance."

Readers of his day (and the Left Book Club, which printed The Road to Wigan Pier, alone had forty thousand members) had to "make a choice. - either to support oppression once it had been exposed, or to begin to transform the unjust world." Even Victor Gollancz, who felt obliged to write a disavowing foreword to The Road to Wigan Pier, acknowledged that he could not "imagine anything more likely to rouse the 'unconverted' from their apathy," than a reading of the first part of the book in which Orwell carefully records his first hand observation of the squalor he had seen.

But even though Orwell stands out from all other middle class writers of the thirties in trying "to break down the patron-client attitude that infected the bourgeois socialist or the unaffiliated do-gooder," he was unquestionably unfair in much of his attack upon the middle class socialists. Much of this takes place in the second part of the book where he moves from the concrete details of life among the miners to his thoughts about socialism and where, as he wrote of Down and Out in Paris and London, the characters described "represent types of their class...and not individuals." Eccentric himself in voluntarily sojourning amongst the poor he proceeds to attack the eccentricities of others, ridiculing assorted "cranks" which include those who favour birth control, less oppression of women, and vegetarians. As John Mander notes, it reminds us of Orwell's comment that "It is strange how easily almost any Socialist writer can lash himself into frenzies of rage against the class to which, by birth or adoption, he himself invariably belongs." To add further contradiction, while the eccentric is attacking the right to eccentricity,
he just as strongly attacks the power of socialist orthodoxy to make members ashamed of liking horses, that is, of being unorthodox by having affections for the past. The inconsistency here betrays the constant tension in Orwell's work created by his simultaneous recognition of the need for some associations of men, "solidarity with the working class," on the one hand and the need of individualism on the other. It lies at the heart of his most serious inconsistencies of thought.

His inconsistencies notwithstanding, Orwell had a special impact on the left because without reservation he decided to do what most other socialists would not do at the time — to attack the soft spots of leftist ideology not simply within the party structure but in public. Thus Richard Rovere could comment that in *The Road to Wigan Pier* we see "perhaps the most rigorous examination that any doctrine has ever received at the hands of an adherent." Orwell's belief that if socialism was to be strengthened it had to be examined publicly also led to Gollancz's mild charge of "strange indiscretion" and to more serious charges of "public betrayal" by those leftists who were anxiously trying to "build up party discipline." The importance of Orwell's criticism is most evident when we recall the absence of what Hynes calls the "buffer" generation in England between the young and old after World War I. The absence of this generation which could have provided experienced guides in the political arena for the younger generation explains Stuart Samuels' observation that the "English Left Intelligentsia of the 1930's emerged from a definite political and economic situation and not from any previously existing left-wing literary or philosophical tradition." It also explains why Orwell's generation, short of experienced guides, were fuelled more by political feelings than political ideas and more by anger than ideology.
at the beginning of the thirties and were thus more prone to political illusions, from Wellsian Utopias to the myth of Russia. It was in his role as critic of this "new boy" socialism of the thirties that Orwell, in the thirties, was so embarrassingly influential in the left. This occurred well before his wide, public acclaim for *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

It should be remembered that in attacking middle class socialists Orwell was in large part attacking himself "as sufficiently typical of my class." In *Down and Out in Paris and London* he often failed to recognize his own snobbery while complaining bitterly of others'. Recalling his days as a dishwasher in Paris he writes contemptuously of the American guests,

They would stuff themselves with disgusting American "cereals" and eat marmalade at tea, and drink vermouth after dinner, and order *poulet à la reine* at a hundred francs and then souse it in Worcester sauce. One customer from Pittsburg dined every night in his bedroom on grape-nuts, scrambled eggs and cocoa. Perhaps it hardly matters whether such people are swindled or not.

Also, at the start of his career because he had not really thought about many of the social problems of his time, of unemployment and the like, he could charge that "nobody minds" about the kind of exploitation which he recorded in *Down and Out in Paris and London*. It never seemed to occur to him, as Hollis suggests, that a lot of people "mind" very much about the exploited, but more importantly that such people, rightly or wrongly, sincerely believe that the state should keep its nose out of such problems lest its incursion upon the individual's right to be tramp or beggar would set a precedent for all manner of official invasions of private life. Such incursion upon a beggar's free choice, however desirous in itself, might well mark an irretrievable step on the road to the kind of
total state interference which Orwell was later to abhor.

In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, however, he shows that he is aware not only of the dangers of the state but of his own snobbery. While at times he lapses into the old naivety, we see the observer beginning to analyse. Such increased awareness, particularly of the causes of his own attitudes toward others rather than of the attitudes themselves, was of course simply part of the maturing process of a young writer. But there was something else, a growing mood of urgency that had more to do with the social and political scene in England than with Orwell growing older and which pushed him to search for a remedy for those ills which previously he had merely recorded.

It hardly needs pointing out that at this moment we [in England] are in a very serious mess, so serious that even the dullest-witted people find it difficult to remain unaware of it. We are living in a world in which nobody is free, in which hardly anybody is secure, in which it is almost impossible to be honest and to remain alive.\(^\text{158}\)

Such was the mood created by the crisis of the thirties and felt by society at large just prior to the Spanish Civil War. Grown weary with the government's inability to deal effectively with unemployment and the dictators, much of the population, particularly writers, felt a growing impatience with the "tactics of gradualism" at home, and a growing fear of Fascism. It was this mood, as Zwerdling points out, which "turned Fabian gradualists into apologists for revolution and alienated the Labour Party's left wing [and] changed Orwell from a humanitarian liberal into a socialist."\(^\text{159}\) Just as Beatrice Webb, whom Orwell disliked,\(^\text{160}\) had written in her diary, "What I am beginning to doubt is the 'inevitability of gradualness,' or even the practicability of gradualness, in the transition from a capitalist to an equalitarian civilisation,"\(^\text{161}\) so Orwell would write, "The tempo of events is quickening; the dangers which once seemed a generation
distant are staring us in the face. One has got to be actively a Socialist, not merely sympathetic to Socialism, or one plays into the hands of our always-active enemies."^{162}

The result from the Left was an unequivocal "demand for more radical thought and action."^{163} In this way what had begun as a pilgrimage of expiation took on a political purpose as self-hatred became galvanized into political action through a sense of shared crisis. The observer becomes the doer, a commitment to change himself becomes a commitment to change society. In the latter commitment Orwell was like so many of his contemporaries, but in the commitment to first change himself he stood apart.

Thus in the indigenous period Orwell's concern with the exploited had expanded beyond the relatively closed structure of the "local level" imperialists. Having done "the dirty work of Empire at close quarters," he had seen the distance between institutions and men. In England he had observed more the distance between men - between classes of the same race. Had Orwell resigned and remained in Burma where he had found that "there was no obvious class-friction,"^{164} he may well have retained the simplistic rich-poor, exploiters-exploited dichotomy of *Burmese Days*. But his writing about England in the thirties reflects a definite shift from the black-white delineation of his first novel to the grey, complex, industrialized populations of the lower and middle classes. This shift, as we saw in *Poverty, Revolution and the Middle Classes*, is marked in part by the recognition of a non-malicious, unintentional, and thus unconscious, kind of exploitation. The case of leftists vehemently denouncing imperialism while happily but unconsciously enjoying the products of imperialism's cheap labour is to the point. He also discovers
that in a machine age, exploitation often seems to have a life of its own all but independent of human will, impelled by little more than the amoral neutrality of technological change. Orwell's emphasis on unconscious exploitation more than anything else signals the maturation of the ardent anti-imperialist of *Burmese Days*. In the latter, exploitation of others is always willfully, if not arrogantly imposed, but in the indigenous writings it is not so simple—he can even sympathize with the middle class sending their children to snobbish private schools. The narrow master-slave world of *Burmese Days*, of a few exploiters in an outpost of the old order, has expanded into novels about the exploited at large. In *Burmese Days*, Flory's self-indulgent pessimism about the world can be ended only by a bullet. In the later novels, pessimism persists but there is also hope. Imperialism has been rejected but socialism is about to be welcomed.

To be sure, there is common ground between the two kinds of exploitation Orwell has written about to this date, between the cruder imperialist type and the indigenous kind of the middle and upper classes. This common ground is not simply the will to resist incommodious change which threatens status and income but is a fundamental belief in the rightness of class distinctions as a reflection of the "natural" order of things. Such is evident from Veraswami admonishing his friend, "How can you pretend, Mr. Flory, that you are not the natural superior of such creatures [the natives]?" through Comstock's and Bowling's lack of pity for the proles, to the humiliation visited upon the near blind miner collecting his dole in Wigan.

In examining the constancy and persistency of the belief that there are people whose proper function in life is serving others without
respite or adequate recompense, Orwell takes us well beyond the evils of imperialism for he is showing us the cause of the remarkable resilience of the class structure in England as well. Indeed the belief in class distinctions is so strong that it lasts all the way to Nineteen Eighty-Four where Winston Smith in Airstrip One (London) tells us that "the Party taught that the proles were natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection like animals." It is the persistence of this belief which periodically curdles Orwell's optimism into pessimism and causes him to choose cooperation within class differences rather than removal of them as the best path to societal reform. As Hoggart says, one minute he urges the middle class to drop their habits and the next not to try, claiming that such habits are too deeply ingrained.

Because of Orwell's concentration upon the belief in the rightness of class distinctions it is tempting to agree with Woodcock that throughout his work Orwell continued to view society according to the imperialist model he had observed in Burma. Instead of seeing an England populated by people of the same race, divided as it always has been into a number of merging classes and subclasses between which individuals could pass with considerable mobility, he tended always to see it in the simpler terms of a colonial world, a world of master race and subject race.

This criticism, however, takes no account of Orwell's recognition of yet more common ground between the world of imperialism and the world of Wigan Pier, namely that of patriotism which he passionately believed constituted a hidden reservoir of good will. This discovery enabled him, contrary to Woodcock's claim, to see an England of the same race and not only a country of exploiters and exploited. As we have seen, while he could talk of "three" Englands, he could also talk of one "family," debunking the fear of the "mob" which he believed was based on the
erroneous belief that there was "some mysterious fundamental difference between rich and poor, as though they were two different races."\textsuperscript{170} It was a "family"

in which the young are generally thwarted and most of the power is in the hands of irresponsible uncles and aunts. Still it is a family...A family with the wrong members in control - that, perhaps, is as near as one can come to describing England in a phrase.\textsuperscript{171}

And this belief of Orwell's was not confined to observations of events in the war years. In \textit{The English People} Orwell recalls how in 1935, during George V's jubilee, slum dwellers had scribbled "poor but loyal" on the sidewalks.

Still, the old tensions between the need for brotherhood, as exemplified in patriotism, and the desires of self-interest and self-expression are still present. Just as Flory felt the pressure to conform to imperialist orthodoxy, so Orwell feels the pressure of socialist orthodoxy pressing in upon individuality. Yet as 1936 nears its end he attacks "cranks" with the same vehemence as Ellis attacked Flory because in the mood of urgency he sees the need for solidarity, a united front against the looming threat of Fascism. It now becomes necessary "for left-wingers of all complexions to drop their differences and hang together."\textsuperscript{172}

Still, the tension between group and individual was not resolved. This tension, a manifestation of the ancient freedom-versus-authority theme in political thought, would continue to haunt Orwell. It would never disappear but at times it would be eased. Such a time was during the early part of the Spanish Civil War. Here for a brief time it seemed to Orwell as if one's sense of individuality could be properly and safely surrendered to a united front that was ostensibly fighting against Fascism and for the exploited at large.
Notes to Section II - Chapter III


2. Orwell, Wigan Pier, pp. 141, 126.

3. Ibid., p. 150.

4. Ibid., pp. 154 and 199.


6. Ibid., III, p. 51.

7. Ibid., II, p. 120.


10. Ibid., I, p. 215, 583.

11. Ibid., III, p. 143.


13. Orwell, CEJL, IV, p. 36.


17. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 29.


19. Ibid., III, p. 83.


23. Ibid., I, p. 457.


34. Orwell, *Coming Up For Air*, pp. 177-78.


43. *Ibid.*, p. 171. By way of contemporary illustration Professor Sagan, director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies at Cornell University, writes, "One of the many virtues of the space-city proposal is that it may provide the first convincing argument for extensive manned space-flight" and "The earth is almost fully explored and culturally homogenized. There are few places to which the discontented cutting edge of mankind can emigrate. There is no equivalent of the America of the 19th and 20th centuries. But space cities provide a kind of America in the skies, an opportunity for affinity groups to develop alternative cultural, social, political, economic and technological life-styles. Almost all the societies on the earth today have not the foggiest notion of how best to deal with our complex and unknown future. Space cities may provide the social mutations that will permit the next evolutionary advance in human society." (My italics.) *Time*, June 16, 1975.


50. Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, p. 179. See also p. 182.


52. Orwell, *Coming Up For Air*, pp. 12, 158.


58. Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, p. 188.


69. *Ibid.*, III, p. 227. The significant point is that despite the increase in war wages and Orwell's earlier statements about the advent of an "indeterminate stratum [technicians and the like] at which the older class distinctions are beginning to break down," class remained an important factor (*CEJL*, II, p. 98). In Runciman's *Relative Deprivation* study in England he points out, for example, that while "between 1918 and 1962 inequality
of status was diminishing...relative deprivation of status" was "growing
more widespread" and that "despite all talk of workers 'becoming middle-
class,' there was no evidence that the changes brought about by the
prosperity of the 1950s were yet sufficient to overcome the traditional
barriers of status." (W.G. Runciman, Relative Deprivation and Social
Justice [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966], pp. 118, 118,
115.) (My italics.)

70. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 152.
71. See Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 152; also Zwerdling, Orwell and the
Left, p. 34.
72. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 185.
73. Orwell, Aspidistra, p. 91.
74. Orwell, CEJL, I, pp. 476, 478. I am not suggesting here that
Dickens is a socialist, for as Orwell notes of Hard Times "there is not
a line in the book that can properly be called Socialistic, indeed its
tendency if anything is pro-capitalist." (CEJL, I, p. 457.) The point
here is that those who are sympathetic to the poor can nevertheless
operate on what Orwell, talking about Dickens, calls an "attitude"
which, for all its sympathy, "is at bottom snobbish." (CEJL, I, p. 477.)
75. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 162.
76. For the difficulty of characterizing English intellectuals as a
clearly identifiable group, as opposed to the relatively easy identifica­
tion of continental intellectuals, see Anthony Hartley, "English
Intellectuals: Their Power and Powerlessness," Interplay (April, 1968),
pp. 47-53.
77. Sedgwick, "George Orwell International Socialist?", p. 32.
Sedgwick writes, "Much of The Road to Wigan Pier itself must be seen
as an outgrowth from the whole complex of argument and acquaintance within
The Adelphi."
78. Orwell, Wigan Pier, pp. 142, 158.
79. Ibid., p. 201.
80. Ibid., pp. 202-203.
81. Ibid., p. 138.
82. Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 113.
84. Ibid., pp. 158, 160-61.
85. Ibid., pp. 159-62.


102. See below, p. 146.


114. Zwerdling, Orwell and the Left, p. 84.


116. Ibid., p. 589.

117. Ibid., II, pp. 32, 32.

118. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 204.


120. Ibid., I, p. 301.


122. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 179.

123. Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 117.


125. Zwerdling, Orwell and the Left, p. 64.


129. Zwerdling, Orwell and the Left, p. 121.

130. Ibid., p. 73.

131. Ibid.


133. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 104.

134. Ibid., p. 204.


137. Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, pp. 74, 75.


140. Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, p. 16.


144. Hoggart, Introduction to *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p. 42.


167. Hoggart, Introduction to *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p. 44.
169. Orwell, *CEJL*, III, p. 34.
SECTION III - FOREIGN CONDITIONS: ORWELL'S SPANISH EXPERIENCE
(The Move from Socialist Sympathizer to Combatant and the Lessons of a Revolution Gained and Lost)

Chapter I - Background.

By the time Orwell was fighting in Spain in early 1937 the Spanish Civil War had already been underway for six months (since July 17, 1936) and, as Orwell admitted, he had "seen only one corner of events." Because the lessons of his experience will be better understood if the complex forces behind the war which touched all corners of Spain are recognized, a brief historical background to the conflict and the way in which it galvanized "left" against "right" not only in Spain but in England is given below.

* * * * *

Despite the promulgation of a constitution in 1876 (which was much abused by bitterly opposed liberals and conservatives alike) and the nominal introduction of universal male franchise in 1890, elections in Spain were decided by local caciques, or political bosses. In consequence, most Spaniards viewed the parliamentary system as a vehicle for their exclusion from rather than for their participation in the government of the monarchist country.

To compensate for their lack of electoral power, workers, particularly those of Catalonia, sought representation through general trade unions. Predominant among these were the C.N.T. (Anarchist) and the U.G.T. (Socialist) trade unions. The U.G.T. was more Fabian than Marxist and not infused by the ideas of Bakunin as were the anarchists whose predecessors in the short-lived First Republic of the 1870s had played their part in the chaotically violent demands for local rights. These
demands had moved the army to reinstate the monarchy in 1874. Later the anarchists were particularly active in Barcelona, the most industrialized city in Spain and capital of Catalonia, a region noted for its own language and customs and for a determination to gain recognition of its separate identity. In 1909, Catalan-led protests against King Alfonso XIII's régime reached a climax when strike leaders were shot by the Army under the King. Earlier in the disturbances the rioters' ferocity, of a kind which was to become all too evident in the Civil War, knew no bounds, as drunken workers danced through Barcelona, swinging about the "disinterred bodies of nuns." Such was their violent opposition to the institution of the church and the central government in Madrid.

By 1923, the parliament was unable to cope with the problem of Catalan anarchism and problems resulting from the defeat of Spanish forces at Anual by Abd-el-Krim, the Moroccan rebel leader. Thereafter, General Miguel Primo de Rivera took control of the country under the nominal head of King Alfonso III. This dictatorship under the eccentric Primo de Rivera was politically oppressive but was cushioned by the economic boom of the late twenties in which the dictatorship won support from Spanish capital. The dictatorship ended in 1930 through a coupling of the effect of the economic collapse of 1929 and the dictator's disregard for the Spanish middle class. No longer convinced that he had the support of fellow officers, the General resigned and died alone in Paris shortly thereafter.

King Alfonso's subsequent attempt to govern did not enjoy the support of those Army officers angered by his acceptance of Primo de Rivera's resignation. Amid general disaffection from the monarchy and
hopes for a democratic, or at least less oppressive Spain, a group of Republican politicians, intellectuals (including José Ortega y Gasset) and socialists met in San Sebastian (the summer capital) in 1930 with the result that by year's end, revolution seemed imminent. The plans failed, however, and the conspirators were arrested. The latter claimed in their defence that the King had violated the constitution in accepting Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. The brief terms of imprisonment which the authorities meted out to the anti-monarchist conspirators reflected a growing sympathy with the anti-monarchist feeling, particularly among the leftist parties who, as a measure of their dissatisfaction, initially refused participation in any parliamentary elections "under the monarchy." Finally, however, as the King, "given the prevailing mood of opinion... found it impossible to refuse elections" to the people, the left, in a "compromise," agreed to take part in municipal elections. These were held on April 12, 1931.

Although many parts of the countryside were still ruled by the local political bosses and the Monarchists gained a majority nationwide in these elections, the large towns and cities voted overwhelmingly Republican. And in some places, such as Eibar in Basque provinces (religious rather than anarchistic but as fiercely independently minded as the Catalans), a Republic was proclaimed. With huge crowds gathering in Madrid the day after the election and impending violence in the air, the King's advisers urged him to leave Spain. The Bourbon King drove into exile, after having solemnly announced that Sunday's elections have shown me that I no longer enjoy the love of my people. I could very easily find means to support my royal powers against all comers, but I am determined to have nothing to do with setting one of my countrymen against another in a fratricidal civil war.
Following national elections in June, 1931, Socialist-Centrist parties had 318 members in the Cortes (parliament) as against the Right's 60. At its outset, the Second Republic, with its nominally "socialist" government set upon democratic reform, was plagued by severe tensions and provocations from both left and right. On the extreme left were the anarchists who gained much support from the landless peasant labourers who were the victims of the gross inequality of agrarian conditions ("the central sore" of Spain).\(^9\) The anarchists, however, refused to recognize the legitimacy of any state. On the far right were the monarchists seeking a return to control through the army and the state. In between, a whole spectrum of political voices clamoured for a share in governing the new Spain.

In the surge of victory the government failed to give the agrarian "sore" priority of treatment\(^10\) and was led first to imprudence then to sheer folly through constitutionally attacking the Church and alienating the middle class. It decreed, for example, that there was to be an end to all religious education, and that every "public manifestation of religion" would have to be given prior approval from the government.\(^11\) As Hugh Thomas has pointed out, "all Spanish Catholics were forced into the position of having to oppose the very Constitution of the Republic if they wished to criticize its educational or religious policy."\(^12\) (My italics.)

While on the right the middle class and landowners were respectively hostile to the government's anti-clerical stance and to its limited agrarian reform (of 1932), the Army was particularly upset by the passing of a statue of Catalan Autonomy.\(^13\) A similar success for the equally independent-minded Basques gave impetus to like-minded separatist movements\(^14\)
which the Army saw as a direct threat to Spain's unity, the maintenance of which provided them with their very livelihood. Such dissatisfaction led to an unsuccessful attempt in August, 1932, headed by Spain's most celebrated soldier, General Sanjurjo, to overthrow the government with the help of a young Fascist group (the Nationalist Party of Burgos). A prostitute leaked the details of the plan and it was crushed by Prime Minister Azaña's government.  

The remainder of 1932 was marked by an unprecedented educational building program which, in more than tripling the number of secondary school students from that of pre-Republican days, was part of a great "flood" of reform legislation: "It was as if all the reforms of Sir Robert Peel, Gladstone and Asquith had been crowded into two years debate." These reforms included a new divorce law, the legalization of civil marriage, and laws concerning forced labour, collective rents, mixed arbitration, minimum wages, labour contracts, women's rights, and recruitment in the Civil Service. Despite this, Prime Minister Azaña's popularity plummeted. This was due to the harsh repression of anarchist uprisings, mostly in Catalonia where under the red and black flag, villages were taken over amid proclamations of libertarian Communism.

National elections were held in November of 1933, and now the left-right split in the Cortes was, broadly speaking, 99 to 207 with a large centre party coalition of 167 seats. The anarchists by and large had refused to vote. The largest party on the right was the C.E.D.A. (Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas) or Catholic Party. The C.E.D.A. was led by Gil Roblés who, in imitation of Hitler, whom he had met, "allowed" himself to be addressed as "Jefe" ("Chief" as in "Führer"). The loss of the left to the electoral alliances of the right and centre
parties was due largely to socialist leader Largo Caballero who had pushed his party far left in an attempt to attract anarchist supporters. Meanwhile, new members were being sought for a religiously-based Fascist party, J.O.N.S. (Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista), founded by rightists for whom Roman Catholicism (insofar as they saw it as "embodying the 'racial' tradition" of the Spaniards) played the same role as Aryan blood did for the Nazis. In 1934 J.O.N.S. amalgamated with the Falange Española under the leadership of José Antonio Primo de Rivera. The potential of the still small Falangist Party lay in its appeal to a wide range of Spaniards, from students to labourers to military officers. Indeed the antagonism of the relatively small communist party was reserved for the anarchists and socialists until 1935 when the Comintern's policy was to close ranks with leftist as well as bourgeois elements in a common front against the threat of Hitler.

Following the rise of the C.E.D.A. Catholic party and the monarchists in the 1933 elections, the centrist coalition-dominated governments of 1933-36 were plagued by anarchist-led strikes. An amnesty for all political prisoners in 1934 exacerbated conditions by simply encouraging more plots. And, as Thomas notes, "From 1933 onwards, the villages of Navarre (like the cities of the south and centre of Spain, where the Falange, the Anarchists, the Socialist and Communist youth trained in arms) rang again with the noise of drilling." The spirit of compromise, never strong, was fast evaporating as battle lines were drawn, almost daily it seemed, between the multifarious elements of right and left, each side convinced that the promise of the Second Republic properly belonged to them. In March, 1934, Mussolini promised arms to the monarchist leader of the Cortes in the event of an
uprising against the Republic. In June both the Catalan and Basque separatist movements pressed for greater autonomy from the central government. The C.E.D.A. objected strongly. In answer, the anarchists (C.N.T.) and socialists (U.G.T.) combined in Asturias, in their first alliance for years, and declared a general strike. Robles, "Jefe" of the C.E.D.A., threatened to withdraw his right wing party's support of the government, a threat which was taken by the U.G.T. as the prelude to a C.E.D.A. takeover - a Spanish version of Dolfuss's subjection of the socialists in Austria.

In October, carrying out his threat, Robles withdrew C.E.D.A. support of the government which, under Prime Minister Samper, then resigned. Lerroux (leader of the centre's so-called "Radicals") took over power. His inclusion of three C.E.D.A. members in his cabinet immediately triggered off violent anti-"Fascist" strikes by the socialists (U.G.T.) and a rebellion in Catalonia which was promptly put down. Further disturbances throughout Spain in October, 1934 were crushed, except for those in Asturias where, unlike the rest of Spain, a broad spectrum of the left - socialists, anarchists, communists (30,000 strong) - allied in establishing "a revolutionary Soviet" throughout the mining province. This alliance was the precursor of what would become known as the "Popular Front." Several priests were shot, churches burned, and middle class women raped and murdered while insufficient government forces tried unsuccessfully to restore order. This was no less than civil war and the Centrist Lerroux government sent for generals Goded and the forty-year old Francisco Franco Bahamonde to quiet the rebellion. Franco was known to be a first rate organizer, unquestionably brave, and an extraordinarily cautious commander who had consistently declined to ally himself
with any side in the political arena and, perhaps more importantly, had diligently refused to let his preferences be known. He quickly crushed the Asturias rebellion, immediately becoming a hero in Madrid. His retribution upon the defeated miners, however, was so ruthless that for many of the working class (six to seven million, including agricultural workers), the Asturias rebellion, in which thousands were made political prisoners, became a rallying cry for a wider confrontation with the right. For the middle classes (approximately four million out of the total population of eleven million), the rebellion was a clear and disturbing sign that, Franco and Goded's victory notwithstanding, the government of the Second Republic was incapable of maintaining order.

Prime Minister Lerroux's commutation of further death sentences of the rebels of Asturias caused C.E.D.A. resignations of protest and the formation of a new cabinet. Financial scandal involving Lerroux followed: he and his party resigned in disgrace. Within weeks the new Prime Minister, Chapaprietas, was involved in argument with the C.E.D.A. over the budget and this led to the resignations of the C.E.D.A. cabinet members. This governmental crisis in 1935, the latest in a long series of crises which had plagued the Second Republic, led to new national elections in February, 1936. These were marked among other things by huge billboard photographs of the "Jefe," Gil Robles, accompanied by demands that he be given "the Ministry of War and all the power." The C.E.D.A., determined to gain power, formed an alliance with other right wing groups such as the monarchists. This alliance was called the "National Front." Between the "National" and "Popular" Fronts, between cries to elect the "Jefe" and calls to remember "Asturias," there were the parties of the centre. Also supporting the Popular Front was the semi-Trotskyist Workers and
Peasants Alliance (P.O.U.M.) which Orwell would join in December. The results of elections in February, 1936, were 278 seats for the Popular Front, 134 for the National Front, and 55 seats for the centre parties whose heavy losses augured badly for compromise in the Cortes and made for even sharper right-left divisions. The actual votes cast for the various alliances of over fifteen parties showed that if the centre and right parties had combined they would have had a small numerical majority. This fact would later (and quite wrongly) be used to claim that the Popular Front's government was illegal.  

Now Franco took a firm stance - against the Popular Front, recommending to the caretaker Prime Minister that a state of war be declared so that the leftist alliance could not assume power. The Prime Minister refused, though similarly urged by Calvo Sotelo, leader of the monarchists. The Popular Front assumed office under Azaña who again extended amnesty to all political prisoners and allowed the Catalan members to elect a government of their own. Generals Goded and Franco, for their part in the ruthless suppression of the Asturias rebellion, were transferred, in effect exiled, from the War Ministry to commands in the Balearics and Canary Islands respectively.  

In the euphoric climate of the Popular Front's victory, murder, violence and arson, the dark trio of Spain's political arena, spread across the country as the left settled old scores and the right, particularly the Falangists, sought to create chaos so that their cry for "order" might catapult them into power. While the Falangists rode about with their machine guns, socialist leader Largo Caballero, intoxicated by his power and by communist praise (at a time when "the votes of his party kept the Government of Azaña in power"), rode about declaring that "revolution"
was at hand, creating dissension within the left as well as no doubt spreading terror among the middle classes. At the same time, in March, 1936, as internal squabbling once again beset the left, the right, fearing leftist-inspired chaos, consolidated their forces as never before. The monarchist leader Calvo Solelo, replacing C.E.D.A.'s Robles, became leader of the right. Part of the right's action involved a generals' plot masterminded by General Mola, military governor of Pampalona, and which included General Franco. In Lisbon, in March and acting independently, General Sanjurjo had approached the German Admiral, Canaris, for arms in the event of an uprising. By April General Mola had drawn up plans for simultaneous local, civil and military takeovers in all provinces, including Spanish Morocco.

Political assassinations and general violence continued, including that carried out by landless peasants who considered the rate of agrarian reform too slow. Rumours of impending revolution were rife throughout the spring. On May 1 the Labour Day parades were held, dominated in Madrid by giant posters of Caballero (now Prime Minister), Stalin, and Lenin, further terrifying the well-to-do who from their balconies looked down upon the leftist crowds.

The state of tension was hardly alleviated by Caballero talking on May 24 about the impending "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the repression of "capitalist and bourgeois classes." If any spirit of compromise had ever truly existed after the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, if it had ever existed between the power of the Church and Army on the one hand and the liberal led Spanish workers on the other (who had been "maddened by years of insult, misery, and neglect" and were now "intoxicated by the knowledge of the better conditions enjoyed by their
class comrades in France and Britain" and supposedly "in Russia"), it was now exhausted. 36

Political murders were daily occurrences throughout July, 1936 and in the Army, officers were already choosing sides. Following the murder of a government Asalto (Assault Guard) by Falangists on July 12, members of the Civil Guard sympathetic to the left took revenge by murdering the rightist leader Calvo Sotelo in the early morning of July 13 in Madrid. The bourgeoisie were further convinced that the government was incapable of keeping order. General Mola set the uprising for July 17 and any tentative alliances among rightist elements were now firmed. Mola would rise against the government in the North, Goded in the North-East, and Franco in the South, all of them heading toward Madrid. Calvo Sotelo's funeral and that of the Asalto lieutenant for whom revenge upon Sotelo had been taken were held on July 14 in the same cemetery. The lieutenant's body, covered by a red flag, was surrounded by crowds of Asaltos, Republicans, Socialists, and Communists giving the clenched fist salute. Within hours, Sotelo's casket, draped in monarchist colours, was lowered, accompanied by a mass of Fascist salutes. Middle class crowds "attacked" the Cortes Vice President and Permanent Secretary. In addition, four people were killed and shots were exchanged between Falangists and Asaltos. 37

The tension was so high that a meeting of the Cortes scheduled for July 21 was accompanied by a request that all members leave their firearms in the cloak room. This proposed meeting never took place. Meanwhile the liberal government, under the leadership of Casares Quiroga, while it definitely saw the right as its enemy did not regard the left as an ally.
At 12:30 in the morning of July 17, General Franco, as part of the generals' plot, left Tenerife in the Canary Islands for Las Palmas, the Islands' capital, where he would declare martial law and from whence he would move to Morocco to take over command of the Army of Africa. The latter was by far the most experienced fighting force in Spain. Late on the afternoon of July 17, in accordance with General Mola's plan, certain officers in Melilla (Spanish Morocco) rebelled against the garrison commander, General Romerales, who was shot, together with fellow officers who had refused to rise against the government. The form of this uprising, wherein commanding officers of strategic garrisons who were not fully trusted to rebel against the government were given the quick choice of joining the rebels or being shot, would soon be repeated throughout Spain.

In a chaos of vacillation and poor communications ("there were now not two Spains but two thousand"), workers demanded arms to resist the rightist uprising which, first proclaimed in Morocco, was now spreading to the mainland. But the government knew that to acquiesce in this not only was to give the left the arms for self defence but would constitute the liberal government's acceptance of a leftist revolution. But finally the government, now under José Giral, relented and the people were armed. Early on July 19, trucks from the Ministry of War delivered rifles to the U.G.T. and C.N.T. headquarters where they were distributed to the "waiting masses." As Thomas points out, it would be a mistake to think that in general Spaniards were appalled at the coming struggle. Indeed they "leapt into the war" with the same exuberance as did their European neighbours in 1914 and "within a month nearly a hundred thousand people" would perish "arbitrarily and without trial. Bishops would be torn to pieces and churches
profaned. Educated Christians would spend their evenings murdering illiterate peasants and professional men of sensitivity." All this and more would be done because each side believed that it was right, "not only right but noble."41

The lack of unanimity among the army officers explains why, dotted throughout Republican and Nationalist Spain alike, there were islands of resistance within what was otherwise an enemy sea. Even so, Spain, in July, 1936, was essentially divided into a north and a south with the northeast and the Basque provinces of the far north in Republican hands. The Republican territory, however, was progressively eaten into as the war progressed. By October, 1937 most of western Spain and nearly all of the north had fallen to the much better equipped (largely by Mussolini and Hitler) rebel, or Nationalist, forces. By July, 1938, the Nationalists had driven a hundred mile wide wedge into the Republican territory reaching all the way to the Mediterranean Sea and cutting Catalonia in the north off from Madrid in the centre, and southeast Spain. Catalonia, where Orwell had fought with the P.O.U.M. in 1936-37, finally fell on January 26, 1939. Amid the chaos of impending defeat, the supreme irony of the Civil War was played out by a Republican commander, General Casado, who, resentful of the communist influence within what remained of the Negrín government and determined to end the war on the best terms possible, revolted against the Republican government, just as the rebel generals had done in 1936.

The result was more chaos, a civil war within a civil war in Madrid where Casado, having objected to the communist call for "continued resistance"42 against the Nationalists, was now busy fighting his former allies. Franco, who even before the death of Mola had become leader of all
the Nationalist forces, noted that now he would be spared "the trouble of crushing the Communists." Apart from gaining time for some Republicans to escape, General Casado's attempts to reach an agreement on something less than unconditional surrender with Franco failed and on March 27, with the Republicans in full retreat, Madrid fell to the Nationalists. The left, mainly the working classes, had literally been overrun and for them all that was to follow after a conflict that had claimed half a million lives was a retribution as ferocious as that with which the war had been fought.

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In England, despite the initial mood of neutrality which greeted its outbreak, the Spanish Civil War quickly became a focus for and culmination of the feelings of political and social commitment that had been growing in the thirties. With the failure of the League of Nations made painfully evident by the victory of Mussolini's army in Abyssinia, the Japanese entrenchment in Manchuria, Hitler's march into the Rhineland, and what seemed to be Dollfuss's consolidation of power in Austria, the threat of Fascism loomed larger than ever.

The foreign crises reflected the conviction of impending war which by now had penetrated the "general consciousness including [the] literary consciousness." In *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* Gordon Comstock had felt that "Our civilization is dying....Presently the aeroplanes are coming. Zoom - whizz - crash! The whole western world going up in a roar of high explosives." Now, in *The Road to Wigan Pier* which he finished a few days before leaving for Spain in December, 1936, Orwell had written, "Events are moving with terrible speed. As I write this the Spanish Fascist forces are bombarding Madrid, and it is quite likely that before
this book is printed we shall have another Fascist country to add to the list."  

Although the Spanish issues which created the war were extraordinarily complex, the war was quickly viewed by the rest of the world as a struggle not simply between left and right but between good and evil. Depending on which side one supported, the war was seen either as a struggle against Fascism which, supported by Hitler and Mussolini, would destroy democracy, or as a struggle against a communist inspired anarchy which, supported by the Soviet Union, would destroy Christian civilization.

In England the pacifist attitude exemplified in the Oxford Union's resolution of February, 1933 "not to fight for King and Country," the Labour Party's Hastings resolution in the same year not to take part in any war, and the peace pledge movement of the Reverend Dick Sheppard had steadily been losing its appeal since Hitler had come to power. Julian Bell, once a Bloomsbury pacifist who had enthusiastically participated in the massive anti-war march in Cambridge during the Armistice Day celebration of November, 1933 but who was one of the first literary figures to die in Spain, tapped the shifting mood. He wrote to E.M. Forster that "At this moment to be anti-war means to submit to fascism, to be anti-fascist means to be prepared for war."

The decline of the pacifist movement was even noticeable in the Labour Party. Though it made an official and deeply divisive decision to support the government's non-interventionist policy with regards to Spain, it did so not so much from a purely pacifist standpoint but in the hope, like those conservative supporters of non-intervention, of avoiding a world war. Despite some agreement between leftist and
rightist supporters of non-intervention, however, the Spanish Civil War widened the gap between the left and right in England and injected an air of class consciousness into foreign and domestic policy, marking it with unprecedented "bitterness."\textsuperscript{55} In the literary world the climate for such division between left and right had already been set by such distorted statements of supposed impartiality as John Lehmann's in the 1936 Spring edition of \textit{New Writing}: "New Writing is first and foremost interested in literature, and though it does not intend to open its pages to writers of reactionary or Fascist sentiments, it is independent of any political party."\textsuperscript{56} And even earlier, in 1934, in a delayed response to the urging of the "central committee of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers in Moscow,"\textsuperscript{57} a British section of Writers International had been formed, led by middle class intellectuals such as Ralph Fox, Montagu Slater, and Tom Wintringham. Its periodical was the \textit{Left Review}, and by 1937 such figures as Stephen Spender and C. Day Lewis were on its editorial board which was concerned with "mobilizing an effective number of middle class intellectuals to speak out against fascism and war."\textsuperscript{58} But the anti-war feeling of the peace pledge and the like before it quickly became buried in the anti-Fascist fervour.

Given the general ignorance of the complex causes of the Spanish Civil War, the most intriguing aspect of the way in which it aroused public opinion in England and abroad was that the war was soon seized upon as a crucible in which new and old rival political, social and even military theories, from blitzkreig to collectivization, which had been gestating and spreading during the thirties, were tested. For many of those who went to fight in support of either Franco or the Republic in the voluntary International Brigades and similar organizations, the war was no doubt
largely a matter of conscience in what was viewed as a decisive struggle between left and right. But there were other motives. Because its military activity was "comparatively restrained" compared to the huge areas and numbers of men in World War I, the war provided the individual with an opportunity to distinguish himself. And for some of those who had missed World War I it provided the opportunity to catch up.

By fighting in Spain Orwell joined many of his contemporaries who, as Toynbee recalls, had "felt less pity than envy of a generation which had experienced so much" in the war they so bitterly condemned.

Recalling his post-Eton days Orwell wrote:

As the war [1914-18] fell back into the past, my particular generation, those who had been "just too young," became conscious of the vastness of the experience they had missed. You felt yourself a little less than a man, because you had missed it...I am convinced that part of the reason for the fascination that the Spanish Civil War had for people of about my age was that it was so like the Great War. At certain moments Franco was able to scrape together enough aeroplanes to raise the war to a modern level, and these were the turning-points. But for the rest it was a bad copy of 1914-18, a positional war of trenches...mud, barbed wire...and stagnation...I know that what I felt when I first heard artillery fired "in anger," as they say, was at least partly disappointment. It was so different from the tremendous, unbroken roar that my senses had been waiting for for twenty years.

Like many others, the untried patriotism which he had had at Eton had circuitously fuelled a need which, once given vent in action in Spain, finally "erased" the old "humiliation" of not having proven oneself.

Beyond such feelings, however, the Civil War became a rallying point particularly for the left - a symbol of its opposition not only to Fascism but to economic exploitation as well, not just of Spanish workers but of all workers. For Britain in particular the war not only offered the intellectual committed to social and political improvement "a place where a legitimate cause that represented a greater degree of
of freedom and justice was resisting a thoroughly reactionary one but "lifted the intellectual anti-fascist cause into a crusade for justice. It widened the intellectual front against fascism and war to a more popular Front support for justice and civilization."  

That it was not just the intellectuals who were actively involved is evident in the fact that of the four thousand British volunteers who fought on the Republican side both in the International Brigades and outside (as Orwell did in the P.O.U.M.), eighty percent were members of the working class. They came from all over the country....Some had been unemployed; some threw up jobs to join. There were miners, engineers, building workers, and indeed all trades were represented...so that many of the local Aid Spain Committees had their own local lad at the front, and felt thereby a close involvement. His letters home to his family would be read out at meetings; his dependents, if he had any, visited and helped....Pride in the British volunteers was great throughout the labour movement and C.R. Attlee, the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, visited them at the front, and lent his name to what became known as the Attlee Company of the British Battalion.

Still it was the writers, very few of whom were working class, who would articulate the intent and frustrations of the cause against Franco. Through such organizations as the Association of Writers for Intellectual Liberty and F.I.L. (For Intellectual Liberty), which included the "curious [political] amalgum" of figures like Leonard Woolf, E.M. Forster, C.P. Snow and Aldous Huxley, attempts, ostensibly devoid of any "definite political creed," were made to influence public opinion and ultimately official policy in favour of a more just society. The F.I.L., though in effect leftist inclined, allowed intellectuals to protest outside their careers by signing a general manifesto, for example, against the wanton murder of a Spanish intellectual and having it published in The Times.

The split between the pro-Franco and pro-Republican supporters
among the Intellectuals is evident in Left Review's 1937 poll, "Authors Take Sides on the Spanish Civil War." The poll revealed that 127 supported the Republic, 5 supported Franco, and 17 were neutral. Similarly, public polls conducted throughout the war showed that support for Franco ranged between seven and fourteen percent and between fifty-seven and seventy-two percent for the Republic. With such generally overwhelming support for the Republic, including the support of many liberals and conservatives, a popular political front, especially amongst the working class, or at least a "united front" of all supporters of the Republic, would have seemed assured. However, because of dissension within the parties over non-intervention (the rift, for example, between the more radical left wing of the Labour Party led by Aneurin Bevan and the more moderate wing), the gaining of either party's endorsement of popular or united front programs was difficult at best. As Mowat observes, even vigorous attempts by such diverse political figures as Churchill and T.U.C. secretary Citrine "to promote 'a popular front' in a formal sense came to nothing." In this atmosphere, many looked "outside the parties" for leadership in either their support for or opposition to the Republican (and generally leftist) causes. No doubt this mobilization of public opinion beyond normal party channels, of perhaps having to form your own local Aid Spain Committee and the like, had the effect of increasing the political consciousness of the public and indeed for many it constituted the very awakening of political consciousness.

Leadership on the left or at least a sense of political fraternity was provided informally by the Left Book Club (L.B.C.) which, as part of the current "impulse toward political action through writing," was
founded just before the Civil War broke out by socialist editor Victor Gollancz, Harold Laski, and John Strachey. The Club formed part of what was in effect an intellectual Popular Front which had sprung up under the impetus of the Spanish Civil War. Here the "scattered efforts of intellectual activity in the theatre, films, literature, art and music" were mobilized for the leftist anti-Fascist cause. Gollancz, who incidentally had already published three of Orwell's first four books, wrote that "What the Left Book Club is attempting to do is to provide the indispensable basis of knowledge without which a really effective United Front of all men and women of good faith can not be built" and later a leaflet informed members that the Club's "aim" was "to help in the terribly urgent struggle for World Peace and a better social and economic order and against Fascism."

The importance of the Left Book Club lay not simply in its extraordinary success as a book club, with its monthly sales to its members quickly reaching fifty thousand, but in its wide influence, beyond intellectual circles, amongst the general public. Apart from the L.B.C.'s poets' and writers' group, which sponsored "poetry reading, mass recitations and heated literary discussions," the Club at times served as the nucleus of local Aid Spain Committees in middle class areas. Within a year, five hundred L.B.C. groups were formed and this grew to twelve hundred with the strongest and most active groups being established "where official political parties of the left were weak." Here, where "members felt they were involved in something wider than immediate policies...[and] were contributing towards a more just and rational future," they would discuss the issues of the day.

Orwell describes such a L.B.C. group in *Coming Up For Air*:
I suppose, if you come to think of it, we people who'll turn out on winter nights to sit in draughty halls listening to Left Book Club lectures...have a certain significance. We're the West Bletchley revolutionaries. Doesn't look hopeful at first sight. It struck me as I looked round the audience that only about half a dozen of them had really grasped what the lecturer was talking about, though by this time he'd been pitching into Hitler and the Nazis for over half an hour.78

Despite Orwell's skeptical tone about this pre-World War II meeting it demonstrates the pervasiveness of the Left Book Club in the 1936-39 period of the Spanish Civil War. As Samuel Hynes remarks,

Though it [the L.B.C.] began as an educational enterprise, it soon became something very different; the emphasis quickly shifted from book to club and it became a society, a movement, almost a religion ....Certainly it did affect the political education of many English people...a means of manipulating Left opinion.79

Within this "process of political education," wherein approximately a million books were circulated and wherein facts so often became partisan as "part of the struggle" against Fascism, "one, or perhaps two [books], survive."80 One of these is The Road to Wigan Pier, the Club book which more than any other subjected socialism's aims and methods to the most public and searching criticisms and thus ironically established Orwell as the most widely read and important critic of the left.

The influence of the L.B.C. was so great that in April, 1937 the Labour Party demanded "equal representation of the official [Labour Party] standpoint" on the book selection committee so as to balance the opinions of Gollancz, Laski and Strachey.81 The Left Book Club is mentioned here because it is symptomatic of the way in which the Spanish Civil War excited large sectors of the British public (there was also a less successful Right Book Club), infusing them with a sense of urgency unknown in any of the previous crises of the thirties. Secondly, through accelerating "the leftward movement of many British intellectuals,"82
it helped increase communist membership from barely 1400 members (mostly workers) in 1930 to over 15,000 (including many middle-class intellectuals) in 1938. However, in inviting active commitment to the leftist cause the Club posed a great danger to the writer as well as providing him with an opportunity to become widely known as Orwell did after having written *The Road to Wigan Pier*. The danger of course was that whether or not an organization is a party in the formal sense, any decision to write for it poses the danger of corrupting one's honesty. Again it was the perennial tension between the need to act collectively in the interests of solidarity against a common enemy, and the need for the individual to maintain his or her integrity as a measure of self respect. Indeed, for writers in the thirties, it was the central dilemma. Auden, Spender, McNeice, and other literary figures had argued for the independence of the artist and by the mid-1930s, after it was seen that "political commitment had produced no art of any importance," there was the beginning of a return to the earlier ideas of the individual aesthetic. This return, however, was suddenly arrested by the demands on conscience made by the grim reality of the Spanish Civil War. The metaphors of the time became those of advance, not retreat; of Upward's *Journey to the Border* and Spender's and Isherwood's *On the Frontier*. Now the young men who had missed the great war were confronted by the challenge to act out their words.

In recognizing the danger posed between political commitment and individual integrity Orwell was hardly alone but he stood out because he was clearer than most on the subject. With the weight of his Spanish experience behind him he never tired of insisting that while as a citizen you can fight for an organization, for a party if you like, you should not
There is at first sight a blatant contradiction in Orwell's position if one recalls that he wrote The Road to Wigan Pier on commission from an editor of the Left Book Club. But it is only a seeming contradiction, for anyone who has read the book realizes immediately that while its author, like so many other writers, had turned his pen in the service of the left he stood apart in his fierce refusal to become captive to its orthodoxy. Indeed at the very time Orwell was in Spain, editor Gollancz was writing an unprecedented disclaimer of Orwell's attacks against the left in the very book Gollancz had commissioned him to write. In his independence of the party line Orwell would soon show in Homage to Catalonia that he stood apart from most political writers of his day — not simply from those of the left. For Orwell, the intellectual surrender of a writer to a cause was more threatening to freedom, liberty and justice than all of Franco's troops. This lesson of the Spanish Civil War, together with his experience of equality in the early days of the revolution within the Civil War, would be repeatedly used by him in his ongoing analysis of the condition of England.

Contrary to growing myth, Orwell, despite "some vague idea of fighting if it seemed worthwhile," did not go to Spain specifically to fight with the Republicans: "Of course I would never have allowed Eileen [his wife] to come nor probably gone myself if I had foreseen the political developments." The discrepancy between the myth and reality surrounding Orwell's reasons for going to Spain is important to note because the myth assumes a prior commitment to political action which was in fact still in the process of maturation. The commitment was not fully realized until 1937 after his experience in Aragon and after which
he wrote the previously mentioned letter to Cyril Connolly from the Maurin Sanatorium, declaring that he "at last" really believed in socialism, "which I never did before." 88

Having acquired the sponsorship of the Independent Labour Party (which he did not join till 1938), he went to Spain to write about the Civil War. 89 Having sent the completed manuscript of The Road to Wigan Pier to his agent on December 15, he left England just before the Christmas of 1936. What caused him to join the Republicans "almost immediately" upon arriving in Spain was the "overwhelming... and moving" 90 experience of being in Barcelona in the early days of the war (which will be discussed later).

In January, 1937, as part of the I.L.P. contingent of the P.O.U.M., 91 Orwell was sent to the Aragon Front near Alcubierre. After a relatively inactive period, he returned to Barcelona on leave in late April, 1937, with intentions of seeking action in Madrid which he was told would be possible by joining the International Brigade through communist recommendation. But the first week in May, while he was resting and waiting for a cobbler to outdo the "entire Spanish army" in providing him with big enough boots ("the kind of detail that is always deciding one's destiny"), 92 fighting broke out in Barcelona between various elements on the Republican side.

On May 10, having refused to seek communist endorsement for the Madrid Front after what he had seen in Barcelona, Orwell returned to the Aragon Front where he found himself promoted from corporal to second lieutenant. On May 20, near Huesca, he was shot through the throat by a Fascist sniper - a near fatal wound. After convalescing till mid-June he returned to Barcelona where he joined his wife whom he
had married a year earlier.

By now the P.O.U.M. had been outlawed by the government and though he had never actually been a card carrying member of P.O.U.M., Orwell's service with them as part of the I.L.P. contingent placed him in immediate danger. After being pursued by secret police, he and his wife crossed the French border on June 23 and shortly thereafter returned to England. By mid-July, 1937 he began *Homage to Catalonia*. But in an England of "right" and "left" ("terms hardly used in the political sense" before Spain) wherein the political climate was marked by "widening" class divisions and wherein any criticism of the "left" was quickly construed as affording aid and comfort to Franco, Victor Gollancz refused to consider publication of the projected book on Spain even before Orwell had put pen to paper. Nevertheless, Orwell put pen to paper and by mid-January, 1938 he had completed the book which would set down the themes which would obsess him till the end of his life.
Notes to Section III - Chapter I


3. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 34.

4. Ibid., pp. 33, 62.

5. Ibid., pp. 34-35. Though such violence was indiscriminately directed against members of the church it is important to note that at the local level the priest was "usually regarded as a comparatively amiable counsellor." And while "no fate would be too unpleasant for the priest" if he showed favour to the rich over the poor, religion for the Spanish worker was, by and large, a passionate concern. (See *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 55.)

Paradoxically, as Thomas points out, the church, especially in its great days of egalitarianism during Spain's "golden century," had "prepared the way" for "the conversion of the working class of Spain to revolutionary ideas." (See *The Spanish Civil War*, pp. 52, 61.)


8. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 39. In fact it is highly doubtful that the King could have found such support. As Borkenau reports, "After the election General Sanjurjo, the commander of the guardia, went to the king to tell him that the guardia would not shoot upon the people. Nobody was left to defend the king." (See *The Spanish Cockpit*, p. 46.)


12. Ibid., p. 74.

13. Ibid., p. 80. Voted for by 592,961 votes to 3,276 in Catalonia in 1931.

had begun under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. A statute for Gallegan autonomy was being planned... There were similar stirrings among the Valencianos, and even among the Castilians. It did indeed seem that Spain might be geographically divided up again, and an age of city states be inaugurated."


16. Ibid., p. 94.

17. Ibid., p. 96.

18. Ibid., p. 98. The implication being that to be "purely" Spanish one had to be Roman Catholic. The analogy between the role of Roman Catholicism and Aryan blood breaks down of course insofar as one can convert to the former but not to the latter. Still, though I have no evidence, I suspect that converts would not have fared too well in J.O.N.S.

19. Considering the part later played by the Falangists it is of interest that José Antonio was not at all impressed by either Hitler or Mussolini and for a time made efforts to differentiate his movement from that of Fascism.


21. Ibid., p. 114. The day after the meeting with Mussolini, April 1, the Italians paid the potential rebels one and a half million pesetas.


23. Ibid., p. 20.

24. Ibid., p. 118.

25. Ibid., p. 121.

26. Ibid., p. 76.

27. Ibid., p. 129.


29. These included the Basque Nationalist Party who, though they would not join the right, would not, because of their religious beliefs, join the left either.


31. Ibid., pp. 136-37.

32. Ibid., pp. 138-39.
33. Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, p. 140.

34. Ibid., p. 142.

35. Ibid., p. 150.

36. Ibid., p. 159. That there had not been unanimous agreement on conditions in post-revolutionary Russia was obvious as early as 1921 when, as Thomas reports, "At first, the Socialists were, however, in favour of affiliation to the Comintern. Before committing themselves finally they dispatched Fernando de los Rios to Russia as a rapporteur. 'But where is liberty?' asked that bearded individualist from Andalusia. 'Liberty,' replied Lenin, 'what for?" Subsequently in a vote of 8,809 to 6,025 "the Socialist party pronounced themselves against the Russian connexion." (See Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, pp. 46, 103-104.)


38. Ibid., p. 175. Actually this uprising took place a little before five o'clock (the prearranged time for the uprising in Spanish Morocco), once the plotters had learned that details of the plan for the takeover in Melilla had been leaked to local Republicans.


40. Ibid., p. 196.

41. Ibid., p. 193.

42. Ibid., p. 735.

43. Ibid., p. 751.

44. Ibid., p. 790.


47. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 150.


49. Mowat, Britain: 1918-1940, p. 422.


51. Julian Bell (1908-37), a nephew of Virginia Woolf and son of critic and historian Clive Bell and painter Vanessa Bell, went to Spain and, while an ambulance driver for the Republicans, was killed in July, 1937 at the
battle of Brunete. For a detailed account of Bell and another volunteer poet, John Cornford, in relationship to the Spanish Civil War, see Peter Stansky's and William Abrahams' *Journey to the Frontier* (Boston: Little Brown, 1966).


58. Ibid., p. 253.


64. Ibid., p. 248.

65. "Of Britons who felt strongly enough about the war to fight in it, Hugh Thomas [The Spanish Civil War] was able to discover 'not more than a dozen' who fought for Franco." (See Hoskins, *Today the Struggle*, p. 12.)


68. Ibid., p. 253.


70. Ibid., p. 578.


78. Orwell, *Coming Up For Air*, p. 146.
85. While it is important to note that Orwell wrote the book on commission from Victor Gollancz and not the Left Book Club as such (the L.B.C. selected it for the March Book of the Month), it would be naive to think that Orwell was unaware of Gollancz's position as an editor of the L.B.C. While Gollancz in his introduction to *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Gollancz, 1937), p. xii, writes, "The Left Book Club has no 'policy': or rather it has no policy other than that of equipping people to fight against war and Fascism," it was nevertheless clear, as Richard Hoggart points out in his introduction to *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Heinemann, 1965), p. v, that "The club was intended to mobilize and nourish socialist thought."
89. Orwell, *Homage*, p. 8. There is some confusion surrounding Orwell's financing of the trip. On the one hand it has been claimed that Orwell was "under contract" with Secker and Warburg to produce a book on the Civil War (Jenni Calder, *Chronicles of Conscience: A Study of George Orwell and Arthur Koestler* [Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968], p. 99) and on the other that he got an "advance" from Secker and Warburg for a book about his Spanish experiences (Brander, *George Orwell*, pp. 128-29). In any event, Warburg did not sign a contract for *Homage to Catalonia* until September 1, 1937, after it had been rejected by Gollancz. (Frederic Warburg, *All Authors Are Equal: the Publishing Life of Frederic Warburg, 1936-1971* [London: Hutchison, 1973], p. 98.)
91. P.O.U.M. (Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista) were semi-Trotskyists who, as mentioned earlier, started out as members of the Workers and Peasants Alliance. (See Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 131.) Seeing their fight as primarily a struggle between socialism and capitalism they held strongly to the anarchist slogan that "The war and revolution are inseparable." (See Orwell, *Homage*, p. 69, and Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 494.)


94. Orwell, *CEJL*, pp. 559-60. This apparently is explained by the fact that irrespective of whether Orwell had received an advance from Secker and Warburg for a book on his Spanish experiences, Gollancz "had options under his contract with Orwell for his next two full-length novels, and clearly wanted to preserve them." As Bernard Crick notes, "Never has a publisher tried harder to keep his hooks into an author whose best books he cordially disliked." (Warburg, *All Authors Are Equal: the Publishing Life of Frederic Warburg, 1936-1971* [London: Hutchison, 1973], p. 40.)
Chapter II - Revolution and Equality in Practice.

In Burma the imperialists had ruled; in England, the rich. But in Spain, in the Barcelona of December, 1936, Orwell saw something he had never seen before and it excited him. He not only saw how the Fascists were being resisted in a civil war the whole world knew about, but he discovered a revolution - the workers in control. Suddenly it seemed that the exploited might yet reduce the old social and economic imbalance and injustices which, even if not consciously imposed by the thousands of absentee landlords, had nevertheless spread like an untended weed, choking off whatever remained of the Spanish church's early moves towards equality. Of his first days in the Catalan capital Orwell, in a poem in memory of an Italian militiaman, reveals part of that "thrill of hope" which he assumed had passed through every anti-appeasement anti-Fascist in Europe on July 18 when the generals' plot had been met with such fierce opposition by the workers:

But the thing that I saw in your face
No power can disinherit:
No bomb that ever burst
Shatters the crystal spirit.

The "crystal spirit" for Orwell, "the thing" that he had seen in the face of an Italian militiaman the day before he joined the P.O.U.M., was the expression, born of new hope, of an incorruptible determination to fight for a better life, "to live the decent, fully human life which is now technically achievable." For Orwell, then thirty-three years old, joining a workers' militia, the air seemed filled with fearless determination.

When one came straight from England the aspect of Barcelona was something startling and overwhelming. It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers
and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the Anarchists. Every shop and café had an inscription saying that it had been collectivized and their boxes painted red and black [Anarchist colours]. Waiters and shop-walkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal...revolutionary posters were everywhere...it was the aspect of the crowds that was the queerest thing of all. In outward appearance it was a town in which the wealthy classes had practically ceased to exist...practically everyone wore rough working-class clothes, or blue overalls, or some variant of the militia uniform. All this was queer and moving.

Reflecting his ignorance of some of the historical factors behind the revolution Orwell admitted that "There was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it." Nevertheless he adds, "I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for...there was no unemployment...above all there was a belief in the revolution and the future, a feeling of having suddenly emerged into an era of equality and freedom." If, as Orwell had said, there was "no turbulence left in England" because of the acceptance of "them" over "us," there was spirit enough for him in Barcelona. "Nobody said Señor or Don...everyone called everyone else 'Comrade' and 'Thou.'...In outward appearance it was a town in which the wealthy classes had practically ceased to exist."

Of course the wealthy classes had not ceased to exist - they had, as Orwell later discovered, simply donned workers' garb and gone psychologically, if not actually, underground, awaiting their chance to resurface. This they did after Franco's immediate threat had been met by the initial worker-bourgeois alliance, and the alliance began to fall apart as the communists, giving priority to the concept of the popular front against Fascism, sided with the more moderate leftists and bourgeois elements of the Republic. When the wealthy classes did reappear, dotting the militia's sea of blue overalls with their "smart
summer suits," the "normal division of society into rich and poor, upper
class and lower class, was reasserting itself."11 Orwell, dirty and
tired from the front, would thus sense the first signs that the revolution,
born in the working class resistance12 to Franco, was dying. When the
secret police of the side he had fought for hunted him in June he would
know it was dead. But for a moment in Barcelona in late 1936, in the
heady draught of temporary victory, despite the city's shortages and
"gaunt untidy look," the idea of equality seemed realized.

At this time the Catalan workers' militias, hastily formed by the
trade unions and political parties to whom they gave as much allegiance
as they did the central Government, were holding the Nationalists at bay
while a more regular army could be trained.14 The militias, Orwell shows,
were imbued with a chaotic optimism which was apt to dismay even the most
ardent foreign supporter unused to Spanish ways. Along with the Lenin
Barracks smelling of "horse-piss and rotten oats" and the "smashed
furniture," greasy pannikins, and piecemeal issuance of a semi-uniform,
there was the daily "instruction." For the ex-military policeman and
Etonian O.T.C. member, this early instruction was more like comic opera.
"Frightful scenes of chaos" confronted him as instructors struggled with
working class recruits who were keen to make revolution but for whom a
"pull-through" seemed as great a mystery as the Blessed Trinity.15

Even for a man like Orwell who was suspicious of passionate
quests for "order," the lack of discipline amid the "extraordinary-
looking rabble",16 was equally as disconcerting in the face of coming
combat with Franco's forces as was the habitual assurances that all would
be well "mañana." The literalness with which the Spaniards took the
revolutionary phrases was astounding if not somewhat "pathetic," Orwell
reports. "Discipline did not exist; if a man disliked an order he would step out of the ranks and argue fiercely with the Officer" who seemed as likely to accept this without complaint, even to the point of insisting upon further abolition of the pre-revolutionary deference. Orwell remembered the "pained surprise" of one ex-Regular Army Officer "when an ignorant recruit addressed him as 'Señor.'" The officer, still in "spic and span" uniform of the Regular Army, replied, "What! Señor? Who is calling me Señor? Are we not all comrades?" At first Orwell doubted that it made an officer's job "any easier." 17

These early observations are important here not just because they reveal Orwell's eye for the telling detail, in this case in capturing the early chaos of war, but because they testify to his early doubt that the ideal of social and economic equality could practically survive under fire. This makes his later observations that equality could, and did, survive all the more convincing.

After some days of "instruction," which was little more than drilling, the P.O.U.M. column, almost unbelievably ill-equipped but full of urgent revolutionary fervour, left Barcelona. From the "torchlit" rail station, amid a scene of red banners, bands and the sound of an address by the political commissar, the column was sent to the Alcubierre on Aragon's Zaragoza 18 Front. Here, along with Durruti's anarchist forces, it would be seen how well or badly the equalitarian forces would fare against the more traditionally trained Fascist armies.

After the Republican company's truck got lost in the fog, after the first smells of war, "excrement and decaying food," after passing through the dismal, muddy filth of the Aragonese villages, Orwell, seeing his "first 'real' Fascists," made the old soldier's discovery that often,
except for different uniforms, the enemy was "indistinguishable from ourselves." Issued with a badly rusted Mauser rifle dated 1896, Orwell, secretly "frightened," made his way with the rest of the "rabble" company up into the often mist-shrouded hills about Alcubierre, dreading the cold more than the "enemy." When they arrived at "the front," Orwell, seeing that they were "nowhere near" the Fascists (seven hundred metres away across a ravine), was "indescribably disappointed."

The front line here was not a continuous line of trenches, which would have been impossible in such mountainous country; it was simply a chain of fortified posts, always known as "positions," perched on each hill-top. In the distance you could see our "position" at the crown of the horseshoe, a ragged barricade of sand-bags, a red flag fluttering, the smoke of dug out fires. A little nearer, and you could smell a sickening sweetish stink that lived in my nostrils for weeks afterwards. Into the cleft immediately behind the position all the refuse of months had been tipped — a deep festering bed of breadcrusts, excrement, and rusty tins.

In such circumstances (though not typical of all the Spanish fronts), where the acquisition of "firewood, food, tobacco, and candles" more often than not was of more concern than the enemy, it is not surprising that to Orwell, who had joined the P.O.U.M. to fight Fascism, this period at the front (January to May, 1936) "seemed to me one of the most futile of my whole life." "I was chiefly conscious of boredom, heat, cold, dirt, lice, privation, and occasional danger." Yet even before the war was over he recognized that the time on the Aragon Front was of "great importance" to him. It had been "an interregnum in my life," markedly different from "anything that had gone before."

Reflecting his habitual homage to concrete experience, he wrote that his time in the low sierra with the P.O.U.M. had "taught me things that I could not have learned in any other way." For Orwell the essential lesson of this time was that despite chaotic birth pains, the
children of equality, for all their "pathetic" naivety, could survive even in a world of inequality. Like the sudden spring of alpine plants, they may die young and quickly in the later cold and inhospitable air but their very existence, however brief, had for many transformed a dream into a reality that would nurture the hope of succeeding generations of the oppressed. Because the militia system was heavily composed of trade unionists (e.g., U.G.T., C.N.T., and P.O.U.M.) who held similar, if not always the same, political views, it "had the effect of canalizing into one place all the most revolutionary sentiment in the country."

(My italics.) Accordingly, Orwell found that he had "dropped more or less by chance [through his membership in the P.O.U.M.] into the only community of any size in Western Europe where political consciousness and disbelief in capitalism were more normal than their opposites."

(My italics.) Here at last were people of mostly working-class origin not only proclaiming equality but living it. Admittedly there were "serious faults," and confusion reigned amongst the early recruits (some of them aged eleven and twelve) who constituted little more than an "undisciplined mob." And the military incompetence amid people who had never even held a gun was rife, giving Orwell cause for not ranking the Spanish highly in their ability to wage successful war.

Nevertheless, noting how it later became fashionable to decry the militias by arguing that their military inefficiencies were due to the failure of "the equalitarian system," he pointed out that the militias were an "undisciplined mob" at first not because of the "essential... social equality between officers and men" but because raw troops of any army are likely to be an "undisciplined mob." And to further blame military inefficiency on social equality was simply to ignore the acute
lack of serviceable war materials on the Republican side, a lack which explained why the first casualty Orwell saw at the front was unintentionally but "characteristically self-inflicted."\textsuperscript{28}

To be sure, the revolutionary approach to discipline whereby one depended more on political consciousness than regular army training for the execution of an order "appalled and infuriated" Orwell at first, but he saw that it probably took no more time to adapt to this system than to instil unquestioning obedience among recruits in the British Army. Orwell recalled that in January, 1937 his job as corporal of maintaining discipline "almost turned my hair grey" but by May he didn't have the "slightest difficulty" either in getting men to obey orders or to volunteer for dangerous sorties. Besides, he noted that whatever the equalitarian army's faults it had held the line "while the Popular [Regular] Army was training in the rear," a fact which he said sneering journalists often forgot. Most significant of all was the fact that despite the vastly better equipped and trained Nationalist forces, the completely voluntary militias managed to stay in the line in the absence of "combat-police" who normally accompany conscript troops. This, he believed, reflected the virtues of an equalitarian system wherein general and private alike partook of equal pay, food, and "wore the same clothes." Orders of course were given and had to be obeyed but they were given "as comrade to comrade not as superior to inferior," so that whatever their faults, the militias provided "a sort of temporary working model of the classless society. Of course there was no perfect equality, but there was a nearer approach to it than I had ever seen or than I would have thought conceivable in time of war."\textsuperscript{29} (My italics.)

Unlike that kind of revolution which Orwell said was advocated
"from above" by middle class socialists who would impose their rules upon the ignorant masses, the revolution in Spain came from below. As Thomas shows, the importance of a detailed manifesto of May, 1936, which among its other aims declared that "after the setting up in each locality of the free commune [la communa libertaria]...the producers [i.e., the workers] will freely decide the form in which they are to be organized," was that within two months, and within the Civil War, "the principles [of equality] there proclaimed were being enacted in several thousand Spanish towns." \(^{30}\) (My italics.) Revolution was "sweeping" not only "through all the towns" where the Nationalist rebellion had been put down but even "in those places where it had not even occurred. Committees of control were everywhere formed, nominally proportionate to the parties of the Popular Front." \(^{31}\)

Such revolution, as Orwell notes, was evident not only in the military operations of the militias but in the non-military activities of the militias and people in the seizing and administration of land, factories and transport by the peasants and workers, and the "setting up of local soviets," including "workers' patrols to replace the old pro-capitalist police forces." \(^{32}\) He admits that "of course the process was not uniform" and that while "it went further in Catalonia ["primarily Anarchist in direction"]\(^ {33}\) than elsewhere...there were areas where the institutions of local government remained almost untouched." But he also tells us of some areas where old local government institutions "existed side by side with revolutionary committees," and that "in a few places independent Anarchist communes were set up" and operated until "about a year later, when they were forcibly suppressed by the Government." \(^ {34}\) (My italics.)
That the revolutionary aspect of this behind-the-lines re-organization was hidden from world view forms much of the discussion of the next chapter and in light of this it will be helpful here if we examine the nature of the concrete changes, as opposed to the mere sloganeering, which followed upon the mainly Anarchist seizure of power in Catalonia early in the war.

Formed on July 23, 1936 — a week after the Civil War had begun — the "real executive organ in Barcelona, and therefore of Catalonia, was the Anti-Fascist Militias Committee." This organization, on which all parties were represented, was led by the F.A.I. and C.N.T. (Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalist Trades Union) and though staffed by "untrained men" acquitted itself with, as Thomas describes, "great competence." 

All the great industries of this great industrial area [Barcelona] passed to the C.N.T.: the C.A.M.P.S.A., the Ford Iberia Company, the public works company known as La Fomento de Obras y Construcciones ....The factory was run by an elected committee of 18 members — 12 workers, 6 salaried staff members, half C.N.T., half U.G.T.... Barcelona thus became a proletarian town as Madrid never did. Expropriation was the rule — hotels, stores, banks, factories were either requisitioned or closed. Those that were requisitioned were run by managing committees of former technicians and workers. Food distribution, milk-pasteurization, even small handicrafts were collectivized....In factories committees of control grasped power, organizing shifts, production, labour and wages.

The anarchists, now they shared power, proved to be more flexible than their longstanding passion and slogans for decentralization and non-parliamentary government would have suggested, accepting centralization when the difficulties of running factories, which needed raw materials from outside sources, became evident. Further measure of their revolutionary flexibility appeared when they agreed to collaborate not only with other leftist parties, towards whom they had often been hostile, but even with banks that were controlled by the Socialist Trade Union (U.G.T.). They
also co-operated with the communists who, with their only concern being to defeat Franco as efficiently as possible, overwhelmingly favoured greater centralization. 39

Eventually the limits of compromise would be reached and the difference in theories would drive the communists and anarchists into headlong and bloody confrontation, as Orwell would witness in June of 1937. And despite the early co-operation between the various factions of the left there were, of course, failures as well as successes in their joint attempts to change society. But the intent to put theory into practice and not merely to sloganeer was plain.

Of particular interest was the collectivization of the Barcelona cinemas: all the cinemas were grouped in a single enterprise directed by a committee of seventeen, of which two were elected by the general assembly of the workers of all the industries, the fifteen others by workers of different professional groups within the industry. The committee received their normal salary but (unlike many members of the agrarian consejos de administración) dropped their normal work, devoting themselves exclusively to administration. Wages were paid according to a complicated differential standard with a maximum wage of 175 pesetas a week. A three-quarters majority of the general assembly of workers was necessary to secure a dismissal. A month and a half of annual holidays were proclaimed, including two weeks in winter. During illness a worker would get full pay, and permanent invalids seventy-five per cent of their old salary. Profits had to be devoted to building a school and a clinic. 40

Collectivization of agriculture though generally slower also took place and though there were no really large estates in Catalonia, the formula usually followed was that half of all expropriated land was to be run by a committee with the remaining half parcelled out among the poorest peasants. The committee of the nearest town would receive half of all rent paid on the land and the other half would be remitted. But whatever the method of agrarian reform, from Catalonia to Andalusia, "in almost every case," as Thomas reports, "the peasants of Republican Spain were by early 1937 either owners of their own land or labouring for a
collectivized farm. The tenant farmers and the landless labourers dependent upon a negligent landlord had vanished."41

The lesson implicit in Orwell's comments about the Republicans in general and their militias in particular is that such a revolution had been sustained in the face of overwhelming odds because suffering was common and generally shared. Of the Republican side as a whole he points to the lack of "gross contrasts in wealth"42 which made the burdens of the war easier to bear. Writing of the appalling shortages of arms and amenities in the militias he concludes that "the fact that they did not disintegrate or show mutinous tendencies under these intolerable conditions ...converted me (to some extent) to the notion of 'revolutionary discipline.'"43

Even so, the idea of "revolutionary discipline" during a time when winning the war seemed the most important thing to him was only frustrating to Corporal, and later Lieutenant, Orwell because it was different from what he as a member of the British middle class was used to. The fact that such discipline turned out to be "more reliable than might be expected" revealed to Orwell yet another important difference between workers' revolutionary, and bourgeois armies; namely that discipline in the first type is based more on a sense of loyalty to fellow workers than on fear of punishment (from above).44 This does not mean that Orwell underrated the power of fear - if he had it is doubtful that Nineteen Eighty-Four would have been written. But his observation does testify to a spirit of co-operation among the revolutionary militias which, allied with necessity, sparked what he called "astonishing feats of improvisation," from using cold cream or bacon fat as a substitute for gun oil to organizing regular meals for thousands of troops in the height of battle.
To Orwell such achievements, however, were merely the material symptoms of a much more significant advancement amongst the workers—namely a new "spirit of utterance, a freedom of speech and the press, which no one would have thought possible in time of war." To argue that this new found (if later curtailed) spirit of freedom was absolute would be as untrue as claiming that there was perfect equality in the militias. But once again it was the increased sense of freedom, the increased sense of equality that mattered to Orwell. Again it was the sense of "direction," despite the failures, which was important to him and which, measured against the old state of affairs, marked the revolution as an advance.

The embarrassingly "hackneyed phrases" of the revolutionary songs being sold on the streets for a few centimes each might disappear like the illiterate militiamen who eagerly purchased them in early days of democratic hope, but their disappearance would signify only the exile of revolutionary hopes, not their death. Orwell, of course, did not think that the experience of revolution would guarantee democracy as it was known elsewhere. It would be "childish," he wrote before the Republican surrender in 1939, to have expected that democracy in the Western European sense could follow quickly upon a Republican victory. There would, he warned, be "enormous problems of reconstruction" (but better this than if Franco won for then even the approximation of a "democratic" government would disappear in the bowels of the corporative state). But if the Republic won, he believed that the early experience of the Republic would be invaluable insofar as the "spirit" of voluntarism and the concomitant discipline which had been gained through making common cause against Franco would better dispose the people towards
democratic procedure in the future. Certainly they would be better prepared for and more disposed to the democratic process than the conscripts of Franco's army who, like conscripts in any army, "have only a very dim idea as to what they are fighting about" and to whom hierarchy, not equalitarianism, is the norm. In the volunteer Republican armies "men were suffering" but "they were also learning."

Even as the possibility of socialism receded because of Franco's victories and the later, bitter internecine fighting on the Republican side, when even a Republican victory might have meant something less than socialism, possibly a "capitalist republic," Orwell believed that "the people have seen and learned too much" to make them willing subjects of an authoritarian régime or to let themselves be pushed back into the semi-feudalism of pre-1931.

The sense of making history, indeed the importance of history as a guide to improving one's condition, had been absent amongst the working class pupils of A Clergyman's Daughter. In Spain the sight of possibilities realized through the revolution would not be lost on the children of the poor. Here in Catalonia "they" had been challenged by "us." Furthermore, the lessons of the "revolutionary outbreak," Orwell believed, had raised the consciousness of the Spanish workers out of the apathetic condition of their English cousins who, as we have seen (though they were relatively better off), might well have envisaged a better future but did not have models for realizing it. Now, as a result of the detailed collectivization of the kind already mentioned, there was in Spain a model for a better way of life and it would encourage future generations to "preserve" and so "extend" the spirit of hope until it would be strong enough to penetrate the totalitarian armour. "The symbol
of military despotism is the tank... yet nearly any calibre of tank can be blown into the air by a grenade weighing only a few pounds... providing that there is someone brave enough to throw it," which depends on "the mass of the people feeling that they have something to fight for." 50

The apathy and ignorance upon which régimes depend, he wrote, "no longer exist in Spain" after the upheaval of 1936, and the desire for "liberty ... for a decent standard of living has spread far too widely" to be extinguished by either the "obscurantism or persecution" of a dictatorship. 51 Thus, even set against the carnage of the civil war, the revolutionary experience would be considered by Orwell as a signal victory. For in the long run, just as the militiamen despite their illiteracy learned the songs of revolutionary hope, so would the proles remember the songs of yesterday. Within the collective memory of a better past would stir the hope of a better future. The victory of political consciousness, then, was not simply a victory for the exploited of Spain but for the exploited everywhere. 52

Scores of thousands of ordinary people had been forced into positions of responsibility and command which a few months earlier they would never have dreamed of. Hundreds of thousands of people found themselves thinking, with an intensity which would hardly have been possible in normal times, about economic theories and political principles. Words like fascism, communism, democracy, socialism, Trotskyism, anarchism, which for the vast mass of human beings are nothing but words, were being eagerly discussed and thought about by men who only yesterday had been illiterate peasants or overworked machine hands. There was a huge intellectual ferment, a sudden expansion of consciousness. 53

For Orwell the militias exemplified the best in the ferment. Insofar as "many of the normal motives of civilized life - snobbishness, money grubbing, fear of the boss, etc. [the themes of the indigenous novels] - had simply ceased to exist" along with normal class divisions, he regarded the experience as a "foretaste of Socialism." He conceded
that this phase was only a "temporary and local phase" in the "enormous" struggle between exploited and exploiter which was world wide. But he added, "It lasted long enough to have its effect upon anyone who had experienced it." 54

Though life in the militias may not be "perfect equality," Orwell found it equalitarian to a degree that was "almost unthinkable" in the "money-tainted air" of the England of Gordon Comstock and Dorothy Hare. Above all, there was none of the dull acceptance of exploitation that he had seen in the faces of the down and out. Despite the incontrovertible savagery of the Civil War, which, like most wars, Orwell considered was not "right" even though it might be necessary, the "expression on the human face" was not that of the coal miner's subservience, the waiter's obsequiousness or the coolie's servility but was that of hope. For Orwell this hope was especially "strange and valuable," quite apart from any political implications he drew from it. Not only did he find himself in a community wherein "political consciousness and disbelief in Capitalism were more normal than their opposites" but in a community where the use of the word "comrade" was evidence of friendship rather than "humbug." Most of all, he found himself invigorated by an atmosphere "wherein hope was more normal than apathy or cynicism....One had breathed the air of equality." 55

From such numerous passages which record his discovery that equality was practical one gains a sense of excitement, near euphoric in its tone, which is not to be found elsewhere in Orwell's writings. 56 It is the "magic quality" of that time in Aragon which was "so different from the rest of my life" 57 which gives Homage to Catalonia its underlying, almost youthful, optimism so that the Orwell of Spain frequently seems
young than the Blair of Burmese Days.

Quite apart from the absence of privileges between officers and men and the sense of men acting voluntarily which he enjoyed so much during his time in the militias, Orwell was no doubt simply experiencing the sense of camaraderie so commonly felt among soldiers and which so often forms the core of the appeal of military life. And though he had known fear, like many a soldier before him his enthusiasm was fired by the action about him, from overrunning a Fascist trench near Torre Fabián to watching

like an allegorical picture of the war, the trainload of fresh men gliding proudly up the line, the maimed men sliding slowly down, and all the while the guns on the open trucks making one's heart leap as guns always do, and reviving that pernicious feeling, so difficult to get rid of, that war is glorious after all.58

While this passage evidences Orwell's honest admission that he could share the pernicious, albeit common, attraction of war, he also stresses the unattractive side of the soldier's life. He shows how heroic visions of war fade alongside the knowledge that "a louse is a louse and a bomb is a bomb,"59 no matter whether you believe you are in the right, and that just as those who take the sword perish by the sword...those who don't take the sword perish by smelly diseases.60 In short, as the author of Burmese Days, A Hanging, and Shooting an Elephant had seen the "dirty work of Empire at close quarters,"61 so had the author of Homage to Catalonia and Looking Back on the Civil War learned the costs of war.

Consequently, in yet another instance of how the Spanish experience would heavily influence his later conclusions about England and the world rather than about Spain, he talks about the ignorance of the dirty details which made it possible for the left intelligentsia in England to "swing" wildly over from "'War is hell' to 'War is glorious' not only with no
This is but one example of how, although Orwell's near euphoric reaction may have been naively founded in Barcelona ("There was much of it that I did not understand") and was undoubtedly spurred on by the common enough camaraderie of any front, it nevertheless generated much that was insightful in his later work. The flash of excitement which he experienced in the militia would be tempered by a much harsher reality later in Barcelona during the internecine fighting in the Republicans' summer of discontent in 1937. Such experiences shaped his concern that through lack of firsthand knowledge of terror and the like, men would find it easier to endorse the formation and administration of a totalitarian state. The exploitation of others, including torture, could be more easily tolerated and advocated by those who had never been subjected to it. Still, the disillusionment of 1937 was not to destroy Orwell's new found hope and belief in socialism. What it did do was sharpen his own political consciousness which had been unwittingly growing through his observation of the raising of political consciousness in those about him. This alerted him more than ever before to the existence of "degrees," or different types of socialism.

Before Spain he had often spoken blithely about the need for socialism to better distribute the necessities on this "raft" in space. After the purges and witch hunting (which were simultaneously underway in Russia) that he witnessed in Barcelona when the "Stalinists" and not the workers "were in the saddle," his vision of socialism would encompass more than simply a system of redistribution with a human face - it would be socialism with a "moral nose." It was because of his Spanish experience that Orwell concluded in 1940, as quoted earlier, that "Socialism in itself"
is not necessarily an advance. In particular, the raising of his political consciousness in Spain explains his subsequent use of the phrase "democratic Socialism." In *Why I Write* (1946) he recalls how "The Spanish War and other events in 1936-7 turned the scale" and that thereafter every word he wrote was "for democratic Socialism."\(^6^6\)

In *Homage to Catalonia* he notes how it had become fashionable to "deny" that socialism meant equality, with "sleek little professors ... busy 'proving'" that socialism was simply state-capitalism with the profit motive "intact." But he adds that "fortunately there also exists a vision of Socialism quite different from this." This vision, inspired by "the democratic spirit of the militias" which he had experienced in Aragon in 1936-37, would, especially in his later fiction, increasingly focus Orwell's attention on those instincts, such as the greed for power, which ran counter to the "idea of equality." If socialism does not mean a classless society it means nothing, he said. The militia society, for all its nascent inefficiency, was one wherein decisions had been made through free discussion among equals and for him this constituted a "microcosm of the classless society." This "crude forecast of what the opening stages of Socialism might be like," writes Orwell, "deeply attracted me" and "made my desire to see Socialism established much more actual than it had been before."\(^6^7\)

Quite apart from the effect it had on him, Orwell's insider's account of the militias did two things. First it challenged the communist charge that what the militias had achieved in the way of agricultural and industrial collectivization was of "no political significance."\(^6^8\) Secondly, as we shall see in the next chapter, it also revealed that the revolutionary promise of the militias was destroyed not because of their inherent
weaknesses or inefficiencies, which he readily admitted to, but because they were vigorously attacked - not so much by Franco but by other, ostensibly fellow, anti-Fascist forces. In short, the "breaking up of the old workers' militias which were organized on a genuinely democratic system" was the direct result of a "blow at equalitarianism" delivered from outside the militias but within the Republic. 69

The unravelling of this paradox is one of the major achievements of Homage to Catalonia. The extent of the attack against the militias was not fully appreciated by Orwell himself until the night of June 20, 1937 when he arrived in Barcelona with his discharge papers, after having convalesced from his wound.

When I got to the hotel my wife was sitting in the lounge. She got up and came towards me in what struck me as a very unconcerned manner; then she put an arm round my neck, and with a sweet smile for the benefit of the other people in the lounge, hissed in my ear: "Get out!"

..."What the devil is all this about?" I said as soon as we were on the pavement.

"Haven't you heard?"

"No. Heard what? I've heard nothing."

"The P.O.U.M.'s been suppressed. They've seized all the buildings. Practically everyone's in prison. And they say they're shooting people already."

Orwell had walked into a Spanish version of the Stalinist purges. The strategy of the communists in the Civil War had always been to leave revolutionary changes of society until victory against Franco was assured. The anarchists, traditionally opposed to the very idea of centralized control, disagreed, including the dissident ex-communist Workers and Peasant Bloc Party known as the P.O.U.M. The P.O.U.M., whose ex-communist leaders had attacked Stalin's show trials and called Russia the "'bureaucratic régime of a poisoned dictator,'" 72 saw little point in simply waging war against Franco unless long awaited social reform could be effected at
the same time. Also, as Orwell described it, "The Communists hold that Fascism can be beaten by alliance with sections of the capitalist class (the Popular Front); their opponents hold that this manoeuvre simply gives Fascism new breeding grounds." Whatever the merits of each side's position, the argument over strategy periodically flared up during the war, particularly in Catalonia. A Nationalist agent reported in May, 1937 "the tension between the Communists and Anarchists was so great that he could guarantee to cause fighting to break out there." In any event, hostilities did break out between the two camps within the Republican camp and this led to the Barcelona Civil War in early May between the communists and the P.O.U.M. in which Orwell participated and about which he wrote so vividly. It is one of the best demonstrations of how his political writing was never entirely divorced from his aesthetic instinct.

The next three days and nights I spent continuously on the roof of the Poliorama, except for brief intervals when I slipped across to the hotel for meals. I was in no danger, I suffered from nothing worse than hunger and boredom, yet it was one of the most unbearable periods of my whole life. I think few experiences could be more sickening, more disillusioning, or, finally, more nerve-wracking than those evil days of street warfare.

I used to sit on the roof marvelling at the folly of it all. From the little windows in the observatory you could see for miles around - vista after vista of tall slender buildings, glass domes and fantastic curly roofs with brilliant green and copper tiles; over to eastward the glittering pale blue sea - the first glimpse of the sea that I had since coming to Spain. And the whole huge town of a million people was locked in a sort of violent inertia, a nightmare of noise without movement. The sunlit streets were quite empty. Nothing was happening except the streaming of bullets from barricades and sand-bagged windows. Not a vehicle was stirring in the streets; here and there along the Ramblas the trams stood motionless where their drivers had jumped out of them when the fighting started. And all the while the devilish noise, echoing from thousands of stone buildings, went on and on and on, like a tropical rainstorm. Crack-crack, rattle-rattle, roar - sometimes it died away to a few shots, sometimes it quickened to a deafening fusillade, but it never stopped while daylight lasted, and punctually next dawn it started again.

Although a cease-fire was effected on May 7 it had become clear
that no compromise on war policy had been reached and "that there could be no truce between the P.O.U.M. and the Communists." The communists bided their time until mid-June when Orlov, the N.K.V.D. chief in Spain, ordered the arrest of all P.O.U.M. leaders, claiming that the P.O.U.M. was involved in a Fascist spy ring. It was now that Orwell was in danger, for in Barcelona the P.O.U.M was declared illegal and its headquarters quickly became a prison. Andrés Nin, its leader, was tortured then murdered. In the paranoid manner of the Stalinist purges not only were P.O.U.M. members persecuted but many Russian leaders in Spain also "disappeared...partly because they had objected to Stalin's policy towards the Spaniards with whom they had worked so much."76

The purge in the Catalan capital, the time of "'secret prisons'" when old comrades walked in fear "past one another as though we had been total strangers," marked the height of Orwell's political consciousness in Spain.77 But the purge's effect would go far beyond his experience in Spain, haunting the daylight hours of George Bowling, subduing the brave but temporary revolutionary light of Animal Farm, and finally overwhelming Winston Smith in the night of Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Summary of Chapter II

For Orwell the lessons of the early days of the Spanish Civil War were (1) that within the civil war between left and right which the world knew about there was a revolution which for the most part the world did not know about, and (2) this revolution held promise of the establishment of socialism which, even if defeated by Franco, would set a precedent which would haunt Franco's régime. It would provide the exploited with an invigorated "political consciousness" and hope born of the experience, however brief and imperfect, of an equality and fraternity hitherto unknown.
In a return to the master-slave view of the colonialist world he saw the Spanish experience, for all its peculiarities, as a microcosm of a world-wide struggle between exploiter and exploited. For a time at least it seemed that here in Spain the exploited could win, that an indestructible solidarity against the exploiters could be achieved - "no one owned anyone else as his master."^78

Life in the militias was the nearest thing he had seen to a "classless society," the socialist ideal which he had written and despaired about in England. Beyond the naivety of the sloganeering, the initial chaos of rampant disorganization, a "working model"^79 had been effected in Catalonia as witnessed by the administration of transport industry and police forces. Orwell's observation that such could be achieved through "revolutionary discipline" based on equality between officers and men not only led him to believe that the semi-Trotskyist P.O.U.M. slogan, "'The war and revolution are inseparable' was less visionary than it sounds"^80 but formed the basis of his later insistence that England's war against Hitler could only be won on the basis of the same kind of "equality of sacrifice."^81

But while the experience of his early days in Spain restored Orwell's enthusiasm for the socialist ideal, his enthusiasm was soon to be tempered by an increasing awareness in the purge-filled atmosphere of Barcelona that there were widely differing and violently opposed ideas within the left on how best to approach the ideal of the equalitarian society. The leftist could be shot as easily by someone on the left as by someone on the right. Orwell's witness of this marked a maturation and turning point in his life.
Notes to Section III - Chapter II

1. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 77. Thomas describes anxious unemployed assembling at dawn "as in a slave market."

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53. In the golden century of Spain when she was the great power it was not unusual, for example, for "noblemen to serve as privates in the Army." The Church in Spain was actively committed for a time to an egalitarian spirit and practice. Not only did it argue for a "more equal distribution of land" but it was noticeably hostile to commerce. Its "pre-commercial" (rather than socialist) stance, however, petered out after the Napoleonic Wars when it began resisting the spirit of liberalism and fell increasingly under the influence of Rome, particularly that of the Jesuit Order.


5. Orwell, *Homage*, p. 245. Of joining the P.O.U.M., Orwell, in the beginning of *Homage to Catalonia* (p. 7), says that he met the Italian militiaman "the day before I joined the militia." In *Looking Back on the Spanish War*, published four years later but included in the above edition of *Homage to Catalonia*, he says the incident occurs on "the day I joined the militia." (*Homage*, p. 243.)


18. I have used Orwell's spelling of Saragosa.
20. Ibid., p. 21.
22. Ibid., p. 22.
23. Ibid., p. 25.
27. Ibid., pp. 101, 101, 15, 29.
28. Ibid., pp. 28, 29, 29, 23.
29. Ibid., pp. 30, 30, 30, 28-29, 29. Orwell notes that some "boys of fifteen were being brought up for enlistment by their parents" simply for the militiaman's wage of ten pesetas a day and for the bread their offspring could smuggle home from the barracks. (See Orwell, *Homage*, p. 15.)
31. Ibid., p. 227.
32. While there was no doubt much violence involved in these actions, the term "non-military" is used to indicate the difference between the battle against Franco's forces and the attempts to restructure society behind the anti-Franco front line.
36. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, pp. 248, 248. It is interesting to note that although the anarchists (F.A.I.-C.N.T.) had in effect held most of the power in Barcelona since the beginning of the Civil War, they only "formally" entered the Government of Catalonia - The Generalidad - on September 26. And "to avoid giving their already alarmed extremist followers the impression that they had joined a real government" they "henceforth referred to the Catalan Government as the 'Regional Defence Council.'" (See *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 367.)
38. Ibid., p. 250.


44. Orwell, *Homage*, pp. 29-30. In *Notes on the War*, however, in 1942, he would write that "if whole armies had to be coerced, no war could ever be fought." (Orwell, *CEJL*, II, p. 32.)


46. *Ibid.*, p. 146. The words "childish," "democratic," and "spirit" I have quoted are also taken from p. 146 of "Caesarean Section in Spain."

47. Orwell, "Caesarean Section in Spain," p. 147.


56. The closest he comes to this tone elsewhere, though in muted form, is in his near obsessive tracts about the revolutionary potential of the English Home Guard in World War II. For just a few examples of this see his articles on the Home Guard in *The Tribune*, December 20, 1940; *The Observer*, October 15, 1943; *The Observer*, May 9, 1944.


Chapter III - A War of Words.

The increase in Orwell's political consciousness that came from his understanding that a political war was being fought beyond simply the democracy-versus-Fascism level was not at all apparent to him when he joined the P.O.U.M. militia. Indeed, as we have seen earlier, even at the front the war itself had "seemed so futile and eventless."

If you had asked me why I had joined the militia I should have answered: "To fight against Fascism," and if you had asked me what I was fighting for, I should have answered: "Common decency." I had accepted the News Chronicle-New Statesman version of the war as the defence of civilization against a maniacal outbreak by an army of Colonel Blimps in the pay of Hitler.¹

And though he was moved to join the P.O.U.M. militia by the revolutionary poor-versus-rich excitement in Barcelona, Orwell admitted that the apparent hodgepodge of political parties and their initials "merely exasperated me." The array of P.O.U.M., P.S.C.U., F.A.I., C.N.T., U.C.T., J.C.I., J.S.U. and A.I.T. signs seemed relatively unimportant to him because at first "the political side of the war bored me."² He was perplexed when P.O.U.M. soldiers pointed out "Socialist positions" at the front. "Aren't we all Socialists?" he asked naively, still not recognizing the differences, or, more importantly, the significance of the differences, between the various parties within the Republic. His attitude at the beginning had been "Why can't we drop all this political nonsense and get on with the war?"³

That such a normally astute observer of events as Orwell failed at first to grasp what was going on beyond and beneath the anti-Fascist war illustrates one of the major points of his Homage to Catalonia, namely that the press coverage of the war, particularly the revolutionary aspect of it, was woefully inadequate. The "revolutionary outbreak," as
he charged, was in fact "successfully covered up."\(^4\) (My italics.) It was not that there were insufficient correspondents. Indeed, they flocked to Spain to see and, in some cases, like Orwell's, to take part in the war.\(^5\) (They included such names as Louis Fischer, Ernest Hemingway, Herbert Matthews, Arthur Koestler, and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.)

Gradually, through 1937, Orwell became aware of the differences in the "plague of initials" which were virtually unknown to most of the outside world. He discovered that it was impossible not to become aware when "one's own destiny was involved:" when, for example, the mere fact that he had fought with the P.O.U.M. would make him a target for the secret police hunt in Barcelona in June.

What Orwell learned and would tell us in *Homage to Catalonia* and elsewhere was essentially this: the Republican resistance to Franco was accompanied by a "definite revolutionary outbreak" so that the war was "not merely a civil war, but the beginning of a revolution." And it was a revolution which, in the interests of Stalin's foreign policy, the communists were determined to crush. That "outside Spain few people grasped that there was a revolution,"\(^6\) that the communists were in fact vehemently *counter-revolutionary*"and were more anxious even than the liberals to hunt down the revolutionaries and stamp out all revolutionary ideas,"\(^7\) was, Orwell stated, largely due to the refusal of the left wing as much as the right wing press to report the revolution. In showing how the leftist press failed to report the leftist revolution (*The Daily Worker* calling those who gave any hint of it "downright lying scoundrels"), Orwell reveals the extent of the communist leaders' determination to preserve at any cost the liberal-leftist alliance against Hitler and
Mussolini. They were working not merely "to postpone the Spanish revolution till a more suitable time, but to make sure that it never happened."8

On the other hand, the right wing press, which could normally be expected to attack any leftist revolution, also largely ignored the revolution's existence. Of course with their generally pro-Franco (Nationalist Front) sympathies they had no sympathy with the Popular Front. But their studied refusal to discuss the revolution within the civil war was, Orwell argued, based on the premise that in order to crush the revolution, which threatened substantial foreign capital invested in pre-war Spain, it was best to deny the revolution's existence, thereby denying it any external encouragement or impetus. Similarly there were those left wing propagandists who thought they were helping the Republican side by denying the revolution. Their rationalization was that mention of revolution would only further stir up pro-Franco sentiment abroad which might result in increased aid to the Fascists.9

Hence, despite the sometimes brilliant and truthful reporting of the war, as acknowledged by Orwell in his praise of the Manchester Guardian, both the left and right wing press acted upon the same belief that "since the revolution had got to be crushed, it greatly simplified things to pretend that no revolution had happened." And if, contrary to the general rule, they did report it, it was deliberately distorted for propagandistic purposes. Thus Orwell recorded that "one of the dreariest effects of this war has been to teach me that the Left-wing press is every bit as spurious and dishonest as that of the Right."10

He cites, for example, how the New Statesman refused his review of Borkenau's Spanish Cockpit because it "controverted editorial policy" (by
showing how, on the Republican side, the communists constituted the extreme right instead of the extreme left) and supposedly would help Franco.\textsuperscript{11} The implication of this kind of censorship, which Orwell described when his review of \textit{Spanish Cockpit} was finally published, is that debate between different points of view is not only misinformed outside Spain but that in Spain, such censorship, enforced by terror, drives debate underground – to be carried on in secret. Instead of differences being aired, and perhaps dissipated, they fester in a society that becomes marked by "ceaseless arrests...censored newspapers... prowling hordes of armed police." In June of 1937 such an atmosphere, said Orwell, "was like a nightmare."\textsuperscript{12}

Worried about the possibility of such a world in the future, Orwell, who repeatedly evokes the "nightmare" image in \textit{Homage to Catalonia}, recalls saying to Arthur Koestler that "History stopped in 1936." Koestler had nodded his agreement, for while both "were thinking of totalitarianism in general" it was the Spanish Civil War they were thinking of in particular. What moved Orwell to make this remark was his reflection that

\begin{quote}
Early in my life I have noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper, but in Spain, for the first time, I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts, not even the relationship which is implied in an ordinary lie. I saw great battles reported where there had been no fighting, and complete silence where hundreds of men had been killed. I saw troops who had fought bravely denounced as cowards and traitors, and others who had never seen a shot fired hailed as the heroes of imaginary victories; and I saw newspapers in London retailing these lies and eager intellectuals building emotional superstructures over events that had never happened. I saw, in fact, history being written not in terms of what happened but of what ought to have happened according to various "party lines."\textsuperscript{13} (My italics.)
\end{quote}

In light of Koestler's later confessions (after Orwell's death), it is not surprising that he "nodded in immediate understanding," for he
had engaged in exactly the kind of willful falsification which so disturbed Orwell. Koestler describes how Muenzenberg, the communist propaganda chief in Paris, would stride into the writer's apartment:

He would pick up a few sheets of typescript, scan through them and shout at me: Too weak. Too objective. Hit them! Hit them hard! Tell the world how they run over their prisoners with tanks, how they pour petrol over them and burn them alive. Make the world gasp with horror. Hammer it into their heads.14

Many examples of such distortion from both right and left are given by Orwell in Homage to Catalonia as well as in Spilling the Spanish Beans (1937) and Looking Back on the Spanish War (1942). One memorable example from the New Statesman accuses the Fascists of making barricades with the bodies of living children, which Orwell wryly points out is "a most unhandy thing to make barricades with."15 And accounts in the Daily Worker about anarchists are also quoted, showing how at one point the anarchists are accused of attacking themselves at the Barcelona telephone exchange. Five days later a completely contradictory story of the same incident appears in the same newspaper.16 In similar fashion, correspondent Arthur Bryant was busily declaring that "'the sawing-off of a Conservative tradesman's legs' was 'a commonplace' in Loyalist Spain."17

Orwell did not deny that atrocities occurred, noting that the fact that they happened at all was of course far worse than the press lying about them. But what struck him about such stories after he drew up a list of atrocities since 1918 was that "there was hardly a single case when the Left and Right believed in the same stories simultaneously." (My italics.) And "stranger yet, at any moment" yesterday's proven atrocity story can, like the Daily Worker's reversal on the Barcelona telephone exchange story, become today's unmitigated lie, "merely because the political landscape has changed."18
The fact that one only believes the stories of atrocities said to have been committed by the other side, both sides lying by omission if not through deliberate falsification of facts, illustrated for Orwell the power of a political orthodoxy through its propaganda to convince the individual that commitment to the party line was more important than commitment to the truth. This power, he wrote, in recalling the Spanish War, "impressed me then, and has impressed me ever since." The impression was negative, and in the sense that all his serious writing after 1936 was directed "against totalitarianism" this power of political orthodoxy through propaganda became a prime target in his anti-totalitarian attack. Though he usually disapproved of propaganda ("I hold the outmoded opinion that in the long run it does not pay to tell lies"), from personal experience Orwell well understood its power. At the front he noted that for a time the megaphone, not the rifle, was the weapon of attack. At first he was "amazed and scandalized" at the idea of talking to rather than shooting at the enemy because it seemed that the Spaniards were not taking the war seriously enough. It was effective enough, however, as even the trickle of Fascist deserters showed. The power of even such simple propaganda became evident to Orwell in an otherwise minor event. As the result of listening to a fellow militiaman who was an "artist at the job" he wrote:

Sometimes instead of shouting revolutionary slogans he simply told the Fascists how much better we were fed than they were. His account of the Government rations was apt to be a little imaginative. "Buttered toast!" - you could hear his voice echoing across the lonely valley - "we're just sitting down to buttered toast over here! Lovely slices of buttered toast!"

Orwell concludes that "in the icy night the news of buttered toast probably set many a Fascist mouth watering. It even made mine water
though I knew he was lying." 22 (My italics.) If the mouth could salivate in the face of non-existent food, how much more willingly would the brain accept lies much more subtly disguised.

In his attack upon political orthodoxy and its propaganda he considered the leading perpetrators (though not necessarily its originators) to be intellectuals in general and the British literary intelligentsia in particular. 23 And though quite obviously not all journalists were intellectuals, or vice versa, Orwell's attack was spurred by what he believed to be the undue influence of the intellectuals in the Press of the nineteen thirties, before radio had stolen much of the literary man's thunder. 24 One of his most telling broadsides against the power of political orthodoxy among intellectuals took place in 1940 when he wrote Inside the Whale, his review of Henry Miller's Tropic of Capricorn, which George Watson rightly refers to as "still the best critique of the literary Thirties." 25 Among other things, this piece bares Orwell's growing disgust with the power of political orthodoxy and more importantly his understanding of its appeal, both of which had resulted from the raising of his political consciousness in Spain. Because the role of allegiance to such orthodoxy, particularly among intellectuals, is central to his later writings about the conditions of modern exploitation, it is necessary to discuss Orwell's view of how such allegiance grew in England between the world wars. Once again we see how his Spanish experience is used to discuss England, rather than Spain.

Dominant in Orwell's appraisal of Miller's novel is his appreciation of the American's fearless recording of facts, even the "inane, squalid facts of everyday life." Orwell does not agree that modern life should be simply accepted ("let's swallow it whole"), for
this meant swallowing a world in which democratic hopes had all too often ended behind "barbed wire." But he considered Miller's novel important for two reasons: (1) it was written without fear of orthodox opinion and (2) in its acceptance of modern life, including the "dirty-handkerchief side," it mirrored the passivity and subservience of the "ordinary" man (i.e., "average sensual" man). In a world of "them" and "us," such a man only felt "master of his fate" within the "narrow circle" of home and work, and was unconcerned by events beyond, which to him seemed as uncontrollable as the weather. By contrast, amid the relatively becalmed sea of the "ordinary" man's political unconsciousness, the English literary intelligentsia's relative non-passivity was seen by him as being a far more influential current than its numbers would suggest.

Orwell believed that the disproportionate influence of the intelligentsia, particularly among the communists and near-communists in the "literary reviews," arose largely from the fact that literature "during the past ten years [i.e. in the thirties] has involved itself more and more deeply in politics." This did not mean that "ordinary" voices had been silent about great events beyond the "ordinary" man's local environment, or that all "ordinary" men were the non-political, non-moral and "passive" underlings which Orwell saw Miller writing about. Indeed, just as Thomas tells us how most of the volunteers in Spain were from the working class, Orwell recalls how some of the best books about World War I were written by "ordinary" men, by "common soldiers." But the difference between books by such men and books by the intelligentsia about Spain - the change that had taken place, said Orwell - was that whereas books like All Quiet on the Western Front were written from the "victim's" point of view, by men who, though in the thick of action, were
asking, "What the hell is all this about?" the majority of the books on Spain were dull and bad because they were written by left and right wing propagandists.

What particularly concerned Orwell about the deepening involvement of literature in politics (which he did not disapprove of in principle) was the increasing allegiance to orthodoxy, particularly communist orthodoxy, among those in literary circles since the mid-nineteen thirties. His concern grew out of his belief that such allegiance resulted more from an irrepressible need to belong to a group than from moral conviction. It was as if he was watching a group re-enactment of Ravelston's transference of allegiance from God to Marx. In this view, Orwell, in his essay on Miller, returns to the problem which he first discussed in *A Clergyman's Daughter*, namely that while it may be easy to rid yourself of "such primal things as patriotism and religion... you have not necessarily got rid of the need for something to believe in." Orwell argued that this was as true for an intellectual as a bricklayer. By way of illustration he recalls how such writers and intellectuals as Evelyn Waugh and Christopher Hollis had earlier turned to the Church after the emptiness of disillusionment. It was significant, he said, that they preferred the "power...prestige" and "rigid discipline" of the Catholic Church over the more flexible Church of England.

Thus he concluded that many of the young, anti-bourgeois intellectuals of the mid-nineteen thirties fled to the Communist Party, instinctively recognizing it, albeit unconsciously, as a surrogate church. It embodied all those values which they had ostensibly overthrown but which had nevertheless resurfaced in disguise.
All the loyalties and superstitions that the intellect had seemingly banished could come rushing back under the thinnest of disguises. Patriotism, religion, empire, military glory—all in one word, Russia...God—Stalin. The devil—Hitler. Heaven—Moscow. Hell—Berlin.  

More broadly, his concern about the rush to the left reflected his conviction that while "group loyalties are necessary...they are poisonous to literature, so long as literature is the product of individuals."  

The literary intelligentsia's allegiance to their respective orthodoxies explained for Orwell why both the right and left wing writers behaved so badly in Spain. But it was the leftist writers who he felt had done the most damage. They had not only hidden the fact of the leftist revolution within the Civil War but had failed to report the violent suppression of the revolution by the Republican government, especially by the communists.  

The left's culpability in Orwell's eyes, however, did not arise from any qualitative difference between the corruptibility of the left or right intelligentsias. It arose instead from the marked right to left swing which occurred between the "art for art's sake" mood of the nineteen twenties ("My dear aunt...'one doesn't write about anything, one just writes'") and the political preoccupation of "Auden, Spender and Co." in the mid-nineteen thirties. In the twenties "nothing is queerer," wrote Orwell in Inside the Whale,  

than the way in which every important event in Europe escaped the notice of the English intelligentsia....Russia means Tolstoy, Dostoievsyky, and exiled counts driving taxi-cabs. Italy means picture galleries, ruins, churches and museums—but not Black-shirts. Germany means films, nudism, and psychoanalysis—but not Hitler.  

Even among the "best" writers who kept aloof from the hollow "art for art's sake" school there was more a "temperamental [rather than
a political] similarity" in an age (1910-30) where the conservative, full-bellied "rentier-intellectual" could wallow in "disillusionment" after the Great War, and turn back to "Rome, Byzantium, to Montparnasse, to Mexico, to the Etruscans, to the Subconscious, to the solar plexus — to everywhere except the places where things are actually happening."^37

But then, writes Orwell (reflecting the rise of Fascism in the early thirties), "in the years 1930-5 something happens. The literary climate changes" from a "'tragic sense of life'" to the "serious purpose" of "Auden, Spender and Co." — from a "leaning towards the Church" to a "leaning towards Communism."^38 After 1930 Orwell asks,

> Who now could take it for granted to go through life in the ordinary middle-class way, as a soldier [like Bowling], clergyman [Reverend Hare], stockbroker, an Indian Civil Servant [like Blair], or what not?...And how many of the values by which our grandfathers lived could now be taken seriously? Patriotism, religion, the Empire, the family, the sanctity of marriage, the Old School Tie, birth, breeding, honour, discipline — anyone of ordinary education could turn the whole lot of them inside out in three minutes.^39

It may have taken more than "three minutes" but the intellectuals, like Ravelston, did overturn such beliefs, at least in their own minds.

As it had once been fashionable amongst intellectual circles to hear that a writer had "been received" (into Mother Church), it now became fashionable to hear that "so-and-so had 'joined'" the party. But quite apart from what he felt was the intellectual's need for a surrogate religion, what Orwell found troubling about the new and predominant swing to the far left was that the new, often middle-class and public school writers like Spender wrote not from experience of having been either exploited or persecuted but from a purely intellectual perspective. Because of this these young writers, in the growing anti-Fascist years of 1935-39, were easily and increasingly attracted by
"Russian Communism...a form of socialism" which, after Spain, Orwell said made "mental honesty impossible." So successful was this intelligentsia's attack upon traditional bourgeois values that Orwell wrote not only is there "now no intelligentsia that is not in some sense 'left'" but England is "perhaps the only great country whose intellectuals are ashamed of their own nationality," resulting in the "divorce between patriotism and intelligence."

In large measure it is this lack of patriotism amongst the leftist intellectuals which, despite the common ground they shared with fellow middle class, "bourgeois baiting" socialists, separates both them and Orwell's attack upon them from his attack on the middle class in general and his earlier attack upon the middle class socialists in particular. A middle class socialist himself, Orwell, we must remember, had written of the patriotic tradition that even at its "stupidest and most sentimental" it was "a comelier thing than the shallow self-righteousness of the left-wing intelligentsia." Similarly, it should be noted that while his major attack upon the middle class socialists took place in 1936 in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, his major attack on the leftist, often middle class, intellectuals took place in the 1940s. This occurred after he had become angered by their slavish reliance upon party line rather than upon personal observation and experience in their distorted reporting of the Spanish Civil War. "Nearly all the dominant writers of the thirties," he wrote, "belonged to the soft-boiled emancipated middle class," and for them the party line was particularly comfortable because they were people to whom war was fought on paper without any more personal danger than was entailed in a move at chess. Consequently, much left-wing thought, he charges, "is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know
that fire is hot." As Stansky remarks, it was in Spain that Orwell discovered that the fire was hot.

The point here is not whether one agrees with Orwell's analysis of the literary thirties (given most prominently in Inside the Whale). The essential point is that, while never denying the presence of subjectivity, "that any report that one makes of any event must depend on the evidence of one's own senses, because there is no way of getting outside one's own body," Orwell relentlessly drew attention to how the lack of concrete experience among many of those who wrote about Spain resulted in pieces which, while they were not deliberately falsified, were nevertheless false or disturbingly cavalier in their justification of what he called "bloodshed in the far distance."

Of course in suggesting that personally sensed experience is the only basis of valuable knowledge, Orwell is being cavalier himself but his obvious exaggeration is simply a device to draw attention to those who persistently judged from afar. In this regard certain lines in Auden's poem, Spain, particularly raised Orwell's ire (even though he regarded the poem generally as "one of the few decent things that have been written about the Spanish war" and no doubt knew that Auden had at least "visited" Spain).

To-morrow for the young, the poets exploding like bombs,
The walks by the lake, the weeks of perfect communion;
To-morrow the bicycle races
Through the suburbs on summer evenings. But to-day the struggle.

To-day the deliberate increase in the chances of death,
The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder:
To-day the expending of powers
On the flat ephemeral pamphlet and the boring meeting.

Orwell took exception to the phrase "necessary murder," commenting that it could only have been written by someone for whom
murder is at most a word....Personally I would not speak so lightly of murder....I have seen the bodies of numbers of murdered men - I don't mean killed in 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. The Hitlers and Stalins find murder necessary, but they don't advertize their callousness.  

Auden's "brand of amoralism" he concludes is made possible by being elsewhere when the murder is committed and perpetuated by people who have not seen the costs.  

In showing how the concept of "necessary" murder could be swallowed whole by people, and by "disproportionately" influential people, because they were so far removed from the act that its reality never touched them, Orwell shows how easily the left's anti-Fascism slipped into totalitarianism. It is this easy mental slide which he said not only constituted the cardinal "sin of nearly all left-wingers from 1933 onward" but explains how the English intellectuals' opposition to Hitler was marked by a simultaneous and enthusiastic acceptance of Stalin, the O.C.P.U., and the purge.  But while remoteness from the bloody details may make for a kind of "amoralism," the harvest of ignorance is not, in Orwell's view, as dangerous in contributing to the acceptance of totalitarian methods as the acceptance by a writer, be he intellectual or not, of the "discipline of a political party." For reasons which will be discussed shortly Orwell believed that even a writer's partial acceptance of an orthodoxy in his writing means that sooner or later he is forced "to toe the line, or shut up." He is forced to dance to the tune which declares Hitler a Fascist monster the day before the Russo-German Pact and an ally the next - to change his stance whenever Monday's dogma becomes Tuesday's heresy.  

Herein we move from falsification
through ignorance to falsification through intent, by people who were not
duped but who, as Orwell pointed out, were willing propagandists.58

Such willful lying was evident in the left's denial of the fact
that in Spain communists were busy killing people because they were
too far left and not because they were too far right, and in the grossly
inflated Fascist reports of a "Russian army" in Spain. For Orwell, this
signalled far more than the extent of corruption in the modern press.
It signalled, and this is the most important message of Homage to
Catalonia, a much deeper danger, indeed the gravest danger of the future,
namely "that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of this
world." (My italics.) For not only did the slavish followers of
political orthodoxy who wrote so many lies partake in the "abandonment
["peculiar to our age"] of the idea that history could be truthfully
written," but they actually advocated that it should not be so written.59

An example of such abandonment of the concept of objective truth
is given in a review by Orwell in The New English Weekly of June, 1938.
Having already noted Koestler's (Spanish Testament)60 cry for unqualified
party allegiance, he draws attention to how the editor of the book
Franco's Rule speaks contemptuously of "'objectivity neurosis.'" In
such contempt Orwell was quick to see the danger of totalitarianism.
Whereas in the past, falsehood was as consciously spread as it was in
Spain, there had remained, he argued, an underlying belief in the
existence of "facts" which "were more or less discoverable" and which
formed a "common basis of agreement" between men. If the existence of
this "common basis is denied, however, through the denial of "objective
truth," then we end up not with "Science" but with "'German Science,'
'Jewish Science,' etc." This not only means that a false division can
be created between scientists by talking of "German Science" and "Jewish Science" but that a falsely predicated division between men can be created. For if the notion of a "common" ground for a "common" species, the "common basis of agreement," is lost, the implication of a "common" species is also lost. That is, just as it is claimed that "Jewish Science" is completely different from "German Science" then it is a short step to claiming that Jews have nothing in common with Germans - that they are two different species: Human and Subhuman.

Further, if the sense of objective truth is lost then so is the sense of degree of truth. If there is no cake how can there be part of one? And if absolute truth is regarded as unobtainable, then just as moral relativism (as Gordon Comstock points out) had gathered strength through the loss of belief in absolute right and wrong, so will it gather strength in the belief that because there is no objective truth, "a big lie is no worse than a little lie" - that living in England is "no worse" than living in Nazi Germany. (My italics.)

Orwell's argument is not that we have access to "absolute standards" but that without belief in the possibility of achieving such access, without belief in the "ideal" of absolute right and wrong and of the existence of the "neutral" scientific "fact," we paradoxically deal in absolute fashion with partial truths and facts. In doing so we evict the notion of degree, of at least trying to the best of our abilities to act morally in an imperfect world. If this importance of "degree" is lost then, as with any compass, the sense of "direction" is lost so that intellectuals and others can continue to busy themselves "'proving' that one régime is as bad as the other," that there is no difference between police who must have a warrant and those who can simply drag you off in
the middle of the night without one. And again if a "big lie is no worse than a little one" then we might as well call "murder" - "execution," "terror" - "force," and "might" - "right."

Orwell correctly tells us that allegiance to orthodoxy makes the writer particularly vulnerable to such distortions, because the acceptance of just one "taboo" thought ultimately means the exclusion of a whole range of thoughts - because there is the ever present danger that "any thought which is freely followed up may lead to the forbidden thought." (My italics.) The single log becomes a log jam blocking the hitherto free flowing stream of consciousness. This ends up producing the "fog of lies and misinformation that surrounds such subjects as the Ukraine famine, the Spanish Civil War, Russian policy in Poland." Such self censorship, even when done with the best of intentions, prepares both the writer and the public who rely upon him for information for the schizophrenic habit of "doublethink." Herein not only does "Monday's dogma" become "Tuesday's heresy" but both can be believed simultaneously. This does not mean that Orwell was against political affiliations, as his service with the P.O.U.M. and his membership in the Independent Labour Party a year later clearly show. Indeed, just as he had written that "the things I saw in Spain brought home to me the fatal danger of mere negative anti-Fascism," he declares in Writers and Leviathan that "in an age like the present" any thinking person had a duty not to be politically neutral.

But he believed that while one might reasonably submit to a party's discipline, as a soldier in the line, a writer could not submit to the party's discipline in what he was writing. In what he wrote a writer had to either be true to the facts or remain silent. To do
otherwise, to write unreservedly for the party, Orwell warned, is to risk swallowing the party's discipline whole, which ultimately means inheriting a body of "unresolved contradictions" which it would be heresy to even try to resolve.

In this regard, Orwell's preoccupation with the intelligentsia, such as Auden and Co., who he felt were able "to dominate large sections of the Press," was prompted by his conviction that the "big public" did not care about the matter of intellectual liberty one way or the other. Just as he had written of the "passivity" of the "ordinary" man in accepting his lot he believed that the "public" were neither interested in persecuting heretics nor in defending them. Rather, after Spain, where the "neutral" fact had so often been erased from the page by "educated" men in a political version of the old team spirit of public schools like Eton, he concluded that "the direct, conscious attack on intellectual decency [i.e. honesty] comes from the intellectuals themselves."

Having noted this I should like to point out that the value of Orwell's observations on this theme of writers and intellectuals in politics stems from his own experience of the temptations which confronted the journalist and literary man alike. In the same way that we must be on guard not to attribute a consistency of ideas to Orwell merely because he was consistently honest it should not be assumed that his integrity, despite his generally creditable performance as a reporter of the Spanish War, consistently rose above the temptations he warned of. Even of *Homage to Catalonia* he confessed in a letter to Jack Common (an old leftist friend) that "I've given a more sympathetic account of the P.O.U.M. 'line' than I actually felt....I had to put it as sympathetically as
possible because it has had no hearing in the capitalist press." 

Likewise in 1942, while he was broadcasting relatively mild propaganda at the B.B.C., far from the front, he was embarrassed to recall (in his wartime diary) the passage in *Homage to Catalonia* where he had written that "one of the most horrible features of war is that all war propaganda, all the screaming lies and hatred, comes invariably from people who are not fighting." He concludes his diary entry by writing, "Here I am in the B.B.C. less than 5 years after writing that. I suppose sooner or later we all write our own epitaphs." Such passages seriously qualify statements like that of Zwerdling's about "Orwell's inability to write propagandistically" because of his "naturally heretical cast of mind." Again we are reminded that respect for Orwell's honesty has a tendency to breed assumptions of consistency - in this case objectivity - which the author's honesty often does not bear out.

In addition to the dangers posed by one's unqualified acceptance of the discipline of a political party Orwell was alert to the danger of surrendering one's integrity to the warm embrace of friendship, or to petty favour. Of the latter he writes from his experience of being a film critic how one is often "expected to sell his honour for a glass of inferior sherry." Of friendship he writes to Stephen Spender, whom he had attacked in print and whom he later met and liked.

In admitting such shortcomings Orwell testified to his concern
with objectivity, unlike those who spoke of "objectivity neurosis."

While the roots of his conclusion that the greatest danger to intellectual honesty comes from the intellectuals themselves are to be found in *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell's fears of what it might mean for the future are more directly expressed in *Looking Back on the Spanish War* (1942). Here we learn that even the history written before the disbelief in objective truth has taken firm hold is no guarantee that belief in objective truth will survive. The explanation is terrifyingly simple. Orwell explains that those in power will simply re-write history in a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future but the past. 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.79

The prospect alarmed Orwell so much that he wrote a novel about such "visions of a totalitarian future."80 The novel, of course, was *Nineteen Eighty-Four* wherein Winston Smith's final, humiliating surrender to the "Leader" or "Big Brother" is his abject confession that "TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE."81 To make men rewrite and accept distorted visions of history, a totalitarian leadership, as Orwell points out, is as likely to use torture as to employ the coercive effects of economic exploitation.

The increasing attention given by Orwell, after Spain, to such perversions of power marks a dividing line in his work, most noticeably in his fiction. Before Spain, in such books as *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, he saw the basis of moral relativism as being mainly one of money, reflecting the rich-versus-poor view of Eric Blair. After Spain, the basis of moral relativism in his work shifts increasingly from money to power. Whereas Gordon Comstock angrily declares that God is money,82 Winston
Smith despairingly concedes that "GOD IS POWER." More than ever before, might has become right. Men like Orwell and his friend Kopp were hunted down in Spain, imprisoned without trial, and murdered in a "reign of terror" so that they might not get away and tell the truth. So would Big Brother's secret police hunt down Winston Smith who, in trying to preserve the truth, had borne witness in his secret diary to the existence of the "neutral" fact "that two plus two make four," believing that if the freedom to say this is granted then other freedoms are assured.

"Perhaps it is childish or morbid to terrify oneself with visions of a totalitarian future?" Orwell asked in Looking Back on the Spanish War. That he decided the visions constituted a real enough possibility became clear in his decision to write his last two and best novels. Once again his decision is deeply rooted in his memories of Spain. Worried about how many of the facts of the Civil War had been kept from the outside world by ardent propagandist writers on both sides, he was concerned that the English public in particular, "nourished for hundreds of years on a literature in which Right invariably triumphs in the last chapter" and thus believing "half-instinctively that evil always defeats itself in the long run," would neither be conscious of, nor in any way prepared to meet the threat of totalitarianism - of institutional lying. But why should evil defeat itself, he asked. "Who would have imagined twenty years ago that slavery would return to Europe?...the forced-labour camps all over Europe." The reason that we cannot imagine it, he said, is because "in our mystical way we feel that a régime founded on slavery must collapse." This is the fable which would in turn be challenged by the fable of Animal Farm and the vision of Nineteen Eighty-Four which I will discuss in the next section, "Global Conditions."
As Orwell's boredom with the rash of political initials gave way to the realization of a revolution within the civil war he became aware of the inadequacy of the press coverage, both foreign and Spanish, of the war. This in turn alerted him to the fact that both left and right were guilty of lying through distortion or through the willful omission of facts. There were exceptions but not enough to counter the overwhelming distortion of the news. Because of the Republic's fear of alienating their chief arms supplier, Russia, who in turn did not want to alarm possible future allies against Hitler, and because the right did not want to further encourage revolution by drawing attention to the revolution already underway, a perverse if unwitting alliance between the right and left press developed. Beyond the desire to hide the fact of the revolution within the war, each side argued, as traditionally they have done, that to tell the truth at all times would aid and abet the other side.

What concerned Orwell most in all this was what he believed was the implicit and at times explicit attack upon the belief in objective truth. This attack he was afraid would extend far beyond the reporting of the war and would further reinforce the moral relativism that began with saying a little lie is no worse than a big lie and ended with the conviction that might is right. The lack of a sense of objective truth would also strengthen dictatorships for it would allow the dictator to simply rewrite history for a public whose intellectual integrity was already softened by the belief that "it all depends on which way you look at it." Orwell did not say that absolute truth was always obtainable, indeed the subjective interpretation loomed large, but he argued that
without the ideal of objective truth, moral as well as scientific relativism could run riot.

He held the disproportionately influential body of intellectuals largely responsible for the undermining of the belief in objective truth. Presumably they knew better but had, whatever their intentions, allowed themselves to write in accordance with party orthodoxy and so distorted the truth or had been too far from the front to know the truth. It was alright to write for a party in his view but only on condition that you were as tough on it critically as you were on its opponents. He knew the dangers because he had been a propagandist himself.

In Spain he had seen large scale terror used as a political weapon for the first time, and the repetition of the word "nightmare" to describe it and the internecine party fighting he was involved with set the atmosphere for *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Here the misuse of power, rather than the use of money, to exploit increasingly engages his attention.

* * * *

Although *Homage to Catalonia* is generally recognized as one of Orwell's best books, and certainly one of the best personal accounts of the Civil War, as political commentary it has several serious flaws. It is clear that Orwell, with his typical English reserve, experienced something of a liberation of the spirit with his first close contact with the Latin temperament.

I defy anyone to be thrown as I was among the Spanish working class ...and not be struck by their essential decency; above all, their straightforwardness and generosity. A Spaniard's generosity is at times almost embarrassing. If you ask him for a cigarette he will force the whole packet upon you. And beyond this there is a generosity in a deeper sense, a real largeness of spirit, which I have met with again and again in the most unpromising circumstances.
Such experience is most memorably revealed in his recollection of the moving moment when the illiterate Italian militiaman stepped forward and grasped his hand in the early days of the war. Orwell talks of their mingling, of the spirit "bridging the gulf of language." He adds, however, "But I also knew that to retain my first impression of him I must not see him again; and needless to say I never did see him again. One was always making contacts of that kind in Spain." This remark is significant because in its implicit recognition of how unqualified perceptions are likely to be when they are formed in excitement it is as applicable, though Orwell does not apply it, to the political events Orwell saw in Spain as to the individuals he met. Although he intuitively understood that such events were "transitional," that "Of course such a state of affairs could not last....It was simply a temporary and local phase," in the same way that the administration of land and police forces by the revolutionary Soviets was transitional, he used such temporary experiences as the basis for envisioning a permanent future society. He saw the militias, for example, as a "microcosm of [the] classless society" for which socialism aimed. There is nothing illogical in this any more than one might use a hastily constructed hut as the model for a sturdier house. But what is lacking in the transference of the temporary situation into a permanent theory of society is any evaluation of the initial structure's inherent weaknesses. For Orwell, the local revolutionary administrations were temporary only because of the war "that was being fought out between two political theories" within the civil war. The communists, who viewed the militias as "breeding grounds for revolutionary ideas and inveighed ceaselessly and bitterly against the P.O.U.M. and Anarchist principle of equal pay for all ranks," were destroying "the
The equalitarian spirit of the first few months of the revolution." This accounted in part for the bitterness he and so many other militiamen experienced upon their return to Barcelona where "waiters were back in their boiled shirts...the shop walkers were cringing in the familiar manner" and officers of the Popular Army walked about in "an elegant khaki uniform" and were paid more than their men.92

What Orwell does not consider is that the "temporary" nature of the revolutionary administrations and the subsequent return to a class structured society might have been caused not by the vicissitudes of the Spanish military situation, between Franco and the Republicans or the communists and anarchists, but by human nature - that the "air of equality" can regrettably only last just so long before self-interest, or the need of efficient administration, reasserts the demands for social and economic inequality. For someone who deplored ignorance of history it is surprising that Orwell did not remember the post revolutionary histories of the French and Russian Revolutions where inequality crept back on the heels of the early excitement.93 In a reversal of his charge against the communists in The Road to Wigan Pier he seems to assume that if the moral advance is made, administrative efficiency will automatically follow - that there is no need to worry one's head over details. This should not be used to charge Orwell with having been deceived in his assessment of the genuineness of the "air of equality" while it lasted. To do so would be to succumb to what Orwell rightly calls the "immense oversensitiveness...of a safe and civilized life" which leads us to condescendingly underrate the importance and, one might add, the genuineness of the "primary emotions"; to dismiss Orwell's interpretation of the generous impulse of the militiaman at the Lenin Barracks as simply naive.
But Orwell's implication that the social revolution had failed because of the military situation, because the communes had been "forcibly suppressed by the Government," rather than because of any inherent tension between the collective and the individual, does open him to two charges. First, he seems to have held an overly optimistic belief in human nature that had been fired by his early enthusiasm in Barcelona. Secondly, he failed to take into account the complex problems of administering an industrialized society such as Barcelona.

Despite the large scale collectivization in Aragon, where 450 collectives were composed of approximately 430,000 members, Orwell never addressed himself, as does Thomas for example, to the question of how far the collectives "degenerated into the dictatorship of local bosses almost as closed in outlook as those whom they had killed in the early part of the Civil War." Nor did he address himself to the fact that in some cases "the majority of the population, when they had gathered sufficient courage, or when they realized that they would have communist backing, announced their intention to resume independence and reclaim their property." Nor did Orwell take into account that while many of the temporary solutions of the anarchists, "faced with an unprecedented situation [of the war cutting off raw materials from industry] for which all their years of struggle and theorizing had not prepared them," worked well, the failure of those measures which did not work "pointed to the weakness of the Anarchist idea." That Orwell later became aware, as the anarchists had, that the collectivist spirit alone was not enough to overcome the problems involved in running a complex industrialized society is obvious in his later journalism. His insistence in "Our Opportunity" (1941) on winning over the middle class as a necessary prerequisite to
revolution in England is to the point. Here he recognizes that without
the support of the technocratic and managerial class, any revolution in
a modern industrial country would be doomed to failure.

Of the failure of the Republican cause in general Orwell wrote
that "the much-publicized disunity on the Government side was not a main
cause of defeat." Here he was clearly wrong. While the point is one
that mainly concerns military historians of the war, its significance
here is to show that just as Orwell's honesty does not automatically
imply a consistency of ideas, his honesty does not mean that he is always
correct, or that his works, as Jeffrey Meyers believes of Homage to
Catalonia, are distinguished by "objectivity." His later confession of
overstating the P.O.U.M. case testifies to this, revealing an infatuation
with the cause of revolution within the war that was plainly a reflection
of his life-long sympathy with the anarchist hatred of authority and
centralization. Orwell was always aware of the problem:

I have tried to write objectively about the Barcelona fighting,
though, obviously, no one can be completely objective on a question
of this kind. One is practically obliged to take sides, and it
must be clear enough which side I am on....I warn everyone against
my bias, and I warn everyone against my mistakes. Still, I have
done my best to be honest.

What his honesty does mean is that his opinion was his own and while this
might be an achievement in any man's time it was a special achievement in
the reporting of the Spanish Civil War which was so dominated by party
struggle within the larger left-right struggle. Orwell's honesty of
course led at times to his most blatant inconsistency in Homage to
Catalonia, namely his change of views on the rightness and wrongness of
the communist and P.O.U.M. war strategy.

But his statement that "very few people seem to have reflected
that a different policy might be appropriate at different periods of the war, demonstrates his willingness to change his mind, to be inconsistent in his political commentary on the basis of changing evidence and not on the basis of a changing party line. Even so, given Orwell's later reputation as an honest writer about the kind of war that was being waged in Spain (though his was not an outstanding analysis of it), one is sooner or later moved to wonder whether Orwell was the only honest writer in Spain. And if not, how do his conclusions and criticisms compare? The answer of course is that there were other independent honest writers. Among them was Bernados, the rightist who criticized the right. And on the left were Malraux (Man's Hope), Hemingway (For Whom the Bell Tolls), and Regler (The Great Crusade) who agreed, for example, with Orwell's earlier conclusion that the communists were better suited to organize the most effective opposition to Franco. As one critic notes, these writers, along with Orwell,

in their novels and personal narratives, display a keen understanding of the international complications of the Spanish Civil War. Their knowledge of the European rivalries and the political machinations of the great powers in exploiting one side or the other is apparent in their writing. And each writer properly deplores the fact that it was necessary to further German, Italian, and Russian political ambitions on Spanish soil and in the main, with Spanish blood.

Hemingway, for example, despite his unabashed support of the Republican cause, also contradicted the propaganda of the Republican side. Reporting on the battle of Birhuega in March of 1937 he writes in one of his despatches that the troops of Mussolini, whom he detested, did not flee in panic under the initial air bombardment but fought a bitter fight for seven days before they finally broke and ran before the combined attack of tanks, infantry and aircraft. And Regler, like Orwell, was profoundly struck by the fraternity he discovered, in this case among the
international volunteers he found fighting for the Republican cause.

As Benson comments,

The bickerings, jealousies, and hostilities, the political and temperamental differences seem slight compared to the central theme of the novel [The Great Crusade], the extraordinary but very simple recognition of the concept of human brotherhood in the face of opposing physical and amoral forces that would destroy it.\textsuperscript{107}

From Regler, Hemingway received "secret material" about the communist party which found its way into For Whom the Bell Tolls. Through this, "countless readers learned...about things that they would not listen to in real life. He [Hemingway] depicted the spy-disease, that Russian syphilis, in all its shameful, murderously stupid workings."\textsuperscript{108} Malraux in turn was honest enough to write, through his character, Garcia, that "For me the problem is essentially this: a popular movement, or a revolution, or even a rebellion, can maintain its initial success only by methods in direct opposition to those which provided it with its first victory."\textsuperscript{109} Thus, as Benson concludes, in their best moments such writers not only assimilated "the facts of the war, as well as the powerful human feelings and aspirations behind the sacrifice of human lives, but they managed to portray these human concerns honestly, without expedient political twists."\textsuperscript{110}

Despite such company, most of whom were much better known than Orwell at the time, Orwell's book about the war, for all its faults, stands out, as in Thomas' estimation that of "half a dozen" or so books that are worth reading out of the "3000 books or pamphlets about the Spanish Civil War," the best is Homage to Catalonia.\textsuperscript{111} The reason is that after the ideological dust has settled, Orwell's book transcends (1) his often faulty analysis of Spain's conflict, (2) his analysis of literary Britain which it inspired, and (3) his general attack upon
Fascism which the war also produced in other writers such as Hemingway. Admittedly the book stands out in that it was "painful to the Orthodox left" because it was "a public washing of dirty Popular Front linen" by one of its own. Beyond this, however, it is distinguished because it remains the most eloquent and moving warning of its time against totalitarianism. What its author saw more clearly than most was that totalitarianism was not the perversity of a particular political party but was a state of mind which, in its attack upon the sense of objective truth, is equally at home on the left as it is on the right.

The solid entrenchment of communist regimes in the latter half of the twentieth century and of their totalitarian mentality often prevents us from realizing the full measure of this achievement of Orwell's in the earlier days of what has correctly been called the "totalitarian epoch." Trilling comments of Orwell's reporting of the internecine fighting in Barcelona: "It would have been very difficult to learn anything of this in New York or London. Those periodicals which guided the thought of left-liberal intellectuals knew nothing of it, and had no wish to learn."

And of the purge of the P.O.U.M. in June, 1937 he writes,

...If one searches the liberal periodicals, which have made civil liberties their own, one can find no mention of this terror. They were committed not to the fact but to the abstraction. And to the abstraction they remained committed for a long time to come. Many are still committed to it. If only life were not so tangible, so concrete, so made up of facts that are at variance with each other ...if only politics were not a matter of power - then we should be happy to put our minds to politics, then we should consent to think."

From his colonial experience in Burma Orwell wrote of exploiters. From his experience at home in England he wrote of the exploited. From his Spanish experience he would write of exploiter and exploited at war. For him it was a class war, part of the long, hard "struggle" of the
"gradually awakening common people against the lords of property."\textsuperscript{115} The old, simple rich-versus-poor dichotomy still reasserts itself as when he says, "The Spanish bourgeoisie saw their chance of crushing the labour movement, and took it."\textsuperscript{116} And, as Brander suggests, at times one would think that there were no workers on Franco's side.\textsuperscript{117} But for all this, the master-slave view had now become even more sophisticated as we see the quest for power overtaking the quest for money and bourgeois status as the currency of success.

Orwell would learn, and beginning with \textit{Homage to Catalonia}, would pass on several valuable insights gained through his relatively brief participation in the Civil War. Though an insider in the militias, he was in the larger sense of his participation an outsider, as he had been in Burma. Still he had rediscovered the truth of his earlier statement that "it is only when you meet someone of a different culture from yourself that you begin to realize what your own beliefs really are."\textsuperscript{118} In much the same way as his Burmese experience had moved him to think about and investigate social conditions in England more carefully so would the Spanish experience tell us more in the end not about Spain but about what he believed were the clear and present dangers to hopes of equality in England, and later on in the world as the disillusioning elements of Spain pass into \textit{Animal Farm} and \textit{Nineteen Eighty-Four}. We have seen, for example, how in such pieces as \textit{Inside the Whale} his attack upon what he believed was the English intellectuals' sympathy with the totalitarian mentality springs directly from his Spanish experience:

The thing that, to me, was truly frightening about the war in Spain was not such violence as I witnessed, nor even the party feuds behind the lines, but the immediate reappearance in left-wing circles of the mental atmosphere of the Great War. The very people who for twenty years had sniggered over their own superiority to war hysteria were
the ones who rushed straight back into the mental slum of 1915... spy-hunting, orthodoxy sniffing...as though the intervening years had never happened.\textsuperscript{119}

For Orwell the most important lessons of his Spanish experience were (1) that though we might argue as to how long it will last, equality is practical as well as realizable, (2) the fact that truth in this war, as in any war, was the first casualty was due largely to the intelligentsia's and the intellectuals' blind allegiance to political orthodoxy, and (3) that such allegiance (because "group loyalties are necessary")\textsuperscript{120} in nurturing the totalitarian mentality eventually threatens everyone with the totalitarian state. And for Orwell, like so many others, the Civil War in Spain had marked a crossroads on the road to servitude, a chance to meet and stop the onward march of Fascism which had already gained so much ground on the heels of Mussolini and Hitler. The war, he had hoped, might be a "turning of the tide" away from Fascism, which "for a year or two past had been haunting me like a nightmare."\textsuperscript{121} Now the Republicans had lost and for Orwell the nightmare would continue.

Before moving on to the global extrapolation of all the warnings which emanated from Orwell's Spanish experience, I should note that perhaps the most interesting of all Orwell's conclusions about his time in Spain is that beyond the initial depression of defeat, his experience ended in hope rather than despair. He had seen hatred, not only of the enemy but within his own side, had been hunted by the secret police, and been near fatally wounded. He had experienced the "horrible atmosphere of suspicion" which pervaded the Barcelona fighting and had watched for the "first time...a person [a Russian agent] whose profession was telling lies - unless one counts journalists." Yet he wrote that "When you have had a glimpse of such a disaster as this...the result is not necessarily
disillusionment and cynicism. Curiously enough the whole experience has left me with not less but more belief in the decency of human beings. "122

Unlike Flory he had learned by now that there are different kinds of failures. Hence, despite the initial bitterness on the left following Franco's victory in July, 1939 and the deep depression following the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact in August, 1939, Orwell's belief in socialism was able to survive. This is crucial to any understanding of his relationship to his contemporaries. As Samuels notes, "For a generation of intellectuals fed on a strict diet of anti-fascism and pro-communism, where Russia symbolized all that was good, rational, and humane"123 and Germany symbolized the opposite, the effect of the Hitler-Stalin pact was devastating. This, together with the quickly ensuing war, meant that for many the hopes of socialism were dead and indeed Orwell has been said to have written their "epitaph" in Inside the Whale when he concluded that the idea that "Socialism could preserve and even enlarge the atmosphere of liberalism" had been disproven. History held no comfort, the future no hope, and the only way out for the disenchanted of the left was to "Give yourself over to the world-process, stop fighting against it or pretending that you control it; simply accept it, endure it, record it....Get inside the whale."124

The feeling of desolation which the war brought, particularly among Orwell's contemporaries, is captured by McNeice:

I had only written a little of this book when Germany invaded Poland. On that day I was in Galway. As soon as I heard on the wireless of the outbreak of war, Galway became unreal. And Yeats and his poetry became unreal also.

This was not merely because Galway and Yeats belong in a sense to a past order of things. The unreality which now overtook them was also overtaking in my mind modern London, modernist art, and Left Wing politics....My friends had been writing for years about guns and frontiers and factories, about the "facts" of psychology, politics,
science, economics, but the fact of war made their writing seem as remote as the pleasure dome of Xanadu.125

Spender found himself unable to write at all, "I feel so shattered," and Auden, his friend who had likewise served on the Left Review, would say goodbye to the decade of commitment and leave for America. The word which best describes the state of mind of writers of the left was "withdrawal," overwhelmed as they were by the failure of their dream.

But here Orwell once again stands apart. His dream had been badly shaken but not destroyed. The optimism that he had felt during the Spanish War sustained him. Along with the "mostly evil" memories of Spain, the early optimism of the militias never entirely left him. Five years later in Looking Back on the Spanish War he could write, "I myself believe, perhaps on insufficient grounds, that the common man will win his fight [for "the decent, fully human life which is now technically available"] sooner or later, but I want it to be sooner and not later."126

Also, as Alex Zwerdling notes, unlike so many on the left in the high enthusiasm of the late thirties, Orwell did not expect any rapid establishment of socialism. Instead, despite his hopes that socialism be established sooner rather than later, and the pace of the revolution in Spain encouraged him in this,127 he "assumed that a worldwide socialist society might not be brought into being for decades, or even centuries."128

Nor did he assume, as noted earlier, that even if it was established socialism could solve all of society's problems. Some problems he knew were probably unsolvable and the best that socialism could hope for was to improve society, not make it perfect. This rendered him less impatient than his contemporaries who, once Spain fell, threw in the socialist towel once and for all because their "impatience gave them little staying power."129
It was Orwell's lack of such impatience allied with the optimism of his Spanish experience which gave him his staying power on the left. It explains why he, unlike so many others, "remained deeply interested in politics and political ideology throughout his life" and could rally himself not simply to oppose Fascism again, many leftists would do that, but to actively return to his faith in socialism, to become what John Mander called the "Left-wing conscience after the Spanish War." Thus, as another critic comments, he does "not conform to the pattern of the disenchanted idealist." This, I believe, supports Zwerdling's contention that Trilling, in his otherwise "fine essay on Orwell," is mistaken when he interprets *Homage to Catalonia* as symbolic of a whole literary genre of the thirties which was marked by "disillusionment with communism." As we saw in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell had never been infatuated with communism like so many of his contemporaries and secondly, in the long run his faith in socialism had not decreased. He had simply become more alert to its internal dissensions as well as to its possibilities. At the beginning of his Spanish experience, as he said, his intent was "To fight against Fascism and for...common decency." But after Spain, "every line of serious work" he would write would not simply be against Fascism or even for socialism but "for democratic Socialism" and "against totalitarianism" which threatened it. His political belief was developing rather than changing, a process which, as Zwerdling suggests, was typical of Orwell's life.

This is important, for it cautions us against treating Orwell's last two novels, which I will discuss in the next section, as mere prophecies of doom, rather than as warnings of "grim" possibility. The difference in "degree" is significant for if we ignore it we miss the
point that warnings are as apt to be born in hope as in despairing convictions of inevitability. We are apt to underestimate the power, not of "Big Brother" but of Winston Smith's belief that "If there is hope...it lies in the proles." We are apt to forget that, just as the drunken embrace of the navvy in The Road to Wigan Pier had bestowed a worker's "baptism" upon Eric Blair, the vigorous handshake and fearless determination of the Italian militiaman, symbolizing the oppressed man's fight for a better life, would infuse hope, and remain as indelible and as meaningful in the memory of George Orwell. "I have never had the slightest fear of a dictatorship of the proletariat, if it could happen, and certain things I saw in the Spanish war confirmed me in this. But I admit to having a perfect horror of a dictatorship of theorists, as in Russia and Germany," where "the two régimes having started from opposite ends, are rapidly evolving towards the same system - a form of oligarchical collectivism." (My italics.)

That Orwell talked so easily of proletarian "dictatorship" is evidence of a blatant hypocrisy in his political thought. He would extend the "air of equality" readily enough to the exploited but not to the exploiters. It is a double standard which often mars his suggestion of social reform in England and is largely responsible for his failure to deal with the question of how the state should conduct itself. What he did concentrate upon, as mentioned earlier, was how the state ought not to be constructed and after Spain the tension between the collectivist impulse, between the need for associations of men to improve society, and the integrity of the individual would reassert itself. Paradoxically, just as Orwell's optimism for socialism was invigorated by the collectivist experiences of the militias, his pessimism about the power of orthodoxy was
fuelled by the collectivist purges which consumed individuals merely because of their association with another point of view. It was also fuelled by the conspiracies of silence and lying which characterized the reporting of the war. And so after Spain Orwell would increasingly turn his attention towards the theorists of oligarchical collectivism. These were the men who, through their love of power, he believed would at least delay the decent life for all (having it arrive "later" rather than "sooner") and in all probability would actively work against it. In Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four Orwell would portray such theorists in action. For this, the final battle between his optimism and pessimism, between the collectivist and individualist impulses in man, his Spanish experience would be the arsenal from which some of his most telling shots were fired.


8. Orwell, *Homage*, pp. 51, 66. Orwell writes, "Please notice that I am saying nothing against the rank-and-file Communists, least of all against the thousands of Communists who died heroically round Madrid. But those were not the men who were directing party policy. As for the people higher up, it is inconceivable that they were not acting with their eyes open." (Orwell, *Homage*, p. 67.)


23. Uncharacteristically, given his usual care with language, as reflected
in the index to his *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*, Orwell has used the words "intellectuals" and "intelligentsia" interchangeably, particularly in his comments about patriotism (see Orwell, *CEJL*, II, p. 95; *CEJL*, III, p. 53; *CEJL*, IV, p. 207). However, as he is clearly referring to people who live (even if they do not actually earn their living) in a world of "ideas," I will use the word "intellectual" unless either directly quoting or paraphrasing Orwell's use of the word "intelligentsia."


28. Orwell, unlike other commentators, thought poorly of the English and indeed the world's working class support of the Republicans. See Orwell, *Homage*, p. 68.


43. Orwell, *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, p. 36.


46. Peter Stansky, lecture on Orwell delivered in February, 1976, at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada.


49. Orwell, *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, p. 36.


51. Orwell, *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, p. 36.


53. See above, p. 220.

54. Orwell, *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, p. 40. For a study of how the totalitarian methods of Soviet Russia were accepted outside England see David Caute's *The Fellow-Travellers*. One member of the German Intelligentsia, Arthur Holitscher, noted of the fate of the "Cadets, mensheviks and socialist revolutionaries" that "This would be a totally inexplicable cruelty on the part of the [Soviet] Government, a shame on the word communism, did it not appear in the last resort profoundly reasoned and indeed unavoidable." (David Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers* [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973], p. 108.)


58. See Orwell, *Homage*, pp. 233-34. See above, n. 25. Though in retrospect Orwell's skepticism and disgust with the reporting of the war have been justified, there is undoubtedly some truth in Lawrence Brander's observation that in *Homage to Catalonia* Orwell "does not concern himself with the obvious difficulty [especially in war time] of the most conscientious reporter." (Brander, *George Orwell*, p. 145.)

59. Orwell, *Homage*, pp. 235, 235, 236. The estimates of the number of Russians "went as high as half a million" whereas Thomas, in *The Spanish Civil War* records the figure was more accurately around three thousand.
60. It is interesting that at this time Orwell did not know of the extent of fabrication in Koestler's book.


64. *Ibid.*


68. Orwell left the I.L.P. in 1939.


87. Ibid., p. 237.

88. Ibid., p. 15.

89. Ibid., p. 7.


92. Ibid., pp. 102, 47, 55, 111, 107.

93. In *Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War*, in *Homage*, p. 238, Orwell does write, "In the long struggle that has 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. Time after time, in country after country, the organized working-class movements have been crushed by open, illegal violence, and their comrades abroad, linked to them in theoretical solidarity, have simply looked on and done nothing." But this is still no closer to an examination of inherent administrative weaknesses and the like within the revolutionary structures but only of a lack of solidarity abroad - though it does say something about international brotherhood.


96. Ibid., p. 471. See also p. 474.

97. Ibid., p. 250.

98. Ibid., p. 240.


102. Ibid., p. 67.


105. Ibid., p. 158. Benson mentions Koestler among these but I have omitted him here as though he provided many useful insights he can hardly be thought of as an "independent" writer - at least not during the Civil War.


123. Samuels, "English Intellectuals," p. 266.


133. Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, p. 4. Zwerdling, however, is quite wrong when he says that Trilling saw *Homage to Catalonia* as an example of "the personal confession of involvement...with Communism" (Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, p. 4) as while Trilling says that *Homage to Catalonia* is about "disillusionment with Communism" he adds that "it is not a confession." (Trilling, Introduction to *Homage to Catalonia*, p. vi.)


SECTION IV - GLOBAL CONDITIONS

Chapter I - Background.

In *Riding Down from Bangor* (1946) Orwell wrote that "the twin nightmares that beset nearly every modern man" are (1) "the nightmare of unemployment" and (2) "the nightmare of state interference." Before Spain, as we have seen in the Indigenous Section, he had been largely concerned with the problems of unemployment. After Spain he became increasingly concerned with the problems surrounding state interference.

In January, 1938 Orwell completed *Homage to Catalonia* which was published by Secker and Warburg in April. In March, Orwell had fallen ill with tuberculosis, the disease which would plague him thereafter. It would cause his rejection by the Army for service in World War II and, exacerbated by the cold climate of the Outer Hebrides, would kill him in January of 1950 — seven months after the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

In 1938, short of money (only 900 copies of *Homage to Catalonia* had been sold at the time of his death), Orwell, after six months in a sanatorium in Kent, accepted "a loan" from an "anonymous" donor and went for a holiday with his wife in the warm climate of Morocco. Here he began writing *Coming Up For Air* wherein, after Spain, the visions of the coming world war with Fascism and the subsequent "food-queues...secret police and the loudspeakers telling you what to think" would assail George Bowling, the "ordinary" man of Ellesmere Road. Failing to find the old security of Lower Binfield, Bowling concludes (before Orwell had written *Inside the Whale*) that "There's no way back...you can't put Jonah back into the whale." Unlike his old friend Porteous, the retired
public school master who refuses to even think about Hitler ("this German person") and thinks that the modern world "since the Goths sacked Rome ...just oughtn't have happened," Bowling sees that he is going to be caught up in the conflict whether he likes it or not.

Orwell points to the growing storm beyond the whale of complacency in a letter of December 28, 1938. Writing of the work in progress on Coming Up For Air, which was written before Looking Back on the Spanish War where his fears of a nightmare world of state interference are so pervasive, he notes that the novel is "really a mess but parts of it I like and it's suddenly revealed to me a big subject which I'd never really touched before." The "big subject," totalitarianism, would be dealt with more fully in Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. For George Bowling in Coming Up For Air

...it isn't the war that matters, it's the after-war. The world we're going down into, the kind of hate-world, slogan-world...the barbed wire, the rubber truncheons. The secret cells where the electric light burns night and day, and the detectives watching you while you sleep. And the processions and the posters with enormous faces, and the crowds of a million people all cheering for the Leader till they deafen themselves into thinking that they really worship him, and all the time, underneath, they hate him so that they want to puke.

The advent of "doublethink" and "Newspeak," as we shall see, would even remove the threat of a subliminal hate for the leader.

Envisaging a world of the "stream-lined" men "from eastern Europe... who think in slogans and talk in bullets," Bowling goes to bed in his flat overcome by "the tremendous gloom that sometimes gets hold of you late at night. At that moment the destiny of Europe seemed to me more important than the rent and the kids' school-bills and the work I'd have to do tomorrow."

In January, 1939, still in Morocco and as depressed as his
character, George Bowling, by the prospect of war, Orwell again fell ill and in late March he returned to England. *Coming Up For Air* was published in June but even with his journalism (he considered two guineas a "very handsome" sum for a reprint of *Shooting an Elephant*) his income was so small that his wife took a job in the Censorship Department of the Army Medical Corps.

By June, 1940 Orwell was "horribly depressed" after having been rejected for active service as medically unfit. And although in July he noted that he had heard "it is no longer held against a man to have fought in the Spanish civil war," he also wrote that "it is a terrible thing to feel oneself useless and at the same time on every side to see halfwits and profascists filling important jobs." This dark mood of Orwell's, early in the war that George Bowling held to be inevitable, signals (as confirmed in *My Country Right or Left*) a turning away from the fatalism of George Bowling, away from the anti-war pamphlet Orwell wanted published. Above all it was a rejection of the quietism of those inside the whale, the quietism voiced by Henry Miller telling Orwell in 1936 that he was an "idiot" to go and fight in Spain, as was anyone who got mixed up in such ventures "from a sense of obligation." It was a return to the belief that you cannot simply accept things but that, just as Eric Blair had descended into the world of the poor from a sense of duty, one has to drag oneself out of the soft belly of the whale so long as a Hitler or a Stalin only gives you two choices – to sink or swim. In 1938 we see the eager young bank clerk having listened to the "well-known anti-Fascist (as you might call somebody 'the well-known pianist')" arguing fiercely with the Trotskyist and seeking support from the ex-World War I soldier Bowling.
"Mr. Bowling! Look here. If war broke out and we had the chance to smash Fascism once and for all, wouldn't you fight?..."
"You bet I wouldn't," I said. "I had enough to go on with last time."
"But to smash Fascism!"
"0, b-- Fascism! There's been enough smashing done already, if you ask me....Listen, son," I said, "you've got it all wrong. In 1914 we thought it was going to be a glorious business. Well it wasn't, It was just a bloody mess. If it comes again, you keep out of it."
(My italics.)

Two years later, in Inside the Whale, Orwell still sees Bowling's latent pacifism under the bombers overhead, and Miller's acceptance\(^{17}\) as having merit. "At this date it hardly even needs a war to bring home to us the disintegration of our society and the increasing helplessness of all decent people. It is for this reason that I think that the passive non-co-operative attitude in Henry Miller's work is justified."\(^{18}\) Indeed, as Alldritt points out, this feeling would never completely leave Orwell.\(^{19}\) It would form an undertone, if not an undercurrent, throughout his life, an unresolved contradiction alongside his stronger belief that one must sometimes fight. Even as he was writing about George Bowling in 1938, George Orwell writes to Cyril Connolly that while "everything one writes is overshadowed by this ghastly feeling that we are rushing towards a precipice" within "about two years" and that "we shan't actually prevent ourselves or anyone else from going over," one "must put up some sort of fight."\(^{20}\) And even in Inside the Whale, Orwell's understanding of the reasons behind Miller's "quietism" or the "sit on your bum" philosophy, as he calls it, needs to be confronted by his convictions in the same essay that "almost certainly we are moving into an age of totalitarian dictatorships." In such a world he believed that "freedom of thought will be at first a deadly sin and later on a meaningless abstraction."
\(^{21}\)

"To say 'I accept' in an age like our own is to say that you accept concentration camps, rubber truncheons, Hitler, Stalin, bombs,...gas
masks...press censorship, secret prison and political murders."\textsuperscript{22}

For Orwell the inclination to fight against the totalitarian dictators finally took precedence over any gloomy "acceptance" mood which he might understandably have felt in the wake of Franco's victory and the rout of the Spanish Republican forces in 1939. And so by May, 1940 he was writing a letter to the editor of \textit{Time and Tide}, citing his Spanish experience as the basis for his suggestions on how best to combat the imminent German invasion.\textsuperscript{23} At this time he also joined a Home Guard battalion where as sergeant he was in authority over Frederick Warburg, the publisher of \textit{Homage to Catalonia} and later \textit{Animal Farm}. The letter to \textit{Time and Tide} was a precursor of longer pieces in 1940, most notably \textit{The Lion and the Unicorn} (January, 1941) in which Orwell put forward what he thought was the best war policy and where the old P.O.U.M. militia experience and slogan that "war and revolution are inseparable" echoed in his beliefs that war against Hitler and the establishment of socialism were mutually dependent. England needed to follow the Spanish experience - a revolution "from below" marked by an "equality of sacrifice."\textsuperscript{24}

Though still not accepted by the Army, Orwell's spirit of resistance found further outlet. In addition to his volunteer work in the Home Guard, in August, 1941 he found a job as Talks Assistant and later Talks Producer (in the Indian section) of the B.B.C. where he took up the cause of Indian independence from the British Raj. Despite his overall frustration in this post-Spanish period Orwell was, journalistically at least, surprisingly prolific. Apart from his film, theatre, and book reviews, he wrote such pieces as \textit{Inside the Whale} (1940), \textit{The Lion and the Unicorn} (1941), \textit{Looking Back on the Spanish War} (1942), and \textit{An Imaginary Conversation}.
with Jonathan Swift (1942, a B.B.C. broadcast). The imaginary conversation with Swift contains two statements by Orwell which are particularly revealing, given the over emphasis which critics have placed upon the pessimistic moods of Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. Orwell says to Swift, "I see now where it is that we part company, Dr. Swift. I believe that human society, and therefore human nature, can change. You don't." Finally when Swift has gone Orwell laments,

He was a great man, and yet he was partially blind. He could only see one thing at a time. His vision of human society is so penetrating, and yet in the last analysis it's false. He could not see what the simplest person sees, that life is worth living; and human beings, even if they are dirty and ridiculous, are mostly decent.25

In the years 1942 and 1943 Orwell's work, apart from that at the B.B.C., was published in New Statesman and Nation, Nation, Horizon, Partisan Review, and also Tribune. He became literary editor for the latter in November, 1943, having resigned from his propagandist's job "after two wasted years"26 with the B.B.C. While working for Tribune he contributed a regular weekly column, "As I Please" (until 1945 and then sporadically until April, 1947), in which he covered a wide range of topics from politics to gardening. In addition to this, Orwell wrote book reviews for the Observer and Manchester Evening News until 1946. Looking back on his days at Tribune he wrote that while he did not think the paper was "perfect...I do think that it is the only existing weekly paper that makes a genuine effort to be both progressive and humane - that is to combine a radical Socialist policy with a respect for freedom of speech and a civilized attitude towards literature and the arts."27 Despite his pessimism about the future, Tribune's concern for such things as freedom of speech was no doubt conducive to Orwell's next venture into the world of the novel when in November, 1943, at the
age of forty, he began writing *Animal Farm*.

As early as 1938, after his experience with the communists in Spain, the emergence of the idea of a "popular Front" in England represented for Orwell an "unholy alliance" of left and right, from bishops to communists, but far worse, in his view, it obscured the "huge though inscrutable changes that are occurring in the U.S.S.R." Of Stalin's régime he asked, "Is it Socialism, or is it a peculiarly vicious form of state-capitalism?" Orwell's determination to get "hold" of the truth arose from his concern that, as in Spain, the inheritors of revolution against injustice were in fact anti-revolutionary. The possibility that this could happen in England during the war is suggested by his observation of how, in Spain, Fascism had been "imposed under the pretence of resisting Fascism" and "we shall see its relevance quickly enough if England enters into an alliance with the U.S.S.R."

At the very least, such an anti-revolutionary stance would have been diametrically opposed to Orwell's belief that victory over Fascism (which he earlier saw as simply a "development of capitalism") and victory over capitalism were mutually interdependent. To Orwell the danger of such an anti-revolutionary stance no doubt seemed particularly acute in an England where "so long as the objective, real or pretended, is war against Germany, the greater part of the Left will associate themselves with the fascizing process," including "wage reductions, suppression of free speech, brutalities in the colonies, etc."

Though he was proven wrong about the interdependence of revolution and victory over Hitler, Orwell's determination to expose Stalin's régime remained and grew. Six years later he lamented that although "the world of secret police forces, censorship of opinion, torture and frame-up
trials is, of course, known about...*it has made very little emotional impact.*" (My italics.) The result of this, he said, was that "there is almost no literature of disillusionment about the Soviet Union."\(^{31}\) Orwell's answer to this deficiency was *Animal Farm.* The book, which was finished in February of 1944, was rejected by Victor Gollancz, Faber and Faber, Jonathan Cape, and by Dial Press in the U.S. who said that "it was impossible to sell animal stories."\(^{32}\) In June, 1944, while the manuscript was doing the rounds of publishers, Orwell's house was bombed. He and his wife, together with their adopted baby son, Richard, did not move into a flat of their own until October, the same month that *Animal Farm* was finally accepted by Frederic Warburg (though it would not be published for another ten months).

As noted earlier, Lionel Trilling asserted, and this assessment had been widely accepted, that Orwell was one of those "figures...who are what they write," whose everyday behaviour reflects the "ideas and attitudes" which permeate their writing.\(^{33}\) This notion is seriously challenged, however, if one looks beyond *Homage to Catalonia,* which was central to Trilling's assessment, and notes, for example, how during Orwell's time at *Tribune* a tension and finally a telling contradiction between Orwell the man and Orwell the writer became obvious, most noticeably to Orwell himself. In the same way as he would attack the public school system in print yet acknowledge its merits when it came time to think of his son's education, and in the same way as he had attacked Spender, yet liked him when he met him, he found himself at *Tribune* ("still his first love")\(^{34}\) torn between intellectual honesty and sympathy for writers on the individual level. He was torn between the abstract ideal and the concrete, between what he said an editor should
do and what George Orwell did. He was not what he wrote.

The fact is that I am no good at editing....I have a fatal tendency to accept manuscripts which I know very well are too bad to be printed. It is questionable whether anyone who has had long experience as a free lance journalist ought to become an editor. It is too like taking a convict out of his cell and making him governor of the prison.35

This largely explains what Orwell called his "psychical or even physical inability to answer letters" and the fact that "my most essential memory of that time is of pulling out a drawer here and a drawer there, finding it in each case to be stuffed with letters and manuscripts which ought to have been dealt with weeks earlier, and hurriedly shutting it up again."36

Early in 1945 Orwell left Tribune, feeling (quite rightly, as his friend and subsequent editor of Tribune, T.R. Fyvel, points out) that he was unsuited for an office job. On February 15, in the closing stages of the war, he left for France as a war correspondent for the Observer. In Paris he was surprised to discover that among the supporters of Libertés (an anti-Gaullist and anti-communist paper) he had become something of a celebrity through his recent editorship of Tribune. The latter, he said, was known among French journalists as "the one paper in England which had neither supported the Government uncritically, nor opposed the war, nor swallowed the Russian myth."37 By late March he was reporting from Cologne. On March 29 his wife died in London while being anaesthetized for a minor operation.

In April Orwell returned to Europe to continue writing about the war for both the Observer and Manchester Evening News. As John Atkins has remarked, "this period did not have any important formative influence on Orwell's political thought, which had matured by now."38 Indeed the most
striking thing about his writing during the entire war is his relative lack of analysis of the day-to-day military details of the huge struggle that was going on around the world. Compared to the prolific war reporting of others it reminds one of Stansky's comment about Orwell's recollections of his stay at Eton seventeen years earlier; that one would hardly know from reading Orwell's recollections that a war had been going on. Unless he was directly involved in the things he wrote about, his interest was not aroused to its full pitch. An example of this is his letter to Stephen Spender about *Homage to Catalonia.* Of the two chapters devoted to the general Spanish political intrigue that was directed from behind the front he wrote, "I hate writing that kind of stuff and am much more interested in my own experiences, but unfortunately in this bloody period we are living in one's only experiences are being mixed up in controversies, intrigues, etc."39

His own experiences in World War II, whatever contribution they might have made, were not those of a soldier fighting the war. His experiences, largely confined to Home Guard Duty and broadcasts to India, did not produce that first hand enthusiasm we usually expect of war writers. It was not that Orwell failed to report the great military engagements or their effects upon conquered peoples and the like - his wartime diary is full of this. But because he was not directly involved in the military action, his published pieces, though starting off with general war news, would quickly be conscripted as springboards for engaging essays on favourite subjects.40 One critic has noted how "Orwell devoted a lot of time and space during the war to a consideration of Pacifism and Anarchism."41 Even when the war was directly overhead it occasioned in Orwell's writing not so much a detailed reporting of the military events
abroad but an analysis of Britain and a return to old and familiar Orwellian themes - some of the more central ones having been discussed in this study with frequent reference to Orwell's wartime writings. For example, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, which was written in 1940, was subtitled *Socialism and the English Genius* and deals largely with the possibility of revolution and the establishment of socialism in Britain. In Part II, *Shopkeepers' at War*, Orwell writes,

I began this book to the tune of German bombers and I begin this second chapter in the added racket of the barrage. The yellow gun-flashes are lighting the sky, splinters are rattling on the house tops, and London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down. Anyone able to read a map knows that we are in deadly danger. I do not mean that we are beaten or need be beaten. Almost certainly the outcome depends on our own will. But at this moment we are in the soup, full fathom five, and we have been brought there by follies which we are still committing and which will drown us altogether if we do not mend our ways quickly.

What this war has demonstrated is that private capitalism - that is, an economic system in which land, factories, mines and transport are owned privately and operated solely for profit - *does not work*. It cannot deliver the goods.42

The point that Orwell is clearly wrong in his analysis on this point is not as important here as the fact that he begins with a description of the fighting above him only to end up pressing hard for the establishment of socialism in Britain. Again in *The British Crisis*, one of his London letters to *Partisan Review* during the war (1942), he begins, "When I last wrote to you things had begun to go wrong in the Far East but nothing was happening politically," then quickly launches into an old theme in an essay subtitled *Social Equality*. Here he writes that "The war has brought the class nature of their society very sharply home to the English people, in two ways. First of all there is the unmistakable fact that all real power depends on class privilege." He adds that while this may not be noticed in a time of relative prosperity, in time of rationing it becomes very obvious that being rich automatically assures one of better treatment
and that little can be done to correct the situation so long as "money and political power more or less coincide."^43

And in one of his *As I Please* columns, while he was literary editor of *Tribune*, he announces that while "It is not my primary job to discuss the details of contemporary politics...I want to protest against the mean and cowardly attitude adopted by the British press towards the recent rising in Warsaw." The theme, again recalling *Homage to Catalonia*, is the role of the press and the British Intelligentsia in propaganda, especially the role of the left wing. Though he supports the idea of an Anglo-Russian alliance he said such an alliance cannot be based on the theory that "Stalin is always right."^44 He attacks the British left wing in particular, charging that they were so corrupt that "Their attitude towards Russian foreign policy is not 'Is this policy right or wrong?' but 'This is Russian policy: how can we make it appear right?'"^45

After the end of the fighting in Europe Orwell returned to London and wrote articles on the General Election. His overall impression was that the election had been relatively fair and clean and had upset all the predictions of the would-be pollsters, including his own, by ending in a definite swing to the left with the Labour party's victory over Churchill and his conservative followers. In his opinion, the shift to the left did not offer any hope that socialism would be established in England. It was merely a sign of "gathering discontent" and "above all" a desire for more security in the face of possible unemployment, "the worst horror the English people can imagine." And once again, as in his wartime articles, he reverts to an old theme - in this case that of imperialism. He charges that because the "Labor leaders have never made clear to their followers the extent to which British prosperity depends on the exploitation of the
colored peoples" the decision to give Indian independence would be "by far the hardest problem for a Labor government."  

By the summer of 1945, he had begun the first draft of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In August he became vice chairman of The Freedom Defence Committee formed some months earlier because of a growing concern with the violation of civil liberties. In the same month, *Animal Farm* was published. The book signals not only Orwell's return to the novel form but his entry into the technique of the fable with its ability to transcend the boundaries of the present. After the poor sales of *Homage to Catalonia* it also marks the end of Orwell's experimentation with the documentary technique which, as Zwerdling suggests, Orwell must have realized did not strike a people's feelings powerfully enough.  

In 1947, Orwell, discussing Gollancz's book *In Darkest Germany*, draws attention to the relative failure of the realistic approach in its effort to make people "conscious of what is happening outside their own small circle."

The now-familiar photographs of skeleton-like children make very little impression. As time goes on and the horrors pile up, the mind seems to secrete a sort of self-protecting ignorance which needs a harder and harder shock to pierce it, just as the body will become immunized to a drug and require bigger and bigger doses.  

In any event it was not the present or the past which Orwell was now so pessimistic about but the future, where such immunization might make us even more insensitive to the plight of others. It was this "after-war" which, after Spain, had haunted George Bowling in 1938 and which continued to trouble George Orwell in 1944 when, "as a result of the Teheran Conference," he wanted to "discuss the implications of dividing the world up into 'Zones of influence'" and the "intellectual implications of totalitarianism." The first major attack against the latter in his
fiction came in *Animal Farm* in 1945.

In the preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm* Orwell sets down his reasons for the attack. Recalling the "man-hunts" in Spain which had occurred simultaneously with the purges in Russia, he notes the shock that he experienced when, after seeing people jailed by communists in Spain merely on suspicion of "unorthodoxy," he discovered that in England the communist versions of the purge trials in Moscow were being swallowed whole. The gullibility of such "numerous" and "sensible" people in England alerted Orwell to three things: (1) "how easily totalitarian propaganda can control the opinion of enlightened people in democratic countries" where people living in "comparative freedom... have no real understanding of things like concentration camps, mass deportations, arrests without trial, press censorship, etc...." (2) that because "of the belief that Russia is a Socialist country and that every act of its rulers must be excused if not imitated" the acceptance of totalitarian justifications of such acts had "caused great harm to the Socialist movement in England;" and (3) that in order to revive Socialism, the "destruction of the Soviet myth [i.e. "the belief that Russia is a Socialist country"] is essential."^51

Having decided ("on my return from Spain")^52 that he would embark upon an exposé of the "Soviet myth" ("I consider that willingness to criticize Russia and Stalin is the test of intellectual honesty"),^53 Orwell set his mind to thinking of a story which "almost anyone"^54 could understand and one which would be easy to translate. It was to be a cry from outside the whale - to resist the totalitarian tendency rather than to merely accept things as they were. Although it would be six years before it was written, the idea first took form one day in a village where
I 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 me 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.\textsuperscript{55}

Orwell had once again seized upon Blair's simplistic division of the world into rich and poor so that everyone could recognize the basic conflict between "haves" and "have nots." Yet the attack upon the Stalinist mentality behind the Russian myth quickly revealed a sophistication which, even for T.S. Eliot, who rejected the book on political grounds, had seldom been reached in the genre "since Gulliver."\textsuperscript{56} In light of Orwell's increasing concern with the power of orthodoxy to hold even highly individualistic minds captive, the story, briefly described here, behind the publication of Animal Farm is worth our attention.

After Gollancz, who had wanted nothing to do with Homage to Catalonia, rejected Animal Farm, Orwell sent the manuscript to the Cape publishing house. An impressed reader gave a favourable report to Jonathan Cape who then made Orwell the offer of a contract. However, before finalizing the proposal, Cape decided to check first with an official at the "Ministry of Information." The official warned that the novel would injure Anglo-Soviet relations.\textsuperscript{57} It was then, in June, 1944, that Orwell sent the manuscript to T.S. Eliot, advising him that the novel was undoubtedly politically unfashionable, noting how someone, either from Cape or the Ministry of Information, had "made the imbecile suggestion that some other animal than pigs might be made to represent the Bolsheviks." He added, "I could not of course make any change of that description."\textsuperscript{58}

After Eliot, highly conscious of the "political situation at the present time"\textsuperscript{59} (the Anglo-Soviet alliance), rejected the novel, Orwell
took it to Frederic Warburg. Arriving "slightly breathless" and "without an appointment," Orwell reached the publisher in a local pub. Warburg recalls the scene in All Authors Are Equal:

"What is it?" I asked.
"Read it yourself," he said nervously, "though I don't suppose you'll like it. It's about a lot of animals on a farm who rebel against the farmer, and it's very anti-Russian. Much too anti-Russian for you, I'm afraid"...
"What's it called?" I said.
"Animal Farm...I think I can find you some buckshee paper to print it on." A few moments later he was gone.

Warburg read it the same day and, like his partner, "never doubted that it was a masterpiece....We told Orwell so immediately." Still, Warburg's decision to publish was not easy. The "great debate" which took place in his office mirrored the power of political orthodoxy (often born of the genuine needs of alliance) to subjugate individual integrity. It was a theme devastatingly described in the very novel under discussion. Warburg writes,

Was it or was it not politically dangerous to publish this bitter satirical attack on our great ally, the Soviet Union, when its armies were rolling back the German Forces, while the U.K. and the U.S.A. had established a mere bridgehead on the French coast only a few weeks before? Senhouse had no doubts – I rather think he felt Stalin might have enjoyed the portrait of himself as the boar dictator. After all, Orwell had christened him with a mighty name, Napoleon. Our young sales manager, Peter Maxwell, supported him. My experienced London traveller, Charles Roth, was extremely worried. He was a lifelong socialist, and could not really bring himself to believe that Russia was not a socialist state, however flawed. Worst of all, I was under strong pressure from my wife. Whether it was the blood of her Circassian grandmother...or her belief that Russia had always been a kind of (feudal) tyranny, or the warmth of her feelings for the immense sufferings of the Russian people...or (perhaps strongest of all) her knowledge that it was the Russians who had done most of the fighting since 1941...Pamela at that time regarded Animal Farm with a complete lack of sympathy. "If you publish that book," she said, "I'll leave you! Don't think I won't!"

One thought "obsessed" Warburg, namely that if the Soviet Union were yet to come to terms with Hitler, both dictatorships might turn on
the West. As aware as Orwell that because censorship can be executed in a civilized manner it is no less invidious - "just a nod and a wink and the thing is done,"62 Warburg could envisage the possible repercussions of publication - the burst of outrage from the Russian ambassador, followed by two smooth gentlemen from the Foreign Office...."My dear Warburg... breach in the alliance...situation extremely grave...Minister feels sure...withdrawal essential...perhaps two or three years time...as a patriotic man surely understand..." Then when it was all over, on a lighter note - "Off the record, of course...reds not our sort of people...Stalin awkward customer...read little book myself...haven't laughed so much since...all those pigs round the table...wonderful scene...reminded me of...well, never mind." And then as they prepared to leave - "funny thing... damned red like Orwell...fought in Spain, didn't he...could think it all up...well, well, what will these literary gents get up to next?"63

What Orwell got "up to" next, at least in his fiction, was *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (begun in mid-1945 before *Animal Farm* was published.)64 Herein the lessons of *Animal Farm*, which, as Bernard Crick points out, far transcend an attack upon the Soviet régime, would be more closely examined.65 Notes for *Nineteen Eighty-Four* had been in existence for some time. In 1944 Orwell was convinced that there "will only be room in the world for two or three great powers."66 Reiterating his Spanish born "nightmare," he wrote later that year that "If the sort of world that I am afraid of arrives, a world of two or three superstates which are unable to conquer one another, two and two could become five if the fuhrer wished it." But while he argued that this, "so far as I can see, is the direction in which we are actually moving," he qualified the dire prediction by adding, "though of course the process is reversible."67 (My italics.) Thé qualification takes us back to Orwell's imaginary conversation with Jonathan Swift where he argues, unlike Swift, that men
can be changed, that totalitarianism could possibly be averted if men were brave enough to fight it. This is important for it reminds us that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is meant to be a warning, not a prophecy.

As well as starting *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in mid-1945, Orwell continued with his journalism and essay writing. The result was that in 1946, despite a rest period, there appeared a rush of essays (along with various journalistic pieces), from *The Prevention of Literature* in *Polemic* in January, 1946, and *Politics and the English Language* in *Horizon* in April, 1946 to *Politics vs Literature* in the September–October, 1946 issue of *Polemic*. Such titles, including *Writers and Leviathan*, reflected Orwell's growing concern with totalitarianism; that if the latter could stamp out the "autonomous individual" then the writer was "sitting on a melting iceberg...an anachronism, a hangover from the bourgeois age, as surely doomed as the hippopotamus." The culmination of this concern would occur in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* wherein the conscious passivity of the writer, *like the citizen*, is assured through the planned destruction of language as we now know it.

By the time Orwell was writing the novel he had decided to break with his old publisher, Victor Gollancz, who still had a "first refusal" contract with him and had refused both *Homage to Catalonia* and *Animal Farm*. Orwell respected the publisher's reluctance to print books "which go directly counter to your political principles," but decided that Warburg, who had published *Animal Farm* and therefore "would risk anything," should be his publisher. To Gollancz he wrote:

I am afraid of further differences arising, as in the past. You know what the difficulty is, i.e. Russia. For quite 15 years I have regarded that régime with plain horror, and though, of course, I would change my opinion if I saw reason, I don't think my feelings are likely to change so long as the Communist Party remains in
power...I don't, God knows, want a war to break out, but if one were compelled to choose between Russia and America...I would always choose America.69

Confronted by such arguments, Gollancz released Orwell from the old contract and from then on Secker and Warburg became his publishers.70

Orwell, despite his worsening illness, wrote much of Nineteen Eighty-Four on the island of Jura in the Outer Hebrides, where in September, 1947 he and his son Richard were nearly drowned in a boating accident. Seriously ill with T.B. in December, 1947 he entered hospital in Lanarkshire. Though having all but finished the rough draft he had nevertheless given his friend, Richard Rees, instructions to "destroy the M.S. without showing it to anybody" should he die before finishing it.71

At times only able to work an hour a day, Orwell finished the final draft by November, 1948, having returned in the summer to the island of Jura from hospital. Soon after his return to the island Orwell was confined for much of the time to his bed. As Warburg notes, only two courses were open to him: to press ahead with the novel and risk a fatal relapse or to stop writing and give his body a chance to regain the strength needed for possible recovery.72 His decision to keep writing was surely no surprise. In a notebook kept in the last year of his life he had written,

It is now (1949) 16 years since my first book was published and abt [sic] 21 years since I started publishing articles in the magazines. There has literally been not one day in which I did not feel that I was idling, that I was behind with the current job, and that my total output was miserably small. Even at the periods when I was working 10 hours a day on a book, or turning out 4 or 5 articles a week, I have never been able to get away from this neurotic feeling.73

No typist could be persuaded to make the long journey, including
two sea crossings and an eight-mile walk to Orwell's rather primitive home on Jura to type out the final draft from the rough draft, which he said would be virtually unintelligible without verbal instructions. And so Orwell, despite his ever weakening condition, typed it himself, no doubt hastening his death. On January 6, a month after having posted the final draft, Orwell entered the Cotswold sanatorium in Gloucestershire. He felt, understandably enough, that his running battle with T.B. had prevented Nineteen Eighty-Four from being a better book, and wrote, with typical and pessimistic modesty, to Julian Symons that because of his lung disease he had "ballsed it up." Similarly, he informed Warburg that it wouldn't be a book that he would "gamble on for a big sale," suggesting that only 10,000 copies be run off.75

By the end of March, after having corrected the proofs, he had a relapse and was "forbidden" by the doctors to use a typewriter. Asking that his will be sent to him he expressed concern in a letter to Richard Rees about his young son's future and about Richard Rees being empowered to "have the final say" in any literary question, as in the case where the American Book-of-the-Month Club wanted to make substantial cuts ("abt [sic] a quarter of it") with a view to selecting the book. Eight days later, on April 8, Orwell wrote to Rees, telling him that the novel (without cuts) had been accepted by the Book-of-the-Month Club. In the same letter he expressed his wish to see his son Richard in the event that the streptomycin treatment failed to contain the T.B. and "before I get too frightening in appearance."76

By mid-April, having finished a promised review of Churchill's Their Finest Hour, he felt well enough to write his American publisher that "I have my next novel mapped out, but I am not going to touch it
In June, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published by Secker and Warburg. For the remainder of 1949, Orwell mostly wrote letters to personal friends although he did write a synopsis and a few pages of a projected short story. He also made notes for essays he planned to write, in particular one on Joseph Conrad and another on Evelyn Waugh. In early September, three months after *Nineteen Eighty-Four* had appeared in print, he entered University College Hospital in London. On October 13 he married Sonia Brownell who was an editorial assistant for *Horizon* magazine, and whom he had known since 1945. On January 21, shortly before he was due to go to Switzerland to another sanatorium, Orwell died, at the age of forty-seven.
Notes to Section IV - Chapter I

1. Orwell, CEJL, IV, p. 287.
4. Orwell, Coming Up For Air, p. 158.
5. Ibid., pp. 233, 156.
6. Ibid., p. 154.
7. Ibid., p. 155.
10. Ibid., p. 160.
12. Ibid., p. 45.
13. No trace of this pamphlet has been found. See Orwell, CEJL, I, p. 395.
15. Orwell, Coming Up For Air, p. 143.
17. This was not really pacifism as Miller's position was more that involvement in such things as the Spanish War should not be motivated from a sense of duty to others. See Orwell, Inside the Whale and Other Essays, p. 40.
18. Orwell, Inside the Whale and Other Essays, p. 47.
19. Alldritt, The Making of George Orwell, pp. 130-34. Alldritt is particularly good in showing how Inside the Whale is an important autobiographical piece as well as a literary criticism of the thirties.
22. Ibid., p. 17.


40. Zwerdling notes, "We find him [Orwell], for example, using many of the essays of the forties to investigate a phenomenon that we have seen disturbed him deeply: the lust for power...Raffles and Miss Blandish...Wells, Hitler and the World State and Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool." (Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, p. 180.) And as Zwerdling also notes, "He [Orwell] consistently uses popular literature as a tool of sociological investigation." (Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, p. 189.)


45. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-63. For more impressions from his war correspondance


47. Orwell, *CEJL*, IV, p. 444. For an excellent account of the literary forbears of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* see William Steinhoff's *George Orwell and the Origins of 1984*. These forbears include London's "Iron Heel" of which Orwell thought so highly, H.G. Wells' *The New Machiavelli, The Shape of Things to Come, When the Sleeper Wakes, and The Island of Dr. Moreau;* and Cyril Connolly's story, "Year Nine." Isaac Deutscher's charge that Orwell "borrowed" the idea, plot and characters of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from Zamyatin's *We* comes under well mannered but demolishing fire as Steinhoff shows how mistaken Deutscher's charge is; how there is simply "too much in *1984* that does not appear in *We.*" (Steinhoff, *George Orwell and the Origins of 1984*, p. 29.) Steinhoff also points out how it would be strange for an author to have "borrowed as much from *We* as Deutscher says he did - in effect plagiarizing it" because "he [Orwell] would not have been likely to give it so much publicity and to persist in trying to get it into print." (Steinhoff, *George Orwell and the Origins of 1984*, p. 24.)


56. Warburg, *All Authors are Equal*, p. 42.


59. Warburg, *All Authors Are Equal*, p. 43.


64. Orwell, *CEJL*, III, p. 444.


70. Warburg, *All Authors Are Equal*, p. 355. Warburg credits Orwell with being nothing less than the firm's financial "salvation." (See Warburg, *All Authors Are Equal*, p. 8.)

71. Orwell, *CEJL*, IV, p. 459. For Orwell, like most writers, rough drafts were "just a mess and don't have much relationship to the final draft." (Orwell, *CEJL*, IV, p. 448.)


74. Warburg, *All Authors Are Equal*, pp. 102-103.


For Orwell, the totalitarian tendencies of the modern state were born in the drive for power, not the desire for power to improve society (as is the original motivation in *Animal Farm*) but power for power's sake.

This tendency, he believed, was nurtured by the increasing centralization of authority and industry which ironically was "a necessary precondition of [democratic] Socialism." The result of such a drive for power in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, accelerated by increasing centralization, is revealed in Goldstein's treatise on "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism." We read that "Throughout recorded time... there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle and the Low" and that although there have been subdivisions and "countless different names," this essential division between men "has never altered." Goldstein, redrawing the earlier divisions that had set the battle lines of Orwell's "Indigenous" period, notes that the aims of the three groups are entirely irreconcilable. The aim of the High is to remain where they are. The aim of the Middle is to change places with the High. The aim of the Low when they have an aim [usually they are too "crushed" by "drudgery" to think about anything beyond their daily existence] - is to abolish all distinctions and create a society in which all men shall be equal.

But though material progress has been made, argues Goldstein, "no reform or revolution has ever meant much more than a change in the name of their masters."

Although Goldstein's view of history incorporates Orwell's earlier simplistic views of societal division, it goes beyond them. What is new in Goldstein's theory, which is Orwell's essential theory of the totalitarian state, is that while once only the "High," with a few middle class
parasites, had clung to the idea of a "hierarchial form of society...softened [for people like the Pithers in *A Clergyman's Daughter*] with promises of compensation...beyond the grave," now "the new Middle groups...proclaimed their tyranny beforehand." Whereas once the "Middle" had cried for "equality" in their quest for power only to become as tyrannical as the displaced "High" once they acquired power, now they made no other pretence than clinging to old names or variations of them, such as "Ingsoc" (or English Socialism). For the rest, they unapologetically "assailed...the concept of human brotherhood." It had once been acceptable, and more importantly, "safe," for the power-hungry members of the Middle group to clamour for equality - safe because technology had not reached a stage whereby inequality could be done away with. Once technology had reached this stage, where despite necessary specialized functions "there was no longer any real need for class distinctions," equality ceased to be a slogan for those in power who wanted to retain power. Instead, equality became a threat to them and was thus "assailed" by people who, like those middle class socialists of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, were not in power but "merely hoped to be." Thus we read in Goldstein's theory that because of technological advance, by the nineteen forties "all the main currents of political thought were totalitarian...every new political theory, by whatever name it called itself, led back to hierarchy and regimentation." But though the modern hunger for power seemed to lead "back" to the old tyrannies, there was a "cardinal" difference between the old tyrannies and the new. Whereas the old tyrannies were at least "infected to some extent by liberal ideas," Big Brother's régime is devoid of them. The Party, whose distant origins lay in the "salaried middle class and
upper grades of the working class," is devoted to the absolute opposition of liberal ideas because such ideas endanger the Party's pursuit of "pure power." In the time of Winston Smith, such "crushing of opposition" presents no problem but this was not always so. In the early days, immediately after the "Revolution" which had merely given way to a new tyranny, the Party, before having consolidated its power, moved to justify its control. Understanding that it was widely assumed that "Socialism must follow" the expropriation of capitalists as day follows night, they realized that the most effective way of remaining in power was to present the régime as essentially collectivist, in keeping with "old" socialist principles. Hence no party member is allowed any private property beyond "petty personal belongings." In fact, ownership of the means of production came to be in fewer hands than before (hence "oligarchical collectivism") but with the difference that a "group" of owners presumably do not seem as exploitative as individual capitalists, even though the "group" are owners nevertheless. The house in which the interrogator, O'Brien, lives may be state owned but it is a mansion compared to those inhabited by members outside the "Inner Party."

Unlike the socialists, however, whom Orwell criticized in The Road to Wigan Pier for losing potential converts by concentrating solely on "economic facts," the Party does take account of the non-material aspects of life. It does this through Big Brother who, while not existing as a real person, forms "the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world." Big Brother drains off potential dissatisfaction with the régime by acting as "a focusing point for love, fear and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization."
Big Brother's régime is divided up into the "Inner Party" or "brain of the State," the "Outer Party" or "hands" of the state, and the "dumb" mass of "proles" who constitute about eighty-five percent of the population. What is new, compared with the old tyrannies, is that the Party from its start was "adoptive," not "hereditary" in nature. It is this, together with the secret "Thought Police," which helps it maintain power. The origins of the Party membership may lie in the old salaried and professional middle classes but "admission to either branch of the Party is by examination, taken at the age of sixteen." The Party does not do this, or prohibit racial discrimination because it is in any sense liberal or "fair" minded - the secret "Thought Police" hardly has its origin in liberal thought. It does this because it sees that the strength of a régime, and thus its longevity, resides in the continuity of policy and this comes not in the continuity of a bloodline but in the continuity of a particular "world view." Orwell, having advocated the change from "privilege to competence" in reforming the leadership of England, well understood the attraction of such recruitment among a populace still conscious of unequal opportunity in a world of class privilege. But as Orwell also sees, it is the very fairness of the merit recruitment system, based on competence rather than privilege, which obscures the fact that the end of class privilege need not mean the end of inequality. There is a shift here from the earlier Orwell, who tends to confuse meritocracy with equality, to a position where we see that power may just as easily be the salary of meritocracy as the inheritance of privilege.

Though Winston Smith discovers how the régime maintains power by reading Goldstein's theory of oligarchical collectivism, he does not
understand the underlying motivations of the totalitarian state until he is faced by O'Brien in the cells of the Ministry of Love, and O'Brien asks,

"You understand well enough how the Party maintains itself in power. Now tell me why we cling to power. What is our motive? Why should we want power?"...Winston did not speak for another moment....He knew in advance what O'Brien would say. That the Party did not seek power for its own ends, but only for the good of the majority. That it sought power because men in the mass were frail cowardly creatures who could not endure liberty or face the truth, and must be ruled over and systematically deceived by others who were stronger than themselves. That the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better. That the Party was the eternal guardian of the weak, a dedicated sect doing evil that good might come.

Instead, O'Brien answers savagely, "The Party seeks power 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."17

Nineteen Eighty-Four is thus not the record of a modern state in which the "perpetual uneasiness between man and man" is maintained largely through unintentional exploitation, as was the case when Orwell wrote Down and Out in Paris and London and later The Road to Wigan Pier. Rather, it is a state where exploitation is intentional, the realization of Orwell's old fear in 1939 of a state wherein "the ruling caste deceive their followers without deceiving themselves."18

Having criticized Burnham for assuming in his world view (wherein there is an "unalterable...division of humanity into rulers and ruled") that the power instinct, though admittedly confined to a few, is as "natural" an instinct as the desire for food and that therefore there is no need to explain it, Orwell makes the same assumption. He simply and unequivocally assumes such a power hunger and from that assumption the ultimate desire of Big Brother - total control of others' thoughts as
well as their bodies - proceeds.

Because of this it has been charged that "Orwell's analysis of the motivations for Big Brother's party purely in terms of power" is particularly "weak," that "some aspects of perverted socialism would surely be taken seriously within the inner-party, just as for all their power-hunger, cynicism and corruption, the inner-Nazi Party retained their racialist and populist ideology and would not compromise on that even to their own destruction."¹⁹ No doubt Orwell does overstate his case, and this criticism of him is sound so far as it goes, but this is only as far as placing the Nazi party, Nazi totalitarianism, alongside Orwell's vision for a comparison. What Orwell clearly wishes to show in his overstatement is that in the totalitarian states of the after-war the "lust for naked power" is growing. Such states, "compared with their opposite numbers in past ages,...were less avaricious, less tempted by luxury, hungrier for pure power."²¹ He was showing that unlike the time of his indigenous novels, status would no longer be measured in terms of property and power but solely in terms of power. In doing so, he is assuming that men can change for the worse as easily as they can change for the better, that there are men for whom the wielding of power is an end in itself.

In arguing this, Orwell avoids the pitfall of what he once called the "lure of profundity," that is, of thinking so deeply at times about a subject that multitudinous qualifications end up smothering an obvious truth. In this case, the truth is that from the harmless child who makes its pet "do tricks" for no good purpose to the man who delights in a crowd's instant response to his word, there is in men, for whatever reason and in varying degrees, a desire to control others. Perhaps it is, as
O'Brien's later behaviour suggests, because control of others' futures, including those of your potential enemies, creates the illusion of control over one's own future and thereby affords a sense of security—a sense of the predictable, the known in the face of the unknown. Whatever the reason, the desire to control others exists. Orwell's purpose was not to investigate the origin of the germ but to warn that, as easily as the drive for virtue, the hunger for such power can grow until finally it consumes all other hungers and intent, even the will to speak freely. This is the great and terrifying simplicity of his work on totalitarianism which, in his opposition to Stalin, dates from the thirties when he wrote, "We cannot be at all certain that 'human nature' is constant. It may be just as possible to produce a breed of men who do not wish for liberty as to produce a breed of harmless cows."\(^{22}\)

The Spanish Inquisition failed, for all its cruelty, to produce such a breed of men, argues Orwell, because "the Inquisition had not the resources of the modern state." \textit{Nineteen Eighty-Four} is such a state. What Orwell saw more clearly than most is that the technology of the twentieth century, especially through its sophisticated ability to invade the individual's privacy, made for a totally new type of régime: "The radio, press censorship, standardized education and the secret police have altered everything."\(^{23}\) Such methods, he believed, would enable a régime to exercise total control through machines, as well as through the kind of oppressive social conventions which drove Flory to the ultimate act of alienation in \textit{Burmese Days}. The efficient use of such technology under the control of small sections of the population demands of course a high degree of centralization. Such centralization is oppressively evident in the complete physical and psychical domination of life in
London (the "chief city of Airstrip One") by the four ministries.\textsuperscript{24}

Winston Smith's apartment in Victory Mansion is dwarfed by the massive buildings of the Ministries of Truth ("which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education and the fine arts"); Peace ("which concerned itself with War"); Love (which "maintained law and order"); and Plenty ("responsible for economic affairs"). These four ministries, we are told, constitute "the entire apparatus of government."\textsuperscript{25}

But while centralization seems essential to the efficient use of power, it does not necessarily assure efficiency in public services. Indeed, the most immediately striking thing about \textit{Nineteen Eighty-Four} is that apart from the surveillance systems, nothing seems to work properly. Goldstein notes that except for the Thought Police "nothing is efficient."\textsuperscript{26} From page one Oceania strikes one as being depressingly run-down. This is not the futuristic setting marked by a Huxley-like, Wellsian vision of chromium-plated efficiency or Bowling's vision of the "streamlined men...from Eastern Europe."\textsuperscript{27} Instead it conjures up visions of armies of ersatz coffee machines, neither giving coffee nor returning your coins. It is a world of "Victory Mansions" hallways reeking of "boiled cabbage and old rag mats,"\textsuperscript{28} of elevators not working, of "VICTORY GIN" that is cheap and oily, and of "VICTORY CIGARETTES"\textsuperscript{29} that empty if held upright. We read of amateur repair jobs, as performed by Winston Smith, as being "an almost daily irritation."

Victory Mansions were old flats, built in 1930 or thereabouts, and were falling to pieces. The plaster flaked constantly from ceilings and walls, the pipes burst in every hard frost, the roof leaked whenever there was snow, the heating system was usually running at half steam when it was not closed down altogether from motives of economy. Repairs, except what you could do for yourself, had to be sanctioned by remote committees which were liable to hold up even the mending of a window-pane for two years.\textsuperscript{30}
It struck him that the truly characteristic thing about modern life was not its cruelty and insecurity, but simply its bareness, its dinginess, its listlessness. Life, if you looked about you, bore no resemblance not only to the lies that streamed out of the tele­screens, but even to the ideals [of enforcing obedience] that the Party was trying to achieve. Great areas of it, even for a Party member, were neutral and non-political, a matter of slogging through dreary jobs, fighting for a place on the Tube, darning a worn-out sock, cadging a Saccharine tablet, saving a cigarette end.  

And in a description that immediately recalls *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell goes on,

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. He seemed to see a vision of London, vast and ruinous, city of a million dustbins, and mixed up with it was a picture of Mrs. Parsons [a neighbour in Victory Mansions], a woman with lined face and wispy hair, fiddling helplessly with a blocked waste-pipe.

Orwell's determination not to present the world of Oceania as one of glittering efficiency may seem puzzling at first sight - after all, he was ostensibly writing about the future. The explanation for his description is that he was not trying to describe a radically different physical world from the present but a different psychological world, and even in this he sees *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as no more than an extension of present trends. It is the psychological future in the physical present. This is why such care was taken to establish the sense of post-World War Two drabness and why the most depressing aspect of the novel is not that it is merely imaginable but that, in its physical setting at least, it is immediately recognizable.

Certainly that marked characteristic of twentieth century society, the increasing trend to centralization, is instantly recognizable. It is this dominant fact in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which reflects Orwell's concern in *Literature and Totalitarianism* that centralization of economy, in restricting one's "economic liberty," ultimately affects one's
'intellectual liberty.' Whether the economy is called "Socialist or state capitalism" does not matter, argues Orwell, because in restricting one's economic liberty (intentionally or not), centralization affects a man's freedom "to choose his own work, to move to and fro across the surface of the earth." The danger is that a restricted mentality is soon nurtured by the restricted body.

The danger is not simply that a totalitarian régime frowns upon certain economic behaviour, such as "'dealing on the free market,'" but that in order to assure compliance with "correct" economic and social behaviour, régimes, as in Nineteen Eighty-Four, undertake to limit the public's knowledge of other systems. In Goldstein's treatise we read, "The masses never revolt of their own accord and they never revolt merely because they are oppressed. Indeed, so long as they are not permitted to have standards of comparison, they never even become aware that they are oppressed."

As later happened in Berlin, one way of removing known standards of comparison, both economic and social, is to build a wall so that people cannot leave and see how others live. As early as 1939 Orwell had already written in a review of de Basily's Russia Under Soviet Rule that the fact that "it is next door to impossible for a Soviet citizen, unless on some kind of official mission, to visit any foreign country" was "a silent admission that life is more comfortable elsewhere."

But neither a barbed wire wall nor the burning of old books, which offer comparisons, blocks out memory. This still exists as a basis of comparison when all else is gone. The question then for a "totalitarian" régime, which has decided upon the "correct" economic and indeed social form of society, is how to maintain unquestioning
obedience to its view of the world in the presence of both individual 
and collective memories of other ways of living. And, just as important, 
how is such a régime to maintain unquestioning obedience when its world 
view must change due to external pressures, when a solemn pact of non-
aggression is violated overnight, when Monday's dogma becomes Tuesday's 
heresy? The latter problem, says Orwell, is a new one for the totali-
tarian régime, for while the older orthodoxies such as the Church in 
medieval Europe undoubtedly dictated to the individual, they at least 
provided one with a fixed framework of thought: "At least it allowed 
you to retain the same beliefs from birth to death" without tampering 
with one's emotions. (My italics.) In totalitarian states the opposite 
prevails for while the totalitarian state "controls thought...it does not fix it." In a totalitarian state, in order to maintain the 
appearance of infallibility in a rapidly changing world, ideological 
boundaries are continually shifting and being redrawn. While the 
medieval writer, for example, was relatively secure working within set 
boundaries, the modern writer is not, for he is never certain that what 
he is "correctly" writing on Monday will not put him in jail on Tuesday. 
Verbal acquiescence involving an abrupt about-face can be quickly given 
to sudden changes in the régime's policy and is difficult to check up 
on. The written word, however, can quickly be compared with what was 
written last week or last year. Hence Orwell could write that "the most 
promising Russian writers show a marked tendency to commit suicide or 
disappear into prison."

The problem for the ruled in the modern totalitarian state, then, 
as much as for the rulers, is how to cope with rapid change of policy 
dictated by ever shifting boundaries. In a world where television
surveillance is no longer confined to department stores but invades what was once the privacy of the home, consciousness of the gap between one's "public" verbal or written acquiescence to the régime's policy and one's private view of reality is bound to produce acute anxiety. Even if a "wall" removes the doubt raised by seeing how others live, such anxiety can be created or, at the very least, worsened by the memory of other days. For most, such anxiety leads to a willingness to conform - in this at least there is safety. But for others it leads to constant tension. As Flory in *Burmese Days* swam against the "stream" of convention but secretly longed for the acceptance of membership - to swim with the stream - so Winston Smith is caught between the pressure of social convention and the cry of his individual conscience.

It was like swimming against a current that swept you backwards however hard you struggled, and then suddenly deciding to turn round and go with the current instead of opposing it. Nothing had changed but your own attitude....He hardly knew why he had ever rebelled. Everything was easy, except - - !

Capitulation to the official view can be made easy. We see, for example, how the tension which results from the conflict between the desire to belong to the group and the desire to be true to one's conscience can be temporarily relieved by the tranquilizing effect of "Victory Gin." This is readily doled out by the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in both the gin shops and at the cafeterias in the ministries. But this is only treating the symptom. To ensure total capitulation to the official view, all thoughts, because of the danger of one thought leading to another, must be controlled, and controlled not so much by the "Thought Police" as by the individual. This is "Crimestop," the "instinctive" ability whereby "the mind should develop a blind spot whenever a dangerous thought presented itself." Indeed the most depressing
aspect of Orwell's treatment of this major theme, especially in *Animal Farm*, is that he shows how in their drive for security, the ruled often willingly surrender to the ruler's methods of deception. This means training themselves in "self-deception." It was in *Animal Farm*, as we shall now see, that Orwell first addressed himself to the refinement of such techniques, and the tragic consequences for those who dare resist them.

Before he gives them the stirring song, "Beasts of England," as their anthem of revolution, Major, the pig who instigates the overthrow of Farmer Jones, tells the animals that "We must not come to resemble him [Man]...above all, no animal must ever tyrannize over his own kind...we are all brothers....All animals are equal." By the end of the story, however, not only do the pigs, led by Napoleon (Stalin), exile Snowball (Trotsky) and tyrannize over their fellow animals but it becomes "impossible" for the common animals "to say which was which" between pigs and men.

Superficially, the difficulty of distinguishing pigs from men, between one-time revolutionaries and their one-time masters, is due to the pigs' physical imitation of man through walking on two legs, dressing in his clothes, and even smoking and drinking. But the real difficulty lies in a much more insidious imitation of man's behaviour, namely his use of language. "Twelve voices [men and pigs] were shouting in anger, and they were all alike." (My italics.) The pigs' ability to corrupt language is evident throughout. We hear Snowball (before his expulsion) arguing against all logic that the revolutionary slogan, "Four legs good, two legs bad," can now include birds because "a bird's wing, comrades,...is an organ of propulsion and not of manipulation" and "should therefore
be regarded as a leg." Such corruption is also evident when, after walking on two legs like a man, Napoleon (Stalin) suddenly declares that while "All animals are equal, some are more equal than others." What we are seeing in such passages is that the pigs have intuitively recognized that language, as Orwell points out, is not "a natural growth" but "an instrument" which, even allowing for differences in sensory perceptions, man uses more to rationalize his actions than to interpret the world as it is. Thus it is possible, as remarked upon early in the revolution, that Squealer, Napoleon's chief bully, "could turn black into white." Yet the proletarians who note this ability of the leadership soon forget it because of yet other weapons in the arsenal of deception. One such weapon is the deliberate alteration of history as in the slogan, "Four legs good, two legs better."

In this regard, this writer suspects that if the word "better" had not been emphasized by Orwell in the previous sentence, the only way in which the reader would recognize the phrase in question as being decidedly different from "Four legs good, two legs bad" would have been to go back and find the first slogan so as to compare the two. The importance of the use of the written word for the purposes of comparison, commonly if unconsciously recognized whenever we say things like "Let me write it down - or I'll forget it," is repeatedly underscored in *Animal Farm* through the almost total unavailability of records.

Sometimes the older ones among them racked their dim memories and tried to determine whether in the early days of the Rebellion, when Jones' expulsion was still recent, things had been better or worse than now. They could not remember. There was nothing with which they could compare their present lives: they had nothing to go on except Squealer's lists of figures, which invariably demonstrated that everything was getting better and better....There was, as Squealer was never tired of explaining, endless work in the supervision and organization of the farm. Much of this work was of a
kind that the other animals were too ignorant to understand. For example, Squealer told them that the pigs had to expend enormous labours every day upon mysterious things called "files," "reports," "minutes," and "memoranda." These were large sheets of paper which had to be closely covered with writing, and as soon as they were so covered, they were burnt in the furnace.51

When one of the original resolutions of Major, that no animal should "engage in trade," is violated by the pigs, who use the capitalist Mr. Whymper to act as agent between Animal Farm and the outside world, some animals are "doubtful." In reply, the pig Squealer asks, "Are you certain that this is not something that you have dreamed, comrades? Have you any record of such a resolution? Is it written down anywhere?" But as there was no such record, the animals are satisfied "that they had been mistaken" in questioning the new practice. Finally Napoleon bans the revolutionary song, "Beasts of England," for, if nothing else, it would keep alive a revolutionary spirit in what Napoleon clearly intends to be a non-revolutionary state now that he is in power. Squealer reports to a disappointed animal that the song "is no longer needed, comrade.... 'Beasts of England' was the song of Rebellion.... the Rebellion is now completed." In its place the animals are given a new song which begins

Animal Farm, Animal Farm,
Never through me shalt thou come to harm.52

The pigs' reversals of original revolutionary intent do not of course take place until the animals' memories fade sufficiently. And even though, as we know, memory fades quickly enough, the rulers are careful to pursue a policy of what could be called "erosion by degree." And so when yet another animal, noticing that the pigs are now sleeping in men's beds, consults the official barn door, dimly recalling that "No animal shall sleep in a bed," he discovers that what the commandment really says is "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets." Likewise he discovers
that the commandment which he believed was "No animal shall kill any other animal" is really "No animal shall kill any other animal without cause."  

So it is that the pigs who are the first to proclaim the change in structure, replacing the old sign, "MANOR FARM," with that of "ANIMAL FARM," give themselves privileges, and daily grow to resemble Mr. Jones. The structure of society may change, the faces of power may change, but the heart of power does not change. No matter that the farm had been industrialized under the pigs' merciless direction, with a windmill, threshing machine, hay elevator and new buildings being added. In essence it was still Manor Farm - the commissar without the yogi to counter the power instinct. It was Goldstein's theory in practice wherein, in order to remove "standards of comparison," the Party member and proletarian alike "must be cut off from the past, just as he must be cut off from foreign countries."  

Beyond the subversion of the original and collective spirit of one revolution, however, a much more serious threat grows out of the "erosion by degree" method of modifying history by tacking qualifying clauses onto the end of old commandments. For when he charges that Snowball not only showed cowardice in the battle against invading humans but "had actually been the leader of the human forces, and had charged into battle with the words 'Long live Humanity,'"  

comrade Napoleon is no longer modifying the historical record but reversing it. And when, in his leap from the little lie to the big lie, he blatantly proclaims that the damage done to the windmill by a November gale is the fault of none other than Snowball he has even gone beyond reversing history, he invents it - making the final descent in the loss of any sense of objective truth.
Beyond this perversion of truth, what is significant in Napoleon's act is that Napoleon does not denigrate Snowball from sheer spite, from a rampant desire for revenge (as Stalin admittedly might have done), but because he has fallen into the trap of the totalitarian mentality - that one lie, of necessity, has to be followed by others.

Of course lying is hardly the exclusive sin of totalitarian societies, as Orwell makes clear. But because the maintenance of control by a totalitarian régime rests largely upon maintaining a widespread belief in the leadership's infallibility it is necessary for the leadership to constantly re-interpret past policy (i.e., history) so as to justify even the slightest deviation in present policy. Normally in the case of justifying policy changes made gradually over a long period there is little problem for the régime. This is especially true in a world like Nineteen Eighty-Four where, unlike Animal Farm, records are kept and there is a whole industry devoted to updating the lies of old newspapers, etc. A problem does arise, however, when, despite an industry devoted to falsifying records, the leadership of a totalitarian régime has to justify a complete and sudden turn about in policy. The problem posed is captured in Orwell's story of the communist in New York who, having been in the toilet as the news of Hitler's massive violation of the Russo-German Pact broke, returned "to find that the 'party line' had changed in his absence." In short, the totalitarian régime must have an ever ready excuse lest dramatic events overtake it and before the possibility of their fallibility be seriously entertained by its followers. For Stalin the excuse was "Trotsky" and in Spain, as Orwell recorded, the great charge of heresy became that of Trotskyism; "to call a man a Trotskyist is practically equivalent to calling him a murderer."
Hence in *Animal Farm*, "suddenly," after a minor rebellion by the hens against exorbitant demands by Napoleon for higher production has been ruthlessly crushed by Napoleon's trained dogs, "an alarming thing was discovered." It appeared that the banished Snowball had secretly been frequenting the farm by night.

The animals were so disturbed that they could hardly sleep in their stalls. Every night, it was said, he came creeping in under cover of darkness and performed all kinds of mischief. He stole the corn, he upset the milk-pails, he broke the eggs, he trampled the seed-beds, he gnawed the bark off the fruit trees. Whenever anything went wrong it became usual to attribute it to Snowball.... Napoleon decreed that there should be a full investigation into Snowball's activities. With his dogs in attendance he set out and made a careful tour of inspection....At every few steps Napoleon stopped and sniffled the ground...and found traces of Snowball everywhere.

The animals were thoroughly frightened. It seemed to them as though Snowball were some kind of invisible influence, pervading the air about them and menacing them with all kinds of dangers.61

More than a highly visible scapegoat, however, whether it be Snowball in *Animal Farm* or Goldstein in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, who correctly proclaims that the "revolution [Ingsoc] has been betrayed,"62 the régime needs an instantly recognizable vocabulary tailored to accommodate rapid changes in policy so that such changes can be more easily presented and accepted by the general population. There may not always be enough time to re-educate the masses, as in *Animal Farm* when, after being taken away by Squealer for what is nothing less than thought reform, the sheep return bleating in unison, "Four legs good, two legs better." Furthermore, the Party's unchanging slogans, such as "Comrade Napoleon is always right,"63 may only serve to erase temporary doubt in the already committed, in "Inner Party" members. And such slogans, relying as they do on the cult of personality, may only be acceptable so long as Comrade Napoleon is alive. What is needed to maintain
widespread belief in the régime's infallibility is a language that will serve Comrade Napoleon or Big Brother with equal efficiency, that will enable the leader, whoever he is, to better and more quickly manipulate the public mind without appearing to do so. This brings us to a consideration of one of Orwell's most outstanding contributions to our understanding of politics: his analysis of the extent to which language, as part of the process of power hunger denying equality, may be willfully corrupted as a tactic in an ever expanding policy of deception.

Although party members in Nineteen Eighty-Four like Winston Smith continue to communicate in Oldspeak, that is, today's English, the Inner Party's aim is to abolish this and to establish a much abbreviated language, "Newspeak," by the year 2050. In Oldspeak a message might read "Those whose ideas were formed before the Revolution cannot have a full emotional understanding of the principles of English Socialism." In Newspeak this would read "Oldthinkers unbellyfeel Ingsoc." It was only through the establishment of this "official language," designed "to diminish the range of thought,"^64 that the process called "doublethink" - the ability to hold two different beliefs simultaneously and to believe in them equally^65 - is most effective in protecting the ideological purity of Ingsoc or English Socialism. That is, "doublethink" successfully hides the fact that Ingsoc is precisely the opposite of what the original English Socialism stood for. As "doublethink" would deal with present contradictions, Newspeak, together with the constant alteration of historical records, could obviously thwart the possibility of contradiction in the future. Through the studious elimination of undesirable words and of "unorthodox meanings" of the remaining words it
was hoped that "a heretical thought - that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc - should be literally unthinkable." 68

By such large scale elimination of words it is hardly surprising that Newspeak reduces the range of thought, the range of "consciousness," 69 and shades of meaning. The result is that the world is seen in terms of black and white, "good" and "ungood." 70 Through such a language it is not at all surprising that a population could view the world either as Capitalist or Socialist with nothing in between. And so the population could easily be encouraged to assume that Socialism, and not anything like oligarchical collectivism, would follow the expropriation of capitalists. 71 In encouraging the black-white vision of the world, Newspeak, in its expulsion of adjective and adverb, not only expels shades of meaning but it also does away with whole concepts, such as "political equality." The result is that a Newspeak slogan, "All men are equal," would signify nothing more than all men are physically the same. 72

In its reduction of words, "every year fewer and fewer," 73 Newspeak at its worst is a direct attack upon metaphor which, being the expression of conscious comparison, draws heavily on our knowledge of the past and shades of meaning. At this point, continuous alteration of the past so that it can no longer be reliably referred to, together with fewer words with which to refer to it, combine to render the metaphor virtually useless as an agent of thought and precise explanation. Because of its destruction of nuance, of "the shades of meanings" and old meanings (as in the use of Ingsoc), Newspeak has to rely heavily on "euphony" to convey its message. Indeed this outweighs "every consideration other than the [Inner Party's] exactitude of meaning." 74 But as Newspeak is not
expected to be firmly implanted until 2050, Oldspeak must somehow be adapted as a transition language, even if it is not as euphonious. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "doublethink," itself a Newspeak word, helps provide a bridge between Oldspeak and Newspeak because it dismisses any reference to the past which Oldspeak might suggest, even when the past is only minutes old. 75

Doublethink, however, is not the only bridge used and, particularly for the mass of unsophisticated proles, Oldspeak is turned into a language of deception by the almost mechanical reproduction of worn out phrases. They are so worn out that they glide over the consciousness in rapid-fire succession, conveying the hypnotic tone (as Newspeak will do) which the speechmakers desire to induce. This prevents the listener from really thinking about what is being said. As Orwell, after his B.B.C. experience, wrote in *Propaganda and Demotic Speech*, "One's impulse in speaking [particularly in dictating which "is always slightly embarrassing"] is to avoid the long pauses, and one necessarily does so by clutching at the ready-made phrases." Such phrases are nothing less than "thought-saving devices." The attack on the "ready-made phrases," the resulting jargon and its "remoteness from the average man," particularly in political speeches and broadcasts, frequents much of Orwell's writing. 76

Presaging the language of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he writes that those who are likeliest to use simple concrete language, and to think of metaphors that really call up a visual image, are those who are in contact with physical reality....It follows that language, at any rate the English language [Oldspeak], suffers when the educated classes [The Inner and Outer Party] lose touch with the manual workers. 77

Just how out of touch the "Inner" and "Outer" Party members are with manual workers, the proles, is seen when Syme, a fellow worker of Winston
Smith's, curtly asserts: "The proles are not human beings." In any event, as we shall see later in greater detail, physical reality is defined by the Party.

Of listening to the ready-made, "familiar" phrases which are "mechanically" repeated by political speakers in conveying their sense of reality, Orwell wrote in 1946:

One often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker's spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them. And this is not altogether fanciful. A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance towards turning himself into a machine. The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself. If the speech he is making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost unconscious of what he is saying. And this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to political conformity.

Three years later, in Nineteen Eighty-Four, Winston Smith is sitting in the cafeteria of the Ministry of Truth, listening to Syme talk of how Newspeak will so reduce the number of words that "there will be no thought, as we understand it now," that "orthodoxy means not thinking - not needing to think." In the background Winston can hear a man with a strident voice...still talking remorselessly away....His spectacles caught the light and presented to Winston two blank discs instead of eyes. What was slightly horrible, was that from the stream of sound that poured out of his mouth it was almost impossible to distinguish a single word. Just once Winston caught a phrase - "complete and final elimination of Goldsteinism" - jerked out very rapidly and, as it seemed, all in one piece, like a line of type cast solid. For the rest it was just a noise, a quack-quack-quacking. And yet, though you could not actually hear what the man was saying, you could not be in any doubt about its general nature. He might be denouncing Goldsteinism and demanding sterner measures against thought criminals...he might be praising Big Brother - it made no difference. Whatever it was, you could be certain that every word of it was pure orthodoxy, pure Ingsoc. 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...a noise uttered in unconsciousness.
For Winston Smith the culmination of doublethink and mechanical language comes on the sixth day of "Hate Week." The "great orgasm" of hate was quivering to its climax and the general hatred of Eurasia had boiled up into such delirium that if the crowd could have got their hands on the 2,000 Eurasian war-criminals...they would unquestionably have torn them to pieces.\(^82\) But "just at this moment" it is announced that Oceania is no longer at war with Eurasia, that Eurasia is now an ally and Oceania is at war with Eastasia. When the Party speaker, who has been exciting the crowd to a fury that often drowns his amplified voice with a beast-like roaring, is handed a piece of paper informing him of the change of enemy and ally "nothing altered in his voice or manner or in the content of what he was saying, but suddenly the names were different."\(^83\) (My italics.)

The interesting point is that once the crowd understands the switch it does not occur to them to question the dramatic change in policy. Instead, upon seeing that now "the banners and posters with which the square was decorated were all wrong!" that "quite half of them had the wrong faces on them," the crowd instantly and unanimously assume that it is "sabotage." It is unanimously assumed that "the agents of Goldstein had been at work!" The crowd proceeds to go wild, tearing down the offending posters and banners.\(^84\)

But within two or three minutes it was all over. The orator, still gripping the neck of the microphone, his shoulders hunched forward, his free hand clawing at the air, had gone straight on with his speech. One minute more and the feral roars of rage were again bursting from the crowd. The Hate continued exactly as before, except that the target had been changed.

The thing that impressed Winston on looking back was 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.\(^85\)
The importance of the above passages is not simply that they show how Orwell habitually infused his fiction with his own experiences, or even how often the psychological atmosphere of this "futuristic" novel is really that of the present - indeed of Nuremberg, but that they illustrate the extent of the divorce from external reality which has been effected by the Party. The latter has trained its members to believe that reality exists only in the collective mind of the Party, that "It is impossible to see reality except through the eyes of the Party."^86

Summary of Chapter II

The leadership of the drab totalitarian state is marked by a lust for power which is increased by increasing centralization, and by advances in the technology of surveillance. Exploitation as a result is intensely deliberate. Oligarchical collectivism is the reality, common ownership the illusion. The privileges of the leadership not only make a mockery of English socialism's (Ingsoc's) old slogans for equality but perpetuate, under new names, the historical social divisions between men, with over three quarters of the population being little more than slaves. In the hole left by the decline of religious belief, the image of Big Brother is used by the Inner Party to replace the concept of God as all knowing and all powerful. Though in reality proletarians are never recruited by the party, the option to do so is left open by the leadership who in doing so (1) appeal to a sense of equal opportunity which lingers in the collective memory of people long conditioned by inequality and (2) break with the tradition of old despotic régimes insofar as the party is not concerned with perpetuating a blood line but a "world view" based on the belief that might is right.

To thwart the possibility of Oceania's population importing ideas
that would challenge the "infallibility" of the Party, the population, through continuous and all pervasive censorship, is never allowed to compare their lives with those of others, even those of past eras. This requires a censorship which extends so far as constantly reinterpreting and creating history so that contradictions between the leadership's present and past policy remain unknown. This mechanism of control is allied to mental techniques such as "doublethink" whereby one can simply block out memory. This allows one to avoid the anxiety and doubt that would otherwise result from recognition of sudden shifts from a party's most recently stated position - shifts that presumably would occur so quickly as not to allow time for the historical records to be altered.

Along with these techniques of deception there is the intricate control of language. Through this the leadership allows large numbers of words and phrases to be struck from the vocabulary, thus reducing the shades of meaning which are so vital to interpreting emotional nuance. This results in the good-ungood, black-white "world view" wherein just as the range of thought, including political concepts, is reduced, so is the range of doubts concerning the infallibility of the leadership. This combines with the unavailability of records, as in Animal Farm, and the falsification of records, if they are available, as in Nineteen Eighty-Four, to further undermine any doubts the general population may entertain regarding a revolution which was initially undertaken for the benefit of all but which has since been perverted into a privileged haven for a few.

Should all these means of control fail or rather fall short of their intention then a mythical enemy, either a Goldstein or a Snowball, can be invented. As Big Brother becomes God, so do they become the devil and are blamed for the failure of all the régime's promises. Consequently
the sense of objective truth, of truth beyond the Party, is further eroded until reality is what the Government says it is.

One could argue that this destruction of ideas and perceptions, of alternative points of view, inhibits free speech. But the question is, how can one inhibit thoughts which are unthinkable, which are "nameless and therefore unimaginable"? In a strict sense, then, one cannot call this inhibition of free speech. Besides, free speech by itself may be no more than the licence or means to babble nonsense or act libellously. But what the destruction of ideas and perceptions through language does do is inhibit the habit of debate which lies at the heart of the free society and which is kept beating through the lively discussion of different and wide-ranging points of view. Without debate we end up with a régime that, quite apart from being oppressive, is essentially stagnant, incurious, and especially stultifying to any creative impulse. As we shall see in the following chapter this is true not only of the Inner Party but of all those outside it, especially in the arts and the sciences.
Notes to Section IV – Chapter II

1. Orwell, CEJL, IV, p. 36.

2. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, p. 162.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp. 162-63.

5. Orwell, A Clergyman’s Daughter, p. 50.


7. Ibid., p. 164.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 165.

10. Orwell, Wigan Pier, p. 188.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 167.


15. Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 120.

16. See above, p. 149.


18. Ibid., p. 414.


20. Orwell, CEJL, IV, p. 211.


22. Orwell, CEJL, I, p. 419.

23. Ibid.

24. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, p. 6. At one point in Goldstein's theory it is asserted that "Oceania...is not centralized in any way." (See Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, p. 167.) This is an obvious and gross
contradiction of the overwhelming fact that London is the "chief city of Airstrip One" and, as mentioned above, is so completely dominated by the four ministries.


33. In *The English People* (written in May, 1944), Orwell believed that the "change over to a centralized economy...does of itself guarantee greater equality" (Orwell, *CEJL*, III, p. 50) but clearly he saw the dangers beyond a certain point for in the same essay he calls for less centralization (*CEJL*, III, pp. 51-52), arguing that not only would this be good for English agriculture but that diversity "would strengthen national unity rather than weaken it." (*CEJL*, III, p. 52.)

42. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 22.

46. Orwell, *Animal Farm*, p. 120.


50. The only record allowed is the official barn wall. See Orwell, *Animal Farm*, p. 23.


54. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 170. Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov said in an interview with a *Time* correspondent, "The problem is that in order to achieve the good life here [in Russia], one necessarily develops a certain conformist mentality. For most people, there is no opportunity to compare the system here with systems outside. The material side of life has improved here and people know it. So humans work, live and exist here, not knowing of any other kind of life."


58. Boris Souvarine in his study of Stalin notes, "The only things that matter are the latest writings of Stalin, the most recent speeches of his spokesmen, the newspaper articles setting forth the perishable truth of the day, up-to-the-minute texts which render seditious and obsolete the orthodox publications of the day before, finally the current sources of information such as the Soviet Encyclopaedias...which must be thrown on the scrap-heap...despite the many expurgations repeated by the many successive censorships, despite the many falsifications introduced in the very course of printing." (Jennifer McDowell, "1984 and Soviet Reality," *University of California Graduate Journal*, No. 1 (Fall, 1962), p. 18.


65. Ibid., p. 171.

66. Ibid., p. 172.

67. Ibid., p. 250.

68. Ibid., p. 241.

69. Ibid., p. 45.

70. Ibid., p. 44.

71. Ibid., p. 165.

72. Ibid., p. 250.

73. Ibid., p. 45.

74. Ibid., pp. 242, 248, 248.

75. Ibid., pp. 146-48.

76. Orwell, *CEJL*, III, pp. 166, 43, 166, 162.

77. Ibid., pp. 43-44.


81. Ibid., p. 47.

82. Ibid., pp. 146-47.

83. Ibid., p. 147.

84. Ibid., pp. 147-48.

85. Ibid., p. 148.

86. Ibid., p. 200.

87. Ibid., p. 250.
Chapter III - The Attack on Individuality in Literature, Science and Beyond.

For Orwell, the most pressing danger of the tendency towards greater centralization of government, exemplified in the party's control of the language, was that the "autonomous individual" was threatened with extinction. The threat was particularly ominous for writers, who help preserve the tradition of debate. The most invidious aspect of this danger was that, dictatorships aside, it was, as Blair had discovered in the rich's exploitation of the poor, often unintentional.

Orwell saw that the constant and increasing assault against a writer's (or, for that matter, any artist's) integrity, while it is a result of monopoly control over the media, is caused more by "the general drift of society rather than by active persecution." (My italics.) The result of such monopoly, particularly in war time when propagandists were in demand, was that the writer found it necessary to at least "earn part of his living by hack work." This meant joining institutions like the Ministry of Information and the B.B.C. which, while helping the writer to subsist, would also tend to "dictate his opinions," turning him (like the Talks Producer for India) "into a minor official working on themes handed to him from above." The writer is "called a reporter, but is treated as a megaphone." It is a short step to the totalitarian state where, because four ministries comprise the entire apparatus of government, people like Syme, Winston Smith and Ampleforth who have any literary skill or pretensions find themselves as employees of the Ministry of Truth. Here Winston is "not troubled by the fact that every word he murmured into the speakwrite, every stroke of his ink-pencil, was a deliberate lie. He was as anxious as anyone else in the Department that the forgery should be perfect" to make it "now impossible for any human being to prove by
documentary evidence that the war with Eurasia had ever happened.\(^4\)

Once again Orwell has drawn heavily on his own experience in portraying a fictional character. It is in his wartime diary, not Winston Smith's, that we read

I have now been in the B.B.C. [where the name Stalin was "completely sacrosanct"]\(^5\) about 6 months...its atmosphere is something halfway between a girls' school and a lunatic asylum...Nevertheless one rapidly becomes propaganda-minded and develops a cunning one did not previously have. E.g. I am regularly alleging in all my newsletters [Broadcasts to India] that the Japanese are plotting to attack Russia. I don't believe this to be so, but the calculation is: "If the Japanese do attack Russia, we can say 'I told you so.' If the Russians attack first, we can, having built up the picture of a Japanese plot beforehand, pretend that it was the Japanese who started it. If no war breaks out after all, we can claim that it is because the Japanese are too frightened of Russia." All propaganda is lies, even when one is telling the truth. I don't think this matters so long as one knows what one is doing and why.\(^6\) (My italics.)

While this is an honest moment for Orwell it is hardly a proud one. But it does show that well before he wrote *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he had experienced not only the temptation of but the surrender to what he later called in *The Prevention of Literature* (1946) the "dangerous proposition...that intellectual honesty is a form of antisocial selfishness." The most dangerous implication of the proposition is that while most people may readily agree to short term tactical lying in time of war, if the war, or war preparation, becomes permanent - as it does in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* - then the short term becomes the long term. Lying becomes the norm and one cannot, even by an act of will, confine it just to military matters. Lying becomes a habit in all areas of life, especially in a totalitarian state wherein control of the past is essential in protecting the myth of infallibility. In such a state, "lying would still continue even if concentration camps and secret police forces had ceased to be necessary" because history is seen as "something to be
created rather than learned." (My italics.)

Just as lying is not confined to any one sphere of activity, neither is the dominance of bureaucracy over the individual writer confined to merely instructing him on official political pronouncements. This state interference with the artist spreads beyond his official duties more than it does those of the bureaucrat because to lie about facts inevitably leads one into lying about feelings, which is the working domain more of the artist than the bureaucrat. In any event, the integrity of the would-be artist comes under heavy attack in the Ministry of Truth in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which is concerned with altering not only the past but primarily with "entertainment generally," including films, plays, novels and poems. For example, the novels designed for proletarian consumption "have only six plots" and are swapped about by the "Rewrite Squad." This is both the logical extension of the increasing centralization of the press, as noted in Orwell's essay on *Boy's Weeklies*, and the result of sophisticated technology, as predicted in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Similarly, in *The Prevention of Literature* Orwell describes how "Disney films, for instance, are produced by what is essentially a factory process, the work being done partly mechanically and partly by teams of artists who have to subordinate their individual style." The danger of all this is that in its further erosion of individual integrity, the weight of orthodox opinion gains, and the sense of objective truth, which can often only be discovered by venturing further than the convenience of production line process, is diminished. And even if prose is composed in solitude and out of the range of telescreens, as Orwell argues all serious prose has to be, the heretical ideas it may contain are unlikely to spread because of the
lack of non-official distribution channels and the punishment that would certainly follow underground distribution.

The fate of the prose writer in a totalitarian society is significant for if nothing else it focuses attention on what Orwell saw as an unsolved "dilemma" - namely that while "society cannot be arranged for the benefit of artists," who may not be as necessary to society as the coal miner and milkman, "without artists civilization perishes." This dilemma was not solved by the state employing the writer for, as we have seen, this was ruinous in that the artist must inevitably toe the official line. And to the suggestion that a writer could nevertheless write in his spare time, Orwell, doubtless drawing on his own experience at the B.B.C., correctly pointed out that "to compose a propaganda pamphlet or a radio feature needs just as much work as to write something you believe in." This saps one's energy for any spare time writing.

This left Orwell, for all his socialist vision, with the belief that despite its grave faults capitalism, particularly laissez-faire capitalism, afforded a writer, and artists in general, an escape. By "living off the big public," one could at least avoid the demeaning flatteries of patronism on the one hand and having to toe the official line of the bureaucrat on the other. The implications are as clear for the artist as for the citizen. Socialism might bring collectivism, even equality, but there is a constant danger that government and technology, through the centralization which ironically is required to enforce that equality, may deny the freedom of the individual. The danger is especially acute for the writer because "literature as we know it is an individual thing, demanding mental honesty and a minimum of censorship." And because he believed that "this is even truer of prose than of verse,"
Orwell regarded "the atmosphere of orthodoxy" as "completely ruinous to the novel, the most anarchical of all forms of literature." (My italics.)

Orwell in 1944 was still confident that a people, in this case the English, "could centralize their economy without destroying freedom in doing so." In Nineteen Eighty-Four he was obviously in grave doubt and his final position on this crucial point will be dealt with in the conclusion of this study, in the context of his statements on the role of the proles.

In Orwell's treatment of language control it is significant that while prose has fallen victim to Big Brother's deadly censorship in Airstrip One (England), verse of unknown authorship is permitted. This does not mean that verse is not carefully watched. Ampleforth, one of Smith's co-workers, is jailed for allowing the word "God" to remain in a poem. But it does mean that verse is relatively tolerated, for "even in a society where liberty and individuality had been extinguished, there would still be need... for patriotic songs and heroic ballads celebrating victories." This toleration, however, extended particularly to the proles in Nineteen Eighty-Four because the Inner Party considers them stupid and therefore harmless, reveals what might prove to be a grave miscalculation on the part of the totalitarian administration.

The Party, by means of a "versificator," manufactures apparently meaningless rhymes and sets them to music, as well as hate songs, to make the proles' lot more acceptable. What it does not take into account, however, is the possibility of improvisation, the fact, as Orwell notes in The Prevention of Literature, that when "many primitive peoples compose verse communally... someone begins to improvise... somebody else chips in with a line or rhyme when the first singer breaks down, and so the process
continues until there exists a whole song or ballad which has *no identifiable author.*\(^{18}\) (My italics.)

Such unidentifiable authorship would make it impossible to arrest those guilty of heresy against the régime's orthodoxy and might encourage others to join in. The originally meaningless verse could thus quickly become as potentially subversive as mime theatre.\(^{19}\) This possibility grows in proportion to the bureaucrat's tendency (especially those who are unable to grasp the subtlety of the poetic nuance and are too embarrassed to admit it) to look for form rather than content as a guide to correct action. It is the known "form" which, just as it will give comfort to the Christian Dorothy Hare in providing her with the familiarity of a traditional hymn, will afford comfort to a bureaucrat who is anxious to do everything "by the book."

Continuity of form is vitally important to the Inner Party for whether it be a question of a hate rhyme or a Newspeak sentence, the continuity of form allows the Party to present new policy in familiar doctrinal dress, as in the case of the enemy suddenly changing from Eurasia to Eastasia. In this way the Party, as in China, can make new policies appear as if they do not contradict supposedly infallible Party precepts. This explains why when real change comes in totalitarian societies it is so often signalled by a change in the form of a message rather than by the message itself. Indeed, the presence of a harsh censorship, the violation of which directly involves the severe curtailment of a Soviet citizen's political freedom (or in China, arrest and "Thought Reform"), has bred a brand of scholarship in the West which, under the name of Kremlinology, attempts along with other techniques to detect real change in the Soviet Union by concentrating largely upon
minute change in "form." In this regard it is relevant to note how under
the dreaded eye of censorship in Oceania the only hope that the proles
have to survive the obsessively formalized world of Big Brother may
ironically lie in the very verse produced for them by the Party.

What the Party in Oceania does not see is that in allowing the
proles to sing such apparently silly rhymes as

It was only an 'opeless fancy
It passed like an 'Pril dye,
But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred!
They 'ave stolen my 'eart awye^{20}

the Party not only runs the risk of heretical thoughts being spread
through improvisation by unidentifiable authorship but the very form of
the verse, that of the traditional nursery rhyme, is likely to recall
older rhymes. Such recall is dangerous to the Party. Whether or not
the words make sense, they remind the singer of another time, of history,
of an alternative way of life, and in so doing constitute a threat to the
"infallible" totalitarian way.

If the words do make sense, as when Winston Smith enquires about
"Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St. Clement's" and discovers that
what is now a "museum used for propaganda displays" was once a church,
then the memory of another time reinforced by concrete evidence is that
much stronger.

All the while that they were talking the half-remembered rhyme kept
running through Winston's head. Oranges and lemons say the bells of St.
Clement's, You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St.
Martin's! It was curious, but when you said it to yourself you had
the illusion of actually hearing bells, the bells of a lost London
that still existed somewhere or other, disguised and forgotten. From
one ghostly steeple after another he seemed to hear them pealing
forth...he had even started humming to an \textit{improvised} tune.^{21} (My italics.)

Thus while the form of such rhymes is easy to police, the form
itself can conjure up another time, a possible alternative. Indeed the
very utterance of the songs becomes an exercise in maintaining a consciousness not only about the past but about what it is to be fully human in the present. For as simple as it may be, the very consciousness of song ("the birds sang, the proles sang, the Party did not sing") keeps alive in simple form other possibilities than the present which the stripped prose of Newspeak kills, as surely as it kills the habit of debate.

Unlike the needs of the arts, the requirements of science would seem at first sight to pose a major difficulty standing in the way of a language of deception, be it Newspeak or the jargon-filled Oldspeak, which Orwell believed could affect all areas of endeavour. As he points out in The Prevention of Literature, a scientist must be guaranteed a certain amount of intellectual freedom even in a totalitarian society. Atom bombs cannot be manufactured if the scientist is required, as Winston Smith is, to believe that two and two make five. However, in a world of superstates - Eastasia, Eurasia and Oceania - science, insofar as it fathers increased production, must be carefully controlled because increased production, which would raise the living standard, is not wanted by the Inner Party. So long as they are comfortable they do not want more consumer goods which would raise the standard of living, for if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves. They would then, sooner or later, realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away.

Hence in a world where it was no longer possible to return to an agricultural past because, as Orwell noted in The Road to Wigan Pier, "the tendency towards mechanization...had become quasi instinctive... the problem was how to keep the wheels of industry turning without
increasing the real wealth of the world?"^26

It can hardly be argued that this is the "problem" of present day governments, totalitarian régimes included. But - and herein lies the popularity of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* - the psychological climate of a totalitarian state today, and on occasion the non-totalitarian state, strikes us as being remarkably similar to that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This is because every area of endeavour is brought to heel as much to maintain governmental power as to improve the human condition, and often solely to maintain power. In any case, whatever the hidden motives for their power hunger, the Inner Party of Oceania and the rulers of Eurasia and Eastasia do not want to increase production, not even for purposes of war. Like most super powers today, they already possess enough nuclear weapons to annihilate each other. Because of this capability, the leaders, while they have decided that the answer to the threatening problem of over-production caused by science is war, have also decided that such conflict, though continuous, must be limited. In this way the war is not intended to be decisive in terms of permanently changing boundaries. It is in the main a war not so much against an external enemy as one "waged by each ruling group against its own subjects"^27 whose consciousness the leadership does not want to raise. Furthermore, the slogans of war, which apart from evoking images of heroic sacrifice and having great "emotional appeal," help explain away the scarcity of consumer goods. They also channel existing hostilities into permanent "war-hysteria"^28 and are used to justify the continuous oppression and inequality which is needed to keep the Party in power. In this sense, for the Party, war is peace.^[29]

Such continuous war, or at the very least such continuous war
preparation, is more easily maintained by leaders than we think. In *Animal Farm* Napoleon appeals to the sense of common good in his followers. "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?" In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the common enemy is different but the technique is the same, with Goldstein and his Eurasian hordes being kept permanently in the mind of the public by the daily hate. Both leaderships illustrate what Orwell called "the falsity of the hedonistic attitude to life," that is, the assumption that "all human beings desire nothing beyond ease, security and avoidance of pain."  

The rulers of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he makes clear, understand what Hitler, Stalin and Churchill, totalitarians and non-totalitarians, have traditionally understood: quite apart from Nationalist appeal to the fatherland, Mother Russia or whatever, human beings, in addition to comfort and pleasure, "at least intermittently, want struggle and self sacrifice, not to mention drums, flags and loyalty parades." Orwell's view here is again an extension of something that he wrote in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, namely that it is only in the face of hardship and pain that claims of victory fulfill our need for the heroic vision. Of course people do get tired of "Better an end with horror than a horror without end" (Hitler) or "Blood, sweat and tears" and for this reason the Inner Party is ever predicting that final "victory" is within sight.  

Continuous limited war does not mean that total territorial conquest of each other in the future is not desired by the rulers of the superstates. On the contrary, while one of "the two aims of the
Party" is to discover through science "against his will what another person is thinking...the other [discernible in present régimes] is how to kill several hundred million people in a few seconds without giving warning beforehand." This will enable the régime to satisfy its two basic aims, that of conquering the world and that of extinguishing "once and for all the possibility of independent thought." All scientific research is dedicated to this end. And although no more A-bombs are dropped because of the possibility of a retaliatory holocaust, all three superstates keep producing and stockpiling A-bombs for "the decisive opportunity [or what today would be called the ultimate threat] which they all believe will come sooner or later." Because of the "decisive opportunity" theory, the search for new weapons continues unceasingly, even though warfare has remained more or less conventional for the past forty years. "Helicopters are more used than they were formerly, bombing planes have been largely superceded by self-propelled projectiles...but otherwise there has been little development."34

The problem raised by the increasing search for new weaponry even within the framework of limited conventional war, however, is that the scientist must still be allowed to work on the belief that two and two make four, that there is an external reality independent of the Party. Thus some independent thought, if not actually encouraged, has to be tolerated even within the boundaries set by the non-nuclear needs of limited war. Still, the Party does exert control insofar as limited war means limited science to the extent that the scientist of to-day is either a mixture of psychologist and inquisitor, studying with real ordinary minuteness the meaning of facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice and testing the truth-producing effects of drugs, shock therapy, hypnosis and physical torture; or he is chemist, physicist, or biologist
concerned only with such branches of his special subject as are relevant to the taking of life.  

At first sight such limited science may not seem possible in view of Orwell's own argument that once one free thought is allowed, others will follow or, conversely, that by removing the taboo on one thought, the log jam of taboos will burst. That a tunnel-visioned science devoted only to war is possible is evident in Orwell's essay, *What is Science?* Here we are reminded of the inability of many scientists "to withstand nationalism." While Hitler "may have ruined the long-term prospects of German science,...there were still plenty of gifted men to do the necessary research on such things as synthetic oil, jet planes, rocket projectiles and the atomic bomb" in the interest of the totalitarian "German war machine" which could not have arisen without such scientists.  

The lesson is simply that while knowledge of objective truth may be allowed humans, this is no guarantee that they will act humanely - that they will act on the basis of a world view which such knowledge gives them - that they will not surrender themselves to the narrow nationalist view. Of course, as Orwell pointed out in 1945, some do act humanely, taking the wider view, refusing to limit their work to nationalist purpose so long as their research is aimed solely at the destruction of man rather than his preservation.  

Such men by their example alone can disseminate the idea of unlimited ideas. The question for a totalitarian régime, then, is how can it permit a sense of objective truth to exist among scientists, who unlike the artist are considered essential, and yet prevent the growth of a "world view" which causes some scientists to perceive the reality beyond that of the Party?
The Inner Party's answer is to blinker the vision of scientists through controlling the language and thereby the thoughts of scientists. This would, of course, mean a language specially designed for science. This is called the "C" vocabulary of Newspeak. While the "A" vocabulary consists of words necessary for business transaction and everyday living, from drinking to riding in the tube, and the "B" vocabulary consists of words "deliberately constructed for political purposes," the "C" vocabulary consists "entirely of scientific and technical terms" stripped of "undesirable meanings."

Very few of the C words had any currency either in everyday speech or in political speech. Any scientific worker or technician could find all the words he needed in the list devoted to his own speciality, but he seldom had more than a smattering of the words occurring in the other lists. Only a very few words were common to all lists, and there was no vocabulary expressing the function of Science as a habit of mind, or a method of thought, irrespective of its particular branches. There was indeed no word for "Science," any meaning that it could possibly bear being already sufficiently covered by the word *Ingsoc.*

For the Party, such a vocabulary, like the other two, is a counsel of perfection in how to exert state control over the idea of objective truth. Leaks of objective truth do occur, however, even beyond the scientific community. Winston Smith "just once in his life...had possessed — after the event...concrete, unmistakable evidence of an act of falsification" "like a fossil bone." "He had held it [an old newspaper clipping] between his fingers for as long as thirty seconds" before he put it in the "memory hole" in the wall from which a stream of air would transport it to destruction in the great furnaces of the Ministry of Truth.

This incident demonstrates how the use of Newspeak, indeed any new language, is not enough in itself to alter the past, that language is merely an auxiliary technique of thought control. Above all else one has
to learn to control one's memory. 40

To make sure that all written records agree with the orthodoxy of the moment is merely a mechanical act. But it is also necessary to remember that events happened in the desired manner. And if it is necessary to rearrange one's memories or to tamper with written records then it is necessary to forget that one had done so. 41

If one is to succeed in this, the trick, as Smith realizes, is to apply the process of doublethink on itself - that is, to lie to yourself that you are not lying. The process finally becomes almost intuitive and is similar to trying to think of someone's name; the harder you try, the longer the name will be forgotten. But this latter experience is unconscious. Doublethink is a conscious attempt to be unconscious, like thinking of everything at once in order to think of nothing - a case of overload destroying the fuse of memory which would otherwise illuminate the past. Consequently one becomes unconscious of the very act of deception just performed. 42

It is an attempt to erase memory, never to forget the Inner Party's central tenet that the past is infinitely mutable, to believe the Party's claim that it had invented aeroplanes, to believe its fantastic claims of over fulfilled production quotas, and therefore to believe that "reality" exists only in the mind of the Party and "is not external." 43

Smith, however, clinging to his individuality, being "the last man," resists the deception of the Party even though he is part of that deception himself, having casually altered production figures as part of his job at the Ministry of Truth. In particular, he clings to the layman's belief in science - at least in a reality beyond the Party - by clinging to memories of natural laws that are not mutable. He remembers, indeed cultivates, the memory that "Stones are hard, water is wet,
objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre." His determination
to keep such things firmly in mind while at a desk job is a recognition of
Orwell's belief, expressed in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, that once you stop
using your hands, then with the advance of science you lose a large part
of your consciousness.

Winston's spirit of resistance to assure himself of a reality not
just beyond the Party but of another time is captured in his visit to a
small shop in the prole quarter of town. He picks up a lump of glass at
the heart of which there is "a strange, pink convoluted object." Upon
enquiry Winston discovers from the old shop keeper that it is something
called "coral." What attracts Winston to the object more than its
beauty is its "uselessness." Reminding us of Orwell's declaration
that "so long as I remain alive and well I shall continue...to love
the surface of the earth, and to take pleasure in solid objects and
scraps of useless information," Winston buys the lump of glass imme-
diately. What fascinates him most of all is "the air it seemed to
possess of belonging to an age quite different from the present....
It was a queer thing, even a compromising thing, for a Party member to
have in his possession. *Anything old...anything beautiful, was always
vaguely suspect.* (My italics.) Above all, such resistance to the
notion of reality being what the Party says it is, is the manifestation
of Smith's lingering belief that "Freedom is the freedom to say that two
plus two makes four. If that is granted all else follows."

Such resistance, however, is pitted against the subtle arguments
of O'Brien. To the latter's claim that "The earth is as old as we [the
Party] are, no older" Winston protests, "But the rocks are full of the
bones of extinct animals - mammoths and mastodons and enormous reptiles
which lived here long before man was ever heard of. O'Brien asks, "Have you ever seen those bones, Winston? Of course not. Nineteenth century biologists invented them....Outside man there is nothing."\(^{51}\)

In presenting O'Brien's argument in terms of "Who has seen the wind?" Orwell paradoxically reveals Smith's vulnerability, and our vulnerability, to unscientific argument through revealing our blind acceptance of a wide range of "scientific facts" whose proofs lie beyond our relatively narrow experience. He shows how much of what we believe is accepted on faith - solely on the authority of "experts." In this sense Orwell wrote, "Shaw is right. This is a credulous age."\(^{52}\)

Indeed as early as 1935 Orwell has Dorothy Hare entertaining O'Brien's thesis that reality is not external: "The truism that all real happenings are in the mind struck her more forcibly than ever before."\(^{53}\) That Dorothy Hare's "truism" is so seriously questioned by Winston Smith in Nineteen Eighty-Four fourteen years later marks a significant maturation in Orwell. It reveals his concern with the ever present danger that in over-emphasizing the cerebral at the expense of the physical, the things we can feel, we run the risk of disbelieving the evidence of our senses,\(^ {54}\) that in the full meaning of the phrase we "lose touch with reality." If this happens we are already half way to accepting O'Brien's claim that "There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation - anything," that "We make the laws of Nature," and elsewhere that "Whatever the Party holds to be truth is truth."\(^ {55}\)

That Smith is a "flaw in the pattern" and holds out against such claims, or at least holds out longer than most, is due largely to his inability to either control his thought through doublethink or to break
the old habit of thinking in Oldspeak, even though he rewrites history in Newspeak. It is not that he dislikes his work of altering Oldspeak in the Ministry of Truth. On the contrary, "Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work." Like Orwell, who had worked in Propaganda at the B.B.C. and who thought that had the régime been devoted to a better cause he would have enjoyed nothing better than being one of the Gestapo specialists who track down authors through painstaking studies of style, Winston finds that, regardless of the purpose of the job, there were jobs "so difficult and intricate that you could lose yourself in them." As we have seen, "he was as anxious as anyone else in the Department that the forgery should be perfect."56

Winston's difficulty is that he still thinks in Oldspeak because he cannot give up its multifarious shades of meaning so long as he clings to the old concept of objective truth rather than the Party's "blackwhite" vision of the world. His fellow worker, Syme, warns him of the danger.

"You haven't a real appreciation of Newspeak, Winston," he said almost sadly. "Even when you write it you're still thinking in Oldspeak. I've read some of those pieces that you write in The Times occasionally. They're good enough, but they're translations. In your heart you'd prefer to stick to Oldspeak, with all its vagueness and shades of meaning."57

Smith knows that Syme is right - unable to accept the Party's concept of reality he cannot accept its language or Syme's vision that "by the year 2050 at the very latest not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now."58

But, as noted earlier, the totalitarian régime does not maintain total control over dissenting opinions by language control alone. When lies fail to control men there is always terror, and terror works. This is the lesson with which Orwell, the ex-imperialist policeman and fugitive
from the communist police, ends *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Elsewhere Orwell's point is not that the instigators of terror always win but that they win more often than is generally believed, or more often than we want to know.

"REPORT YOURSELF." "Go in and REPORT YOURSELF AGAIN!" "I was in a world where it was *not possible* for me to be good." "It was possible... to commit a sin without knowing that you committed it, without wanting to commit it, and without being able to avoid it," and "Whenever one had a chance to suck up, one did suck up, and at the first smile one's hatred turned into a sort of cringing love." 

This is not the political prisoner, Smith, cowering before the Party or "cured" by being made "sane" by O'Brien; it is young Eric Blair being "cured" of bed wetting at St. Cyprian's. Orwell writes further,

There was a boy named Beacham, with no brains to speak of, but evidently in acute need of a scholarship. Sambo was flogging him towards the goal as one might do with a foundered horse. He went up for a scholarship at Uppingham, came back with a consciousness of having done badly, and a day or two later received a severe beating for idleness. "I wish I'd had that caning before I went up for the exam," he said sadly - a remark which I felt to be contemptible, but which I perfectly well understood... It is a mistake to think such methods do not work. They work very well for their special purpose.... The boys themselves believed in its efficacy.

While at times it is a risky venture to try to tie in an author's childhood experiences to his adult work, and wrong headed to confuse all coercion with terror, the above passages are nevertheless important in following Orwell's concern with the subject of terror. They deserve attention not simply because *Such Such Were the Joys* was written two years after *Animal Farm* and shortly before *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, thus making the childhood experience-adult work connection more tenable.
They deserve attention because in reflecting the schoolboy's passive acceptance of his lot they point directly to the psychological background of Nineteen Eighty-Four. They testify to the fact that without a developed sense of history one is particularly vulnerable to a reign of terror for no other reason than one has no knowledge of anything else.

The weakness of the child [like those pupils of Dorothy Hare and the adults of Nineteen Eighty-Four] is that it starts with a blank sheet. It neither understands nor questions the society in which it lives...other people can work upon it, infecting it with the sense of inferiority and the dread of offending against mysterious terrible laws.

Of his own school days at St. Cyprian's, Orwell writes: "I did not question the prevailing standards...there were no others." As we have seen, it is precisely because of the lack of "standards of comparison" that prole and Party member fail to realize that they are oppressed. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the men of terror win, not now and then, here and there, but everywhere and always, for a people devoid of history are a people unused to the very idea of change - let alone revolt.

Yet even with all the awesome evidence of perverted power about him, Winston Smith continues to resist, and this is what makes him heroic. Daily aware of the institutionalized attack on the concept of objective truth, which differs from the haphazard, if voluntary, attack which Orwell believed was launched by the intellectuals in the thirties, Winston Smith, having resisted the techniques of deception, now resists the technique of sheer terror. He does so despite his knowledge that a "Party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police." And he can do so because he draws strength from the belief, held earlier by Dorothy Hare, that whatever happens externally "even
when you're practically starving - it doesn't change anything inside you." Hence he believed that "the inner heart, whose workings were mysterious even to yourself, remained impregnable." Iron bars may end your political freedom but your metaphysical freedom, the freedom to think what you will inside the cell, is indestructible. O'Brien, however, destroys this inner freedom and it is this which is the ultimate nightmare, the final tragedy of Nineteen Eighty-Four.

The method O'Brien uses to break Winston (because "it is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world") is yet another extension of the Party's attack upon the concept of external reality beyond the Party. While there is nothing new in terror being used in Oceania as a further means of coercion, such practice being as old as despotism itself, the new and terrifying element in Oceania is that terror is constant. And it is constant because there is no distinction made between the dissenting thought and the dissenting act. Furthermore "Thoughtcrime" or, in Newspeak, "crimethink" means death. It is especially significant that the techniques of terror in Orwell's last work, such as the daily hate session, are only new insofar as they employ the latest gadgetry of a perverted science. As the following discussion of such techniques shows, Nineteen Eighty-Four is the culmination of Orwell's concern that the power of orthodoxy, aided by increasing centralization and science, would eventually smother the individual.

It was a voice that sounded as if it could go on for a fortnight without stopping. It's a ghastly thing, really, to have a sort of human barrel-organ shooting propaganda at you by the hour. The same thing over and over again. Hate, hate, hate. Let's all get together and have a good hate. Over and over. It gives you the feeling that something has got inside your skull and is hammering down on your brain. But for a moment, with my eyes shut, I managed to turn the tables on him. I got inside his skull....I felt what he was feeling....Smash! Right in the middle! The bones cave in like
an eggshell and what was a face a minute ago is just a great big blob of strawberry jam. Smash! There goes another. That's what's in his mind, waking and sleeping, and the more he thinks of it the more he likes it.

The world we're going down into, the kind of hate-world, slogan-world...the rubber truncheons. The secret cells where the electric light burns night and day and the detectives watching you while you sleep...the processions and the posters with enormous faces, and the crowds of a million people all cheering for the Leader till they deafen themselves into thinking that they really worship him, and all the time, underneath, they hate him so that they want to puke.73

This is George Bowling speaking in England just before the Second World War. Following is Winston Smith in Oceania in the "after-war":

"The next moment a hideous grinding speech, as of some monstrous machine running without oil, burst from the telescreen at the end of the room....The hate had started."

In its second minute the Hate rose to a frenzy...In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel against the rung of the chair...it was impossible to avoid joining in...a hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer...turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. And yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp...at one moment Winston's hatred was not turned against Goldstein at all, but on the contrary, against Big Brother, the Party...the Thought Police...yet at the very next instant...his secret loathing of Big Brother changed into adoration.74

Despite their similarity, these passages show how, while the gadgetry of science may coerce, it is in the final analysis unreliable as a means of permanent conversion, for quite naturally there is the tendency of the victim to periodically turn against his indoctrinators or torturers. But in order for the totalitarian Party to feel totally secure they must have total conversion. And this, as O'Brien knows, involves near total removal from external reality so that the will, the inner private self, contrary to Winston's belief, can be broken down as much as the body. So long as the mind has some evidence of a reality...
beyond the Party it has a saving point of focus amid the vertigo of drugs and electric shock.

In describing this process of breaking a prisoner down, which for Winston begins at the moment of arrest, Orwell once again demonstrates his grasp of the concrete details of subjugation. The moment Winston and Julia are arrested by the Thought Police in the old pawn shop which they had thought was a hideaway from Party surveillance, we are given an unmistakable sign that Smith - the last man - the last autonomous individual - is doomed. His end is signalled when the glass paperweight with the piece of coral embedded in it is smashed by one of the policemen. As the coral, "a tiny crinkle of pink," rolls across the floor, Winston thinks, "how small it always was!" Having failed previously in a conversation with an old prole to capture a sense of a past that was so different from existence under the Party, Winston had found in the paperweight both a "visible" and "solid" reminder of that past. Its very existence, as evidence, and perhaps hope, of an alternative way of life, refuted the Party's claim that the only reality was theirs and existed only in the present; that "History has stopped."

Now the solid object, the connection with the past, is broken. It is the first step in breaking Winston because it is removal from any evidence or memory of another reality. The second step is for O'Brien to follow that rule of thumb for all police, namely to isolate the prisoner. In this case Smith, after having been taken from a large common cell, is put into a "high-ceilinged windowless" cell of glittering walls where (as Bowling predicted) the light burned constantly, quickly removing one further from the sense of external reality through causing the distinction between night and day to disappear:
He did not know where he was. Presumably he was in the Ministry of Love; but there was no way of making certain. There were four telescreens, one in each wall. It might be twenty-four hours since he had eaten, it might be thirty-six. He still did not know, probably never would know, whether it had been morning or evening when they arrested him.

Before the final isolation some other Party members who are also prisoners pass through the common cell but their confusion as to time only adds to Winston's. Indeed their passage further isolates him psychologically. When Ampleforth, the poet, is brought in, Winston asks, "What are you in for?" Ampleforth answers, "There is only one offence is there not?" Likewise when Parsons, Winston's dim-witted fellow tenant from Victory Mansions, is brought in and Winston asks what he has been arrested for Parsons quickly replies, "Thoughtcrime!" The two most striking things about the new "political" prisoners are Ampleforth's ready acceptance of the charge as if it were as legitimate as a nonpolitical charge such as murder, and Parsons' abject servility.

"Of course I'm guilty!" cried Parsons. "You don't think the Party would arrest an innocent man do you?...Thoughtcrime is a dreadful thing old man....It's insidious....Do you know how it got hold of me? In my sleep!...There I was, working away, trying to do my bit - never knew I had any bad stuff in my mind at all. And then I started talking in my sleep....Do you know what I'm going to say to them when I go up before the tribunal? 'Thank you,' I'm going to say, 'thank you for saving me before it was too late.'"

"Who denounced you?" said Winston.

"It was my little daughter....Pretty smart for a nipper of seven, eh? I'm proud of her. It shows I brought her up in the right spirit, anyway."78

The widespread acquiescence of the victims, like the subservience of the Animals in Animal Farm who publicly confessed to crimes they did not commit, demonstrates how alone Smith is, why he is the "last man" in Europe. It also shows how a totalitarian régime, through appealing to the normal need to expiate guilt, can manage (with help from the children's "Spies") to maintain a steady stream of arrests. These can
then be used to justify the need for continuing surveillance and terror. In such a situation, the "Leader" replaces God. "Everyone is washed clean," says O'Brien of those who are tortured and interrogated. Of three prisoners in particular he tells Smith,

I saw them gradually worn down, whimpering, grovelling, weeping—and in the end it was not with pain or fear, only with penitence. By the time we had finished with them they were only the shells of men. There was nothing left in them except sorrow for what they had done and love of Big Brother. It was touching to see how they loved him. They begged to be shot quickly, so that they could die while their minds were still clean.80

That Big Brother has replaced God is obvious throughout the novel but what O'Brien exemplifies and later reveals to Winston Smith about the new totalitarianism is that the administrators understand that "hatred" is no more exhausting than "love."81 This is the final salvo against the belief that evil men must necessarily be worn down by good. The success of terror in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is clearly an attempt by Orwell to counter the tenacious western, and more specifically English, belief that "it can't happen here"—to counter the "bosh about our natural genius for 'muddling through,'"82 and the almost mystical conviction that "a régime founded on slavery must collapse."83

The terror is especially heightened by the fact that the victims simply vanish without trace—always at night.84

The great purges [like the Stalinist purges] involving thousands of people with public trials of traitors and thought-criminals who made abject confession of their crimes and were afterwards executed, were special show-pieces not occurring oftener than once in a couple of years. More commonly, people [like Winston Smith, Ampleforth and Parsons] who had incurred the displeasure of the Party simply disappeared and were never heard of again.85

Though Winston Smith resists feelings of guilt because he clings to a sense of objective truth unlike his fellows, he does share their common fate. And like them he suffers from the common and constant
anxiety - the terror - which emanates from the fact that in the sense of a codified set of rules to which one may refer as a guide to acceptable, or at least safe, behaviour there is "no law" in Oceania. When he opens a book in a hidden corner and begins his secret diary he is only "reasonably" certain that he faces death. Because thoughts and actions "are not formally forbidden," one's sense of morality is not fixed, as it was in the medieval church, for example, or in modern legal code. The "hole" left by the failure of religion is still unfilled by any immutable laws. The result is permanent anxiety. It is the condition of our age and challenges the party's assumption that if a person is "naturally orthodox...he will in all circumstances know, without taking thought, what is the true belief or the desirable emotion." 86

The best possible antidote to such anxiety is, through close adherence to "crimestop, blackwhite, and doublethink," to be "unable to think too deeply on any subject whatever." This is not a total cure for anxiety or total insurance against arrest but it will at least insulate one to some extent against the lack of formal rules and against the intrusion of contradictions suggested by external reality. It is in this sense that Ignorance is Strength.

In a way, the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane. They simply swallowed everything, and what they swallowed did them no harm, because it left no residue behind, just as a grain of corn will pass undigested through the body of a bird. 87

Quite apart from the fact that the absence of formal rules encourages such frantic loyalty to the Party it also makes it easier for the régime
to arrest anyone without having to justify its action by reference to law, to any specific charge other than the catchall, "Thoughtcrime."
The absence of formal rules also protects the régime from charges of violating the rules of what had once been English Socialism. Thus there is no legal requirement for the Party to justify the gross inequalities of "Ingsoc," to explain why it is that oligarchical collectivism is more oligarchical than collectivist, or why eighty-five percent of the population (the proles) are in servitude to the Party, or why Big Brother is Napoleon writ large. Consequently Orwell shows how the absence of law can join corruption of language in society in making rapid shifts of policy more acceptable.

Much of the reason for Smith's resistance is his rejection of a world without laws. Because of this he finds comfort, indeed seeks comfort, in the laws of nature. In these at least there is a sanity, an understandable order and purpose that can be discerned in the hardness of a rock, the falling of the rain, the flowering of shrubs. Even his rendezvous with Julia in the countryside becomes, in his flight from the present, a journey back to the old reality like the attempted escapes of George Bowling, Gordon Comstock, and John Flory before him. Amid the colourful abandon of tree and flower, in what he wistfully calls the "Golden Country," he undergoes a "slow shock of recognition."

He knew it by sight...on the opposite side the boughs of elm trees swayed just perceptibly in the breeze, and their leaves stirred faintly in dense masses like women's hair. Surely somewhere nearby, but out of sight, there must be a stream with green pools where dace were swimming. 

This of course is a return to the hidden pool of Bowling's youth, the secret fishing hole behind Binfield House. As Flory had fled the stifling atmosphere of the Club and headed into a riot of jungle to be
refreshed and cleansed by the private hidden pool, as Comstock heads into the country with his girl to escape the city where he has had visions of heads stuck in gas-ovens, and future wars, and as Bowling heads into the country in flight from the "prison" of conformity on Ellesmere Road and his visions of the "after war," "the slogans...the enormous faces," so Smith flees the reality of all the others' visions. Paradoxically, however, in fleeing this reality he does not flee consciousness but seeks increased consciousness in the solid, visible objects of the natural world.

Winston feels so oppressed by the world of terror that even the sex act with Julia while on the country outing takes on a meaning beyond being an enjoyable sensual experience. It is an act as yet not fully controlled by the Party, despite the fact that, as Julia says, "all this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour." Winston sees that sex is not completely controlled by the Party despite the fact that, as he discovers, all emotions have been so tainted by the Party's terror that he can no longer look at Julia's nakedness with "pure lust" as one could have in the old days. In these circumstances, the sex act for Julia and Winston, as well as being physically pleasing, becomes a highly conscious rebellion, a "political act," against a political orthodoxy which relies heavily on turning sexual energy into the "driving force" of hysterical obedience.

When you make love you're using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don't give a damn for anything. They [the Party] can't bear you to feel like that...If you're happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the Three-year Plans and the Two Minutes Hate...?"90

Sex is grudgingly permitted because of the Party's need to pro-create91 but thereafter even the family tie is essentially destroyed
within the family by the early psychic separation of child from parent through the systematic training of the Hitler Youth-like organization called the "Spies." It is through this organization, as in the case of Parsons' daughter, that Party surveillance as an instrument of terror is extended to the family keyhole. Again this gross act of state interference is not a wildly futuristic vision but a mere extension on mass scale of present behaviour by some governments.

Smith's private rebellion against such gross invasion of privacy is effected, among other acts, by his secret affair with another Party member and the keeping of a diary through which he can constantly remind himself of what is in front of his nose, that "sanity is not statistical," that even if he is a "minority of one," still there was "truth and there was untruth." But he is doomed in the final analysis because he is alone, because he has found privacy and not in spite of it. O'Brien makes the point that "Alone and free – the human being is always defeated. It must be so because every human being is doomed to die, which is the greatest of all failures." O'Brien then offers a way out: "But if he can make complete, utter submission, if he can escape from his identity, if he can merge himself in the Party so that he is the Party, then he is all-powerful and immortal."92

In the absence of religion, more specifically the absence of Christianity, O'Brien's invitation to partake of a strong sense of immortality with others makes a powerful appeal. Its appeal is to that latent need, which Orwell believed is in all of us, to believe in something – to share at least in some sense of "brotherhood."93 Indeed it is Winston's suspicion that O'Brien belongs to the forbidden "brotherhood" of Oceania which first lures him into betraying his heresies to O'Brien.
The fact that totalitarian régimes implicitly appeal to the subliminal desire for brotherhood explains for Orwell why the Soviet Union, with all its cruelty and terror, could win over "people like the Dean of Canterbury" who were dispirited by the waning attractiveness of their own organizations. Indeed the appeal of seeking immortality through Party identification is the basis for Orwell's belief that "power-worship" is "the new religion of Europe." 94

At first, Winston Smith, like John Flory before him, refuses any such invitation to submerge his individuality in exchange for the company of others. But gradually, through a nightmarish torture of isolation, drugs, beatings, electric shock and incessant questioning, he is worn down to "a bowed, grey-coloured, skeleton-like thing" 95 that screams and rolls on the floor in his own blood and vomit, whimpering for mercy. His obedience to the Party passes from "negative obedience," the obedience of coercion, to an obedience of his own will. After a time, alone in his cell without benefit of the simplest debate that might question his abject surrender, he holds a pencil in his hand and clumsily begins to record the thoughts that come unchallenged into his head. Without O'Brien standing over him he writes, "FREEDOM IS SLAVERY," "TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE," and "GOD IS POWER." 96

Finally the remaining shield of personal loyalty, his feeling for Julia, the last memory of reality, of truth beyond the Party, is shattered. He is dreaming about the Golden Country. It is Bowling's old vision of peace and security amid a madly changing world. "He could feel the short springy turf under his feet and the gentle sunshine on his face. At the edge of the field were the elm trees, faintly stirring, and somewhere beyond that was the stream where the dace lay in the green pools under
the willows."^^ Strapped to a chair he sees the cage come nearer and nearer.

Winston heard a succession of shrill cries...he fought furiously against the panic....Suddenly the foul musty odour of the brutes struck his nostrils. There was a violent convulsion of nausea inside him....Everything had gone black. For an instant he was insane, a screaming animal. Yet he came out of the blackness clutching an idea. There was one and only one way to save himself. He must interpose another human being between himself and the rats.

As the pink hands and whiskers of one of the rats press against the wire Winston screams, "Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me. Julia!...Not me!...Not me."

At this moment the lingering vestiges of individual pride and dignity are extinguished forever in Winston Smith. O'Brien has cured him of rebellion, he has, as promised, made Winston "sane." Winston now belongs totally to the Party. Released, he is a walking zombie awaiting
death - the bullet in the back of the neck which will surely come. Having satisfied the Party, having fallen subservient to the terror which the Party uses not for the accumulation of wealth but for the sheer "intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler," Smith is left alone after his public confessions to quietly await his end. Drinking his Victory gin, his mind back in the Ministry of Love, "with everything forgiven, his soul white as snow," he gazes up at the enormous poster of the Leader.

Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. 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.

Smith's destruction is the final illustration of what Orwell, in 1944, considered to be one of the most dangerous fallacies in non-totalitarian countries: the belief (like that of Dorothy Hare) that under a dictatorship "you can be free inside." It is the belief that "despite the face of the Leader, four feet wide" glaring all about you, "up in the attics the secret enemies of the régime [like Smith] can record their thoughts in perfect freedom." It is a belief, writes Orwell, that does not take into account the fundamental horror of isolation, does not understand that if Defoe had really lived on a desert island he could not have written Robinson Crusoe "nor would he have wanted to." Winston Smith's diary did not keep him free inside - at best it was only temporarily therapeutic.

What Orwell tells us is that quite apart from the more efficient use of terror and totalitarian methods of deception which help undermine the desire for intellectual liberty there is a much more insidious power
at work. Though not realized by Dorothy Hare, Winston Smith or the painter who told Orwell in 1944 that he would be a pacifist under a German occupation "so that I can get on with my work," the fundamental enemy of intellectual freedom is the attempt to isolate oneself from one's fellows. The occasional need of solitude notwithstanding, Orwell argues that while it is possible to work without thinking "it is almost impossible to think without talking," which means the company of others. Of course, once you talk you risk losing your political freedom, for you do not know what thoughts will follow. And because those in power do not know what will follow they will try to forestall heresies by refusing to declare any subject politically "neutral" - as witnessed by Stalin's and Hitler's pronouncements on "decadent" art. And if there is no neutral ground, you are either "for" or "against" the régime. Still, the risk of communicating with one's fellows must be taken if one's intellectual and political freedom, and ultimately one's humanity, is to survive. The story of Winston Smith who tried to live in his own world for a time but then sought the uninhibited company of Julia is one of bravery but ultimately one of defeat. It is the totality of this defeat that is captured in the phrase "He loved Big Brother."

Yet for Orwell all is not lost to the totalitarian state. As the animals, unaware of their collective strength, had inspired Orwell to write Animal Farm, Winston Smith is inspired to write that "if there is hope...it lies in the proles." It is a return to Orwell's faith in the virtues of the working class. But the question for those in the servitude of the totalitarian state is, what evidence is there for such an assertion?

Orwell argues that such a population does have weapons with which
to fight the totalitarian state whether or not they realize it. The first is their numerical superiority. Physically they are as capable of rebellion as the whipped animals which had inspired *Animal Farm*. Constituting eighty-five percent of the population "they needed only to rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies. If they chose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning." The problem, however, is that the proles fail to realize their potential for revolt. The problem is a lack of any kind of political consciousness; "until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious." Politically they are the direct descendants of the coal miners of Wigan: "It was not desirable that the proles should have strong political feelings. All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working hours or shorter rations."<sup>106</sup>

Unlike the members of the Party, however, the proles' consciousness is not deliberately blunted by active ideological indoctrination, at least not by anything beyond the standard newscasts. Rather it is blunted by the Party's perpetuation of what Orwell sees as the "ancestral" sociological patterns of the poorest British worker:

They were born, they grew up in the gutters, they went to work at twelve, they passed through a brief blossoming-period of beauty and sexual desire, they married at twenty, they were middle-aged at thirty, they died, for the most part, at sixty. Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer, and, above all gambling, filled the horizon of their minds.<sup>107</sup> (My italics.)

It is as if the early sections of *The Road to Wigan Pier* have been transported to the world of Oceania. Even in Victory Mansions the haunting image of the haggard, old-before-her-time housewife reappears
as we remember Mrs. Parsons, "a woman with lined face and wispy hair, fiddling helplessly with a blocked waste pipe."  

Still there is hope. Just as the Party fails to realize the potential of verse as a subversive weapon insofar as memories and curiosity prompted by traditional rhyme forms can bring to mind alternative ways of life, the Party likewise fails to see the inherent danger of allowing the proles to gamble. While gambling may blunt political consciousness of inequality by offering prizes as a sop to the underprivileged, and offering them hope of bettering their lot, the very presence of the concept of "luck," of "accident," runs counter to the concept of infallible planning by an infallible Party.

It may well be of course that until Ministries of Information in totalitarian governments perfect their methods of deception, of being able to rationalize everything that happens (including the failure of five year plans), the Party will tolerate the belief in luck as a convenient explanation of those events which contradict the régime's supposed infallibility. The danger to the régime, however, is that though the concepts of luck and planning may reasonably coexist, the belief in luck, even if it does not erode the belief in any man's supposed political infallibility, may well suggest the idea of a reality beyond the control of the Party. If ever this idea becomes widely held then the power, if not the infallibility, of the régime is likely to be widely questioned. And therein lie the seeds of rebellion.

But as in the case of the revolutionary potential of verse, the question is how, if ever, will the proles become conscious enough to recognize, and organize against, the massive deceit that is being worked upon them? Indeed they may not - the prognosis of Nineteen Eighty-Four
is not good. But if there is hope in this matter it lies in something
which the proles have that no one else possesses in Oceania and that is
a strong sense of loyalty. This is not a public loyalty, a loyalty
to the Party that has to adapt to each new policy; it is a "fixed"
loyalty to each other. It is the kind of loyalty that Winston rebel-
liously had for Julia, and it testifies to the victory of the generous
and individual impulse over the inhuman Party loyalty.

By contrast, the Party members are marked by a lack of simple
friendship for each other, and an acceptance of cruelty which reveals
the divorce between the heart and mind which George Bowling feared would
mark the streamlined man from modern Europe. This difference between
the proletarian and Party members, between the "Low" and "Middle-High"
strata of society, is demonstrated early in the novel when Smith describes
the outrage with which a prole mother objects to a particularly bloody
and violent movie scene:

There was a wonderful shot of a child's arm going up up up right
into the air a helicopter with a camera in its nose must have
followed it up and there was a lot of applause from the party seats
but a woman down in the prole part of the house suddenly started
kicking up a fuss and shouting they didn't oughter of showed it in
front of kids...until the police turned...her out i don't suppose
anything happened to her nobody cares what the proles say typical
prole reaction.110 (My italics.)

Similarly for Winston Smith, the Party member, the song

It was only an 'opeless fancy,
It passed like an April dye,
But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred!
They 'ave stolen my 'eart awaye!

is nothing more than some lines turned out from a versificator "without
any human intervention whatever." But the proles quickly adopt it and
the washerwoman near Winston's and Julia's hideaway infuses it with such
emotion that for Winston she turns "the dreadful rubbish into an almost
pleasant sound." "It struck him as a curious fact that he had never
heard a member of the Party singing alone and spontaneously. It would
even have seemed slightly unorthodox, a dangerous eccentricity like
talking to oneself."\textsuperscript{111}

It is the recurrence of this song, the fact that it outlives
the Hate song, that makes us realize why hope lies in the proles. Unlike
a Party member "who is expected to have no private emotions,"\textsuperscript{112} they
have preserved the old emotions such as personal loyalty and this keeps
them more "human" than the Party. (My italics.)

They had not become hardened inside. They had held on to the
primitive emotions which he [Smith] himself had to re-learn by
conscious effort.\textsuperscript{113}

Everywhere stood the same solid unconquerable figure, made monstrous
by work and childbearing, toiling from birth to death and still
singing. Out of those mighty loins a race of conscious beings must
one day come. You were dead; theirs was the future.\textsuperscript{114}

Contrary to what Goldstein has said, that the proles will be
incapable of rebelling because "there is no way in which discontent can
become articulate," the songs for the proles incorporate the primitive
emotions and do articulate, however, roughly, the proles' hope, though
they do not yet know it. Describing how Winston is listening to the
washerwoman sing, Orwell writes that there were
everywhere, all over the world, hundreds of thousands of millions
of people just like this, people ignorant of one another's existence,
held apart by walls of hatred and lies and yet almost exactly the
same - people who had never learned to think but who were storing
up in their hearts and bellies and muscles the power that would one
day overturn the world.\textsuperscript{115}

The proles have made the songs their own and through them express
what little individuality they have retained. Much of this emotional if
not intellectual individuality results from the proles keeping touch with
the reality beyond the Party through their work. You could share in their
future, Smith believed, "if you kept alive the mind as they kept alive the body."\textsuperscript{116} The proles' more frequent contact with the physical world in maintaining a grip on reality is central to withstanding the onslaught of the régime's deception, most specifically Newspeak. For, as Orwell wrote in \textit{The English People}, "the people likeliest to use simple concrete language, and to think of metaphors that really call up a visual image [through which the "blackwhite" world of Newspeak can be challenged], are those in contact with physical reality."\textsuperscript{117} It is this concretely based imagery which must invade the Party if the individual with feeling is to survive. Winston sees such hope in Julia.

A thing that astonished him about her was the coarseness of her language. Party members were supposed not to swear, and Winston himself very seldom did swear, aloud, at any rate. Julia, however, seemed unable to mention the Party, and especially the Inner Party, without using the kind of words that you saw chalked up in dripping alley-ways. He did not dislike it. It was merely one symptom of her revolt against the Party and all its ways, and somehow it seemed natural and healthy, like the sneeze of a horse that smells bad hay.\textsuperscript{118}

Finally, then, and this is Orwell's concluding message, the battle for the future in the totalitarian society is between those who keep both heart and mind alive through keeping touch with the reality of the physical world, and those who surrender heart and mind to the reality of the Party.

This theme of Orwell's is best captured in the scene where Winston tries to explain to Julia that even the past "if it survives anywhere" survives "in a few solid objects with no words attached to them, like that lump of glass there," and in the scene during their escape to the country:

A thrush had alighted on a bush not five metres away, almost at the level of their faces. Perhaps it had not seen them. It was in the sun, they in the shade. It spread out its wings, fitted
them carefully into place again, ducked its head for a moment, as though making a sort of obeisance to the sun, and then began to pour forth a torrent of song. In the afternoon hush the volume of sound was startling. Winston and Julia clung together, fascinated. The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity....Winston watched it with a sort of vague reverence. For whom, for what, was that bird singing? No mate, no rival was watching it. What made it sit at the edge of the lonely wood and pour its music into nothingness?... But by degrees the flood of music drove all speculations out of his mind. It was as though it were a kind of liquid stuff that poured all over him and got mixed up with the sunlight that filtered through the leaves. He stopped thinking and merely felt.¹¹⁹ (My italics.)

This is not an injunction to stop thinking, even though we could cynically point out that it is precisely because Winston Smith thought so much that he ends up dead. Rather it is a clear message — that if our minds are to withstand the electronic world we must periodically go back to nature and to things without utilitarian value. In them and in their profusion at the simplest level we see that though each tree is made of wood, each rock, of rock, each bird, of flesh and blood, no two are exactly alike, as Winston realizes when he sees "some tufts of loosestrife growing in the cracks of a cliff. One tuft was of two colours, magenta and brick-red, apparently growing on the same root. He had never seen anything of the kind before."¹²⁰ (My italics.) We see at once similarity and variation — that in nature, of which we are a part, the first does not preclude the second, as the fanatics of political orthodoxy would daily have us believe, through their use of a language which evades the concrete images of external reality.

Summary of Chapter III and Overview

In order to live in a state where there is monopoly control over the media, the artist who tends to deal more with feelings than facts in his work must spend a substantial amount of his or her time working for
the monopoly. The tension between his individual integrity and the requirements of the state is not unique to him — any civil servant in any government may experience it. In a totalitarian state, however, the tension is worse because propaganda assumes a more prominent role in the manipulation of emotions. For an ordinary bureaucrat, the pressure to conform is at least relieved when his work day is ended and he can relax with other activities which most likely do not involve the recording of emotions. But for the artist whose off hours are most likely an extension of the skill for which he was originally hired, the pressure of his job persists and warps the private expression of his skill. He is so used to lying, to rewriting old newspaper articles, for example, that he cannot break the habit, and thus the power of orthodoxy grows.

Because the bureaucrat often does not understand the content of a literary piece, great emphasis is placed on the "form" of the message. Therefore so long as the individual artist conforms to the orthodox "form," easier in verse and music for example than in prose, he or she can often spread subversive messages. This offers some hope of breaking through the rigid censorship of a totalitarian state.

The scientist has more leeway than the artist because to work at some of his most basic tasks he must be allowed to operate on some vision of reality beyond that of the party’s, for no matter how politically powerful the state may be it cannot alter the basic physical laws of the universe. The prime use of the scientist in Nineteen Eighty-Four is to carry out research on weaponry and not to help produce more consumer goods which might raise the expectations of the general population and inadvertently lead them to demand more goods and ultimately more freedom. To justify scarcity of goods at home, the régime keeps the nation in a
state of continuous war readiness against the enemy abroad, in this case Goldstein and his hordes.

Orwell argues that the conscription of scientists for purposes of limited war, indeed of war in general, is easier than we realize and cites the examples of Hitler's scientists to disabuse us of the notion that to be a "scientist" means that one has a supranational or humanitarian outlook on the world. However, to ensure that scientists (who must be allowed to assume some measure of objective truth for their work) do not stray beyond the work-for-war limits set by the Party, the latter creates a special vocabulary. This allows scientists to operate efficiently in the laboratory but prevents (or at least hinders) any attempt to grasp concepts which lie beyond their immediate tasks.

The Party's efforts to control the perception of objective reality, as through the invention of Newspeak and the daily hate sessions, are not perfect - otherwise they would not need the Thought Police. One of those who resists the various methods of thought control is Winston Smith. He reinforces his own perceptions of reality by reminding himself of the physical, and not the party's laws. The physical laws are most evident in his escapes into the world of nature and into the pawn shop with its reminders of the past. At first he tries to preserve some of his integrity - though he enjoys lying in his job - by keeping a diary. But, like Flory before him, he discovers the crucial truth that no man is an island, that paradoxically, in order to create, indeed to preserve, one's individuality one needs communion with one's fellows. Such communion, however, involves the risk of going against the Party, of even turning the sex act into a political act of rebellion. Above all it involves a decision to place personal relationships, loyalty to the individual, above
loyalty to the organization - above loyalty to the Party.

Once captured through seeking further communion (with O'Brien's secret brotherhood) and imprisoned by the organization, Smith naively but bravely clings to the idea that the Party's terror cannot overcome the individual's capacity to love. One's political freedom may be taken away but not the freedom of the inner self. But through isolation and torture the Party's terror wins out and Smith, in his betrayal of his love for Julia, is destroyed - his metaphysical freedom struck down by the political reality. It is the defeat of man's most dangerous illusion, that "You can be free inside" in a totalitarian society - that by not getting involved with others you can protect yourself. But Orwell's message is that he who isolates himself is doomed for to be free inside one must think, and it is virtually impossible to think without communicating - without language. He is aware that to risk communicating is to risk Winston's fate but that is the cost, not only of political but of metaphysical freedom.

If Winston Smith the thinker fails, however, Orwell sees hope in the proles and this is the ember of optimism that glows in the darkness of the totalitarian state. While physically they are capable of massive revolt, psychically they are unprepared because they have not developed a political consciousness. The hope that they might achieve this resides in evidence of their greater contact, compared to that of the Party, with the external world. This contact gives them an unconscious perspective of the world wherein self interest, though far from being non-existent, is muted by an implicit recognition that they are part of a reality of natural laws which operate beyond the four Ministries that dominate Oceania. To escape the totalitarian mentality we must develop the habit
of participating in, or at the very least observing, the physical world.
Herein we become conscious of the tree of man, needful of the same
nourishment, singularly rooted yet diverse. The knowledge of such
diversity in the realm of nature breeds the tolerance of diversity in
the realm of politics.

At any rate, spring is here, even in London N.1, and they can't
stop you enjoying it. This is a satisfying reflection. How many
a time I have stood watching the toads mating, or a pair of hares
having a boxing match in the young corn, and thought of all the
important persons who would stop me enjoying this if they could.
But luckily they can't. So long as you are not actually ill,
hungry, frightened or immured in a prison or a holiday camp, spring
is still spring. The atom bombs are piling up in the factories,
the police are prowling through the cities, the lies are streaming
from the loudspeakers, but the earth is still going round the sun,
and neither the dictators nor the bureaucrats, deeply as they
disapprove of the process, are able to prevent it.122
Notes to Section IV – Chapter III


2. Orwell, *CEJL*, IV, p. 82.


12. *Ibid.*, p. 293. Orwell points to Trollope as the exception to the rule. He notes, however, that "as he [Trollope] also hunted three days a week and was usually playing whist till midnight, I suspect that he did not overwork himself in his official [Post Office] duties." (Orwell, *CEJL*, III, p. 293.)


19. Rigorously imposed censorship has of course often encouraged the development of certain art forms which may otherwise have lain dormant. One can think of the art of mime, for example, which in Czechoslovakia has received world acclaim in The Black Theatre of Prague. And, as Thomas J. Emerson notes in *Towards a General Theory of the First Amendment* (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 20, censorship has given birth to the "allegory and historical allusion" as a way of eluding the "mechanical formulae of censorship."


24. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 94. Jennifer McDowell in *1984 and Soviet Reality*, p. 18, writes that "It may surprise some readers to learn that 'two plus two equals five' was an optimistic slogan for the first Five Year Plan meaning the fulfillment of the Five Year Plan in four years." It is also noted how Eugene Lyons reports seeing the slogan "in electric lights on Moscow housefronts."


46. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 79.


59. This is not to accuse Orwell of terror tactics in the Burmese Police but simply to note that he was a witness to the often ruthless administration of a criminal law which he later admitted is necessary, for "the alternative is Al Capone." (Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, p. 129. For the treatment of prisoners, see p. 128.)


64. History was, of course, taught but Orwell's point was that in the way it was taught it made little or no sense. "History was a series of unrelated, unintelligible but - in some way that was never explained to us - important facts... '1857?'
   'Massacre of St. Bartholomew!'
   '1707?'
   'Death of Aurangzeeb!" (Orwell, *CEJL*, IV, p. 387.)


91. Vladimir Gsovski writes in a *Pravda* editorial of May 28, 1936 that "marriage receives its full lifeblood and value for the Soviet State only if there is birth of children." (Jennifer McDowell, *1984 and Soviet Reality*, p. 16.)


94. Ibid., pp. 33, 78.


96. Ibid., pp. 204, 222-23.

97. Ibid., p. 225.

98. Ibid.


100. Bob Edwards, the British M.P. who fought with Orwell in Aragon, recalls in an introduction to *Homage to Catalonia* that Orwell "had a great phobia against rats and, whilst most of us got used to them even when they gnawed at our boots at night, Orwell could never feel comfortable in their presence." (See p. 9, Folio Society edition of *Homage to Catalonia*.)


102. Ibid., pp. 203, 215, 239.


104. Ibid., pp. 159, 160.


106. Ibid., pp. 59, 60, 61.

107. Ibid., pp. 61, 60.

108. Ibid., p. 63.

109. For example when Lysenko's wheat experiments, which stressed the influence of environment rather than genes, encouraging Stalin's belief in the creation of a Soviet Man, failed to produce bumper crops, blame could be placed elsewhere than where it belonged - that is, upon the essential fallacies of Lysenko's theory.


111. Ibid., pp. 113, 113, 113, 116.

112. Ibid., p. 169.

113. Ibid., p. 135.

115. Ibid., pp. 166, 175.

116. Ibid., p. 176.


119. Ibid., pp. 126, 102.

120. Ibid., p. 110.


122. Ibid., IV, p. 175.
CONCLUSION

We have seen that Orwell believed that if the totalitarian state is to be overthrown it would be the proles who would do it. But Orwell allows an Inner Party, obsessed by the possibility that an "erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret," to be so unconcerned about eighty-five percent of the population as to avoid keeping most of them under surveillance:

The great majority of proles did not even have telescreens in their homes.

This is the great structural weakness of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In all other respects in the novel the monolithic centralization of the totalitarian state is recognizable but the revelation that the proles "were beneath suspicion"¹ is surely atypical of the totalitarian state. The revelation is particularly surprising in the work of a man who so often assailed those, like the Webbs, who soft-pedalled the pervasive terror of a totalitarian régime.

Orwell's failure as a novelist in sustaining such an obvious weakness, through hanging on to his sentimentalization of the English working class to the end, is at once the strongest proof of (1) his failure, though confronting us with a stark vision of inequality, to come to terms with the problem of "equality denying freedom and freedom denying equality,"² and (2) his hope for, rather than despair of, the future. His clinging to the idea that the prole would win in the end also reveals to us that while, like so many of his fictional protagonists, he was an outsider throughout his life ("the left hated him"),³ he was always the patriotic outsider. He wanted the English working class, and not just the working class, to survive the future. This reminds
one of Cruise O'Brien's remark that "beyond being a socialist, a revolutionary, an anti-imperialist, or following any other political theory," Orwell was first and foremost an Englishman. And what he most hated about communism "was not its ruthlessness, dishonest propaganda and other obvious defects, but the fact that [like some intellectuals' attraction to continental ideas] it was capable of making Englishmen unpatriotic."^4

But Orwell's faith in the proles, his vision of them as preservers of emotion against the men of ideas, constituted a failure to come to grips with the above mentioned dilemma of freedom versus authority because his longstanding affection for the inheritors of Wigan blinded him to their limitations in Nineteen Eighty-Four. He had written in The Road to Wigan Pier, for example, that while the workers had a definite talent for organization, they showed little "capacity for leadership."^5 The question of any detailed organization of the proles into a rebellious body is hardly touched upon in his last work. The question of how to create a proletarian leadership is not even addressed, let alone answered. Orwell's hope in the proles not only seems unrealistic because of his failure to wrestle convincingly with such questions but pales because even the possibility of proletarian collectivist society is overshadowed by Orwell's longstanding conviction that collectivism is not inherently equalitarian. Indeed he had seen how, save for a short time in Spain in 1937, collectivism had bred inequality because the belief that might is right had triumphed amid the ruins of a belief which denied that virtue was relative, and especially denied that it was relative to the possession of power.

In light of this, because Orwell's comment about Laski, that he
was a man "who is a Socialist by allegiance and a liberal by temperament," is largely true of Orwell himself, it lends weight to the conclusion of some critics, such as Laurence Brander and John Mander, that in his final work where the liberal idea is dead Orwell finally rejected socialism. But we should be wary of assuming that Orwell retreated, albeit reluctantly, to the nineteenth century kind of liberalism which he had so admired in men like Dickens whose generous anger at social conditions was directed towards a "change of heart" and not to the creation of any political system. That is, we should be wary of assuming that Orwell's final retreat to Jura was an attempt to return to the century which he believed for "all its own troubles...was free from the nightmares besetting modern man...war, state interference and mass unemployment." He knew that Lower Binfield was lost forever but this did not mean that he had lost hope. Orwell, in his retreat to the isolation of Jura, did not renounce his faith in the political system he called democratic socialism. Instead, his retreat and the book which this allowed him to work on were a restatement of his pessimism about the modern age.

He believed that centralization on top of collectivization meant that power, being far less divisible than money, tends to accumulate in the hands of fewer people. This, allied with the totalitarian outlook that truth is what the Party decrees, corrupts not simply socialism but any political movement. In 1941 he had written, "The movement towards collectivism goes on all the time, though it takes varying forms, some hopeful, others horrible." Four years later, in his review of Cyril Connolly's Unquiet Grave, wherein Connolly gives a resounding "No" to the claim that "man will find fulfillment only through participation in...
the communal life of an organized group," Orwell writes that Connolly's "error" is

in assuming that a collectivist society would destroy human individuality. The ordinary English Communist or "fellow-traveller" makes the same assumption... It does not occur to them that the so-called collectivist systems now existing only try to wipe out the individual because they are not really collectivist and certainly not egalitarian - because, in fact, they are a sham covering a new form of class privilege.12

Similarly, in reviewing two books, one an attack on capitalism and the other a defence of it, Orwell wrote of their common conclusion that each other's policy would end in slavery that "the alarming thing is that they might both be right."13 And just as every line in Animal Farm was aimed for democratic socialism and against totalitarianism, so were they aimed in Nineteen Eighty-Four. In showing how the "horrible forms" of collectivism were not restricted to any particular section of the political spectrum - that madness could come from any direction - the focus of Orwell's writing after Animal Farm changed from a leftist revolution gained and lost through the corruptibility of power to totalitarianism, left or right, entrenched through the corruptibility of power.

Those who, like Isaac Deutscher and, in a non-vehement tone, Alex Zwerdling, have advanced the theory that Orwell lost his socialist faith, lose sight of, or do not understand, one of the basic tenets of any creative writer and one which Orwell asserted as early as The Road to Wigan Pier, namely that to write creatively, even of tragedy, one has to possess the spirit of hope. Even Laurence Brander, for all his criticism of Orwell, understands this. He notes that the Newspeak Appendix to Nineteen Eighty-Four and the Goldstein quotations which speak of the corruption of a socialist ideal "are full of zest and joy"
and "could only have been written by a man who was reasonably well"
(though he assumes without citing any evidence that these sections must
therefore have been "written earlier"). Further to this point that
Orwell gave up his socialist belief, Bernard Crick challenges Zwerdling's
conclusion by pointing out that "pessimism" is not necessarily "defeatism"
and pointing out just as sensibly "how much the description of Ing-Soc
depends on Fascism as well as Communism." Finally, those who assert that Orwell lost his socialist faith
do not understand that to recognize the dangers which face the system
in which one has faith is not necessarily to lose one's faith. It is
the failure of some critics to recognize this which leads them into
the non-sequitur that because Orwell's faith in socialism, expressed
in hope in the proles, is weakly rooted, his faith is weakly held.
This surely is to confuse pessimism with defeatism. Orwell knew of
the power-nourished cancer within the body politic but also knew that
remissions do occur - no matter how serious the prognosis may be,
including his own. We may be skeptical of the basis for Orwell's
hope in the proles as the advance guard of a democratic socialism,
indeed Nineteen Eighty-Four leaves us little choice. But we should not
use this as a rationale for doubting the sincerity with which that
belief is held. However, if one is not convinced of this by the fact
that as late as 1948 Orwell was still actively advocating a "Socialist
United States of Europe" then the following (written to Francis A.
Henson of the U.S. United Automobile Workers Union less than seven months
before Orwell's death) should convince:

My recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the
British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show up
of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable and which
have already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism. I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily will arrive, but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it could arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences. The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasize that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere.17

In short, the voice of disappointment is not necessarily the echo of rejection – the voice of gloom is not the voice of doom. Here I endorse Richard Vorhees, Philip Rahv, William Steinhoff and George Woodcock in believing that Orwell's last novel is unequivocally a warning and not a prophecy.18 The distinction between warning and prophecy is significant for it is the pervasive contemporary notion that Nineteen Eighty-Four is meant to be prophecy, contrary to what Orwell himself said, that nourishes the idea that he had given up not just his faith in socialism but his will to live. It encourages the belief that his withdrawal to the island of Jura in the Outer Hebrides, a withdrawal to the past which he preferred over the present, was more a death wish than an exhausted retreat.

Apart from the debate about whether Nineteen Eighty-Four signals the end of Orwell's socialist faith it is generally agreed that much of the novel's importance is due to the fact that it is the culmination of all of Orwell's major themes which inhabited his earlier and lesser known work. The book also reveals how his "journalism often served as notes for his future novels."19 Winston Smith loses his faith like Dorothy Hare, the clergyman's daughter:

like Flory, he is attracted towards what the Party regards as primitive, like Gordon Comstock, he rebels against a world of slogans; like George Bowling, he believes that the past is better than the present; and like the "I" of the autobiographical books,
he seeks in the alien culture of the lower depths a salvation which he cannot possibly find. Like all of them, he follows the ignis fatuus [delusive hope] of a lost cause, is defeated and captured by his past, and endures the ultimate punishment of losing his inmost vision.\textsuperscript{20}

But if these are old themes there are new ideas which reveal the new note of maturity of Orwell's post-Spanish political writing. There are still the occasional, almost shrill, propagandist passages during World War II: "Either we turn this war into a revolutionary war...or we lose it,"\textsuperscript{21} "I dare say the London gutters will have to run with blood. All right, let them if it is necessary,"\textsuperscript{22} and the penchant for exaggeration, especially in the opening sentence - for example, "The English revolution started several years ago."\textsuperscript{23} But there is also the increasing tendency to transform political feelings into critical political ideas. The twenty-two pages of "THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OLIGARCHICAL COLLECTIVISM" by Emmanuel Goldstein in \textit{Nineteen Eighty-Four} are to the point. Here the old feelings of Blair about the exploitation of the poor, of the subservience of the lower classes to the bureaucratically supported "they" and the lying of the press in Spain pass into a carefully thought out theory. The latter explains the intent, administrative details and structure of the totalitarian state, and Bernard Crick is correct when he says that \textit{Nineteen Eighty-Four} is "a considerable work of political theory."\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Animal Farm} is in no way as sophisticated in its explication of the structure of the totalitarian state but political theory is still present. And though written as a fable, its satirical thrust against the theory and practice of deception paradoxically made more of an emotional impact than the realistic reports of the violence of Stalin's régime. Beyond the obvious attack upon Stalin's brutal excesses the
book reaffirms Orwell's belief that a change in society's structure alone does not of itself constitute a moral advance. In so doing, it reflects the perennial tension between the revolutionary and the moralist, between the yogi and the commissar, between the individual and the group. In this it also reveals the tension between the pessimistic Orwell, who believes that "on balance life is suffering, and only the very young or the very foolish imagine otherwise,"\(^\text{25}\) and the hopeful Orwell who, in his imaginary interview with Swift, is confident that man and society can change for the better and that "life is worth living."\(^\text{26}\)

In sum, the pigs' betrayal of the animals' revolution reveals the tension between the "two viewpoints" which Orwell thought were "always tenable": (1) how can you change man until you have changed the shape of his society? and (2) what is the good of altering the shape of society before you have improved man's nature?\(^\text{27}\)

Orwell's point is that no matter what viewpoint the rulers adopted it was no guarantee that they could solve the "central problem" of revolution, indeed of life, namely the abuse of power. For so long as the rulers failed to confine violence to the least amount necessary for civilized life, just intent is quickly corrupted into unjust society. Thus a wedge is driven between rulers and ruled, separating them further rather than uniting them in common cause for a better society wherein everyone would treat others as equals. The problem had worried the policeman Blair into a guilt-ridden resignation from the Imperialist service and finally it would obsess Orwell the writer. The problem of course remains unsolved in Orwell's works as it does in the world, but out of this obsession came *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*,

\(^{25}\) Quoted in *Animal Farm*.

\(^{26}\) Quoted in *Animal Farm*.

\(^{27}\) Quoted in *Animal Farm*. 
the two novels by Orwell which best examine not only the possible evil consequences of the tyrannical abuse of power but also the rationalization of it by those in power and the often willing acceptance of such abuse by the very people who are its victims.

In both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, excessive violence results - from the public confessions and slaughter of the sheep to the torturing of Winston Smith. But whereas in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* such violence is generally accepted, in *Animal Farm* it is, temporarily at least, questioned by its victims. "These scenes of terror and slaughter were not what they had looked forward to on that night when old Major first stirred them to rebellion...it was not for this that she [Clover] and all the other animals had hoped and toiled." 28 Such questioning, however unwitting, challenges those in power, and it is officialdom's response to it in *Animal Farm*, and to even the possibility of such questioning in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which leads us into the labyrinth of lies and terror which, for Orwell, was the nightmare of totalitarianism.

In Spain on the Aragon Front Orwell had experienced the sense of brotherhood which had filled him with optimism. In Spain, in the streets of Barcelona, he had seen and felt the "nightmare" world of "ceaseless arrests...and prowling hordes of police." 29 As a result, both the kind of life he wanted and the kind he feared were recorded in *Homage to Catalònia*. In *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the abuse of power whereby the kind of life he wanted could be perverted and subverted into the kind of life he feared is investigated.

*Animal Farm*, in showing the outer manifestations of the passion to control others, whatever its motivation, describes the tactics of the abuse of power and sets the stage for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the
latter the same corruptibility and love of power, and even tactics, are assumed but much greater attention is devoted to the overall strategy of deception whereby the abuse of power is both justified and perpetuated by those in control. That is, Nineteen Eighty-Four, like Animal Farm, shows us the power play in progress but it also takes us behind the scenes.

Because the story of Animal Farm uses animals as its main characters it does what none of Orwell's previous novels do - it momentarily suspends our human prejudices and biases against other humans. It is as if we are allowed to withdraw to the vantage point of impartial observer and begin to see things which our prejudices and biases with regard to fellow humans would have perhaps blinded us to. This does not mean that identification of the characters is difficult - indeed Orwell's intention was to make this very easy - but the physical difference between animals and men affords us a clarity and fairness that immediate physical similarities to known people would have blurred. Admittedly, a political scientist or historian will have little difficulty recognizing the analogies when two pigs argue against one another, one pig asserting that "if they [the animals] could not defend themselves they were bound to be conquered" and the other that "if rebellions happened everywhere, they [the animals] would have no need to defend themselves." Here we instantly recognise the classic debate between Stalin's belief in "Socialism in one country" and Trotsky's concept of "world wide revolution."

But while the political scientist or historian readily sees Animal Farm as a savage satire on Stalin's régime, an attack against the sycophantic praises sung by left and right (including The Times)
to the war time Stalin, the general public may not. What they often see, particularly children, is not so much an anti-Stalinist attack but simply a story of good intentions turned evil through greed. Herein lies the universal value of the novel for like so much of Orwell's work, from *Shooting an Elephant* to *Inside the Whale*, its central theme is not confined to any one incident or country but is clearly recognizable in its wider dimension. It is not simply a savage satire on the abuse of power in the Soviet Union but on the abuse of power. Orwell was not arguing against the use of power but asserted that because (1) some degree of suffering is ineradicable from human life,"(2) "it is quite possible that man's major problems will never be solved," and (3) "coercion can never be altogether dispensed with," then "the one difference is between degrees of violence." What we must be prepared to settle for is the lesser of evils. (Hence he could argue that while "all revolutions are failures...all revolutions are not the same failure.") For Orwell the least evil form of government was the democratic socialism of the early pages of *Animal Farm* which was quickly overthrown. The greatest evil was the "oligarchical collectivism" of the early pages of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which might not be overthrown.

Above all, the last novel is both the culmination and expansion of the theme first sounded in *Burmese Days*. This is the pessimism born of the realization that while it is not impractical to form associations of men in the interests of brotherhood, to mitigate their physical and spiritual poverty and even to safeguard and expand their freedom, such associations are depressingly vulnerable to attack by the individual's pursuit of power. Orwell's pessimism was progressively exacerbated by the recognition that in any collectivity the attempt to be rid of the
individual's self-interest was apt to excite a call to be rid of the individual. It was the individual's right to say what he thought against the collectivity which Orwell consistently defended. With this in mind it is significant that quite apart from the climate of the Cold War which accelerated the initial sales of Nineteen Eighty-Four, it is the instant recognition by the reader that here is an individual pitted against bureaucracy which immediately engages our attention. Though the year is 1984 we are confronted by the present. A manifestation of this tension between the individual and the group and one which also reflects the old tug of war between Orwell's pessimism and optimism is Orwell's vacillating views of the proles and Winston Smith. The proles, in their capacity, like Faulkner's heroes, to "endure tomorrow, tomorrow and tomorrow," symbolize the quietism of Henry Miller's "ordinary" man's acceptance, of "robbing reality of its terrors by simply submitting to it." They are inside the whale and live on. Winston Smith breaks out - but dies. To choose between the proles' endurance, which stems more from acceptance of the world than from bravery, and Smith's brave determination to rebel is one of the central dilemmas of Orwell's work on the totalitarian state.

That the dilemma looms so large in his final work is due to the fact that Orwell is better at diagnosing what he sees as evil than prescribing against it. This limitation is plainly evident as we have seen (1) in Burmese Days where, for all the hostility to the exploitation effected by the Raj, no constructive alternative is suggested, least of all a régime left in the care of the native U Po Kyin, (2) in the Indigenous Section where, for all we are told of the symptoms of poverty and unemployment, the confusion between equality and equal opportunity
undermines his all too brief formula for social reform in Britain, (3) in Spain where for all the exuberance of his reporting about the Spanish revolution which he hopes will help set the pattern for ending exploitation in England, indeed everywhere, there is a lack of analysis of how the details of the Spanish experience, the collectives and such, can be adapted for English use, and (4) in his final novel where his turning away from oligarchical collectivism, while not a turning away from the ideal of the collectivist vision, is devoid of a plan to improve, though he knew that some kind of efficient and centralized state was necessary if the socialist vision was to be achieved. 38

In Nineteen Eighty-Four there is a watery hope that the proles', as a kind of unconscious but potential Home Guard, will someday mobilize. But all across the bleak landscape of Oceania there is no armoury in sight, no hint of a scaffolding for future action, only the dark certainty of the four towering Ministries that form the concrete forts of Orwell's pessimism.

The notion held by Zwerdling and others that Orwell turned away from his socialist belief though unconvincing is understandable when one remembers how, on the heels of Winston Smith's total defeat, there is no firm counter attack, not even a slightly theoretical equivalent of the twenty-two page Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism - no Theory and Practice for a Democratic Socialist Collectivism. The absence of any such counter attack from the socialist position helps us to understand how Orwell's position amid his contemporaries, as what Zwerdling rightly calls the "Left's Loyal Opposition," 39 is so misunderstood outside England. It helps explain how in the period of the Cold War Orwell was often hailed, especially in the United States, as a champion of the right
how a news-vendor "thrust a copy of Nineteen Eighty-Four into the hands of Isaac Deutscher in New York, saying 'You must read it, sir. Then you will know why we must drop the atom bomb on the Bolshies!'" This incident is interesting because while it is an example of a common misconception about Orwell it nevertheless reveals a basic truth about all his writings – that he is a better social critic than he is a political thinker. While we always know unequivocally what he is against, we are never as certain about what he was for – the very criticism he levelled against the bourgeois baiters of the bourgeoisie. This does not entitle us to discount him as a useful social commentator and critic or political thinker. If it did, many great names would fall but his lack of detailed alternatives to that which he criticizes should qualify any admiration of him as a political thinker.

From Burmese Days to Nineteen Eighty-Four the emphasis is on diagnosis of a problem rather than its solution. "The world is suffering from some kind of mental disease [totalitarianism] which must be diagnosed before it can be cured." Such diagnosis, and Orwell was a pre-eminent political diagnostician, is no mean feat. This is especially true for a man who, as a novelist and journalist, is under no obligation to suggest remedies for society's ills. It is enough that the novelist and journalist merely identifies and describes the ills, as Orwell does in incomparable fashion in such works as Shooting an Elephant and Nineteen Eighty-Four. But the failure to think as deeply about possible solutions is a singular failure for a man who claimed that one of his prime purposes was to write "for democratic Socialism," and listed among the "four great motives for writing...the desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's idea of the kind of society
that they should strive after." (My italics.) This is hardly satisfied by arguing, as noted earlier in this study, that "It seemed to me then - it sometimes seems to me now - that economic injustice will stop the moment we want it to stop and no sooner, and if we genuinely want it to stop... the method adopted hardly matters." (My italics.)

This attitude led Orwell into a laziness that produced his irritating confusion over the role of the state and of modern technology, and does indeed rob his "social protest" of any "theoretical foundation." He saw, for example, that the modern efficient socialist state would probably have to be "highly mechanized" but as John Wain notes, he "hated modernity," and retreated to the Outer Hebrides. Here he echoed, in an infinitely more frightening tone, George Bowling's estrangement from the modern ersatz world by writing Nineteen Eighty-Four which in its emphasis on the destruction of the past is a return to the past which, for all its faults, Orwell preferred. From the island of Jura he wrote of the horrors of mechanization, "regarding nature and the machine not as complementary, but as antagonistic." But, torn between his conservative love for many traditional values and his recognition that mechanization makes life easier in many respects, he did not suggest how we might effectively limit mechanization's increasing control over its makers.

It is not that one can expect Orwell to solve such problems but it is his reluctance to come to grips with them beyond merely describing them that limits the value of his thought. In this regard his comment about Swift in Politics and Literature is equally applicable to himself: "In general he assumes that we know all that we need to know already, and merely use our knowledge incorrectly." Thus John Wain is correct when
he says that "As a political thinker he [Orwell] is at his most useful, and most zestful, when he is warning us of the hell we could so easily make for ourselves." Orwell understood better what made men evil than what made them good.

Knowing what he was against, however, Orwell was at his best writing about totalitarianism and for this reason while John Mander is incorrect in assuming that Nineteen Eighty-Four is "anti-socialist" he is correct in claiming that Orwell has become the most widely known "witness" to the "totalitarian epoch." Indeed Mander concludes that he is the "only English witness." This clearly is an exaggeration, as other Englishmen and English speaking writers such as Jack London had certainly written of the totalitarian state years before.

We will grind you revolutionists down under our heel, and we shall walk upon your faces. The world is ours, we are its lords, and ours it shall remain. As for the host of labor, it has been in the dirt since history began, and I read history aright. And in the dirt it shall remain so long as I and mine and those that come after us have the 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.

Nevertheless, Mander is on much firmer ground when he notes that "without Orwell, we should have no native English writer (with the doubtful exception of Aldous Huxley) to set against Kafka, Koestler and Camus." It is true that Orwell had learned much about totalitarian states from other writings on the subject, from Koestler's Darkness at Noon, for example, and Souvarine's accounts of the Stalinist purges: "Formerly Galileo had to confess on his knees under threat of torture that the earth did not revolve. The prisoner of Moscow confesses things no less outrageous....Here Trotsky replaces the devil." Nevertheless, Orwell drew heavily on his own experience. As noted earlier he was not, contrary
to Trilling's celebrated remark, one of those "who are what they write" but one of those who write about what they have been. Nowhere is this clearer than in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where it becomes strikingly evident that he was the one English writer who could best draw on his own experience of the totalitarian mentality.

It did not matter what I had done or not done. This was not a round-up of criminals; it was merely a reign of terror. I was not guilty of any definite act, but I was guilty of "Trotskyism." The fact that I had served in the P.O.U.M. militia was quite enough to get me into prison. It was no use hanging on to the English notion that you are safe so long as you keep the law. Practically the law was what the police chose to make it.

In view of other novelists' work, however, such as that of Dickens, Eliot and Hardy, the question remains: why is Orwell still regarded as not only probably the most important political writer (in terms of fiction) of his own time but as one of the "finest prose writers of any English age"? The connecting thread here is his vigorous rejection of jargon which mirrors his overall rejection of the pressures of orthodoxy. Though he was a man who revelled in his contradictions he did not counsel non-conformity for its own sake, as his attacks on the so-called socialist "cranks" testify. What he was against here, especially after Spain, was the blind acceptance of "phrases invented by someone else," phrases which, characterized by a lack of original imagery, glided through the force of habit over the consciousness and embedded themselves unchallenged in the mind of the listener. To so easily and habitually accept others' ideas was the first step towards accepting their domination. In this sense he had learned better than most how potent a weapon language is. He could use the language as poorly, as abstractly, and as unfairly as anyone else ("all tobacconists are fascists") but it was because he knew so well the temptations
involved that he was so useful in alerting us to their dangers. As Cruise O'Brien says,

The cant of the left, that cant which has so far proved indispensable to the victory of any mass movement, was almost destroyed by Orwell's attacks, which put out of action so much cant-producing machinery in its factories: the minds of left-wing intellectuals. His effect on the English left might be compared to that of Voltaire on the French nobility: he weakened their belief in their own ideology, made them ashamed of their clichés, left them intellectually more scrupulous and more defenceless.60

Also, in his fresh choice of metaphor, in waging war against the clichés of imperialism, for example, Orwell developed in his writing an extraordinary ability to reduce the big political problems of his day, and thus perhaps of most days, down to concrete events. As in his description of how a police superintendent shoots an animal because he feels compelled by others' expectations, and how a waiter's loyalty to his class becomes lost in the constant coming and going between kitchen and dining room, he presents the big problems in terms of personal everyday experience and so could simplify complex issues without making them appear simplistic. In these ways he has not only contributed to the common language of despair (e.g. "Big Brother," "Newspeak," "Doublethink") but has enabled us to see politics as a man-to-man, rather than an abstract relationship so that we might also diagnose, through the help of more vivid imagery, some of the more general problems of politics.

Furthermore, while unashamedly stating his bias, yet being determined to retain an unbiased eye (by acting out his belief that "the more one is conscious of one's political bias, the more chance one has of acting politically without sacrificing one's aesthetic and intellectual integrity"),61 he reinforced, in the world of realpolitik, the equally traditional belief that we might still approach the study of politics
with moral conviction rather than with amoral intellectuality. Despite his own failures he said in effect that a man who studies politics can, among other things, be angry yet truthful and even useful in writing and putting things right or at least in making them better than they are.

Beyond his concern with our unconscious surrender to the "ready made" phrase as part of our larger, unquestioning surrender to "political conformity," Orwell waged an unrelenting attack upon what one might properly call the phrases of pretence. This was particularly true in the sphere of politics where he believed that such phrases were used largely in the "defence of the indefensible" which for him included the "continuance of British rule in India, [unemployment and poverty in England,] the Stalinist purges and deportations and the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan." He argued that such actions could "be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face...thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness." It was this vagueness, he said, which together with "sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing."

By way of example, he noted in 1946 how "defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification." As "war" can be called "pacification" then "freedom" can become "slavery" and "democracy" can become what Bernard Crick calls "perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs," largely because (as in Nineteen Eighty-Four) the word has at times been "established for the sovereign purposes of war at the cost of stripping it of any real political meaning." This does
not mean that the prescriptive and descriptive meanings of a word such as "equality" cannot, or indeed should not, co-exist but simply that the two meanings should not be confused.

The confusion wrought by such language is evident upon discovering that a word once invested with emotive appeal has become so worn through repetition that it now seems devoid of any emotion at all. Consequently Winston Smith and Julia, the lovers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, are condemned to search in vain for words to express whatever they are still able, or rather allowed, to feel. While Orwell hoped that the decay and corruption of language might be rescued by some conscientious fellow journalists, he recognized with dismay, particularly in Spain, that many of them were the arch enemies of a fresh and revitalized language.

Orwell's pessimistic vision of the modern tendencies of life and the language which brands it culminates of course in the stark horror of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. As we have seen, the ultimate corruption of political and indeed all language is found in Big Brother's aim of making it possible, through "doublethink," for the public to hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously. This also allows the administrators "to tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient," and destroys thought as we know it. And where, as Spegele suggests in his article *Fiction and Political Theory*, there is no "thought" as we understand it, no awareness of intent, the term "freedom," insofar as it implies an awareness to choose, will have no meaning.

As with the stereotypes of imperialism in *Burmese Days*, and the subservient animals in *Animal Farm*, Orwell attributed the longevity of such conditions, particularly the language of Big Brother's tyranny, to
the mass of "gramophone" minds whose sense of security is guaranteed by the growth (and form) of monolithic order and modernization. These are the people who, as noted earlier, allow the ruling elite of *Burmese Days* to maintain "its solidarity not by physical power but solely by the strength of an amazingly inflexible public opinion."\(^{67}\)

It is particularly the gramophone mind listening to the same tune and ready made phrases which anaesthetize the brain which Orwell warned us to guard against lest our familiarity with the tune's rhythm and lyrics lull us into the dumb acceptance of our own brand of Newspeak. Such was the fate of those who, during the Korean War, actually started to believe, as a result of the sheer repetition of Western broadcasts, that North Koreans and South Koreans were different races. Or we join the ranks of those who still believe that the phrase "the free world" does not include governments whose repressive measures against individuals tend towards a barbaric kind of totalitarianism.

Orwell shows how such surrender to words, particularly to the attack upon metaphor, is at root an acceptance of the idea that all truth is relative. He also shows that such surrender is not confined to the uneducated but can affect those whom we would least suspect - the scientists. While control of metaphor, and language in general, does admittedly worry the Solzhenitsyns of a totalitarian state, many scientists, as Orwell charged in 1946, do not appear overly concerned and "do not see that any attack on intellectual liberty, and on the concept of objective truth, threatens in the long run every department of thought."\(^{68}\)

Without metaphor (*the chief vehicle of analogy*), the dream, political, scientific or whatever, is as vacant as a chemist's vague
notion of a pure gas. With the freedom not only to choose, but to choose from a wide range of analogies, the notion takes form, becomes a concept, and the idea of a particular metamorphosis is capable of being shared. The threat of tightly controlled language, then, not only affects free speech of political men but in its gradual withdrawal of various metaphors it restricts, through the formation of officially sanctioned paradigms, future scientific investigation. Only those metaphors which reflect "correct" political views are allowed, so that under Hitler, racial theory was perverted; under Stalin, Lysenko's genetic views were afforded pre-eminence; while Lenin's "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" became the mandatory basis for any aspiring psychologist's enquiry. Begun in his earlier novels, Orwell's warnings about such an eventuality became the central thrust of his later and better known works such as Nineteen Eighty-Four where he continually raises fears that through our surrender to words and to inverted and distorted analogy we may learn to tolerate the most flagrant and illegitimate impositions of power.

For in addition to his understanding of man's almost infinite capacity for paradox, Orwell perceived more than most of his contemporaries how the habit of comfortably holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously or of acting in a self contradictory manner, of being less conscious, can be organized on a mass scale. Such organization may be achieved through the unofficial distortion of language, and later institutionalized through an official distortion in response to a sense of fear or permanent crisis. Whether this fear be fear of the "blacks" in Burma, the "fear of the mob" at home, or Oceania's constant war with an external enemy, invented to help prevent discontent from
becoming rebellion, the result is still basically the same - the corruption of a sense of objective truth. When this happens we lose our compass bearings in a sea of orthodoxy. The orthodoxy may not always be evil but there is always the temptation to read magnetic north as true north. Once truth is regarded as relative so is everything else, including cruelty. Thus Orwell shows how corrupt language becomes one of the most perverse and pervasive forms of social, as well as political, tyranny.

With this in mind we see how while he was not, as Cruise O'Brien remarks, a "great political thinker," Orwell was a great "cleanser of the language." In spending so much of his effort on this theme, seeing it as the most poisonous distillation of all that is wrong in totalitarianism, he demonstrates, especially in his last novel, how the choice of one's vocabulary may well be the most basic freedom we possess. It is not simply the freedom of speech he is talking about, for this might mean no more than the freedom to act libellously or to babble nonsense. Rather he is talking about the freedom and indeed the obligation to say what we mean. He warns us that if we are to preserve the private self within the public realm in which we must ironically participate to retain our individuality then we must remember that in our choice of words we construct our own constraints and limitations, not only of thought but ultimately of action. It is for this reason that even when the actual year 1984 has passed, Orwell's last work, as the culmination of all that went before, will endure because ultimately his attack is not directed so much towards a political system as upon a state of mind. George Bowling knew that in every fat man there is a thin man trying to get out. Just as certainly Orwell understood that because our drive for total solutions to problems is so often based on the belief that control over others' destiny renders us control over our own, the germ of totalitarianism lies dormant in us all.
Notes to Conclusion


13. The two books which Steinhoff refers to on p. 32 of his *George Orwell and the Origins of 1984* are *The Mirror of the Past* by K. Zillacus (the attack on capitalism) and *The Road to Serfdom* by F.A. Hayek.


22. Ibid., I, p. 591.

23. Ibid., II, p. 112.


25. Orwell, CEJL, IV, p. 344.


27. Orwell, CEJL, I, p. 469.

28. Orwell, Animal Farm, pp. 75-76.


30. Orwell, Animal Farm, p. 46.

31. In his comments about Orwell's proposed introduction for Animal Farm, Bernard Crick, noting that Orwell was clearly "wise" in not publishing the piece in the front of Animal Farm, writes that had Orwell published the introduction with the novel, the latter may well "have appeared to be an attack only on Stalin, and the universality of its reflections on the corruption that can come from power might have seemed just the projection of an English literary quarrel. I first read Animal Farm at the age of fifteen, and my eldest son has just read it at the age of eleven - it is a book for all ages; but I doubt whether either of us would have touched it had it had such an explicitly political introduction." (Bernard Crick, "Freedom of the Press," review of a proposed but unpublished introduction to Animal Farm, by George Orwell, in Times Literary Supplement, September 15, 1972, p. 1040.)


34. Orwell, CEJL, II, p. 197.

35. Ibid., III, p. 282.


38. Vorhees, Paradox of George Orwell, p. 90.

39. Zwerdling, Orwell and the Left, p. 3.


44. Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, p. 64.


54. Trilling's remark is surprising in retrospect when one considers how the remark was made in reference to Orwell's experience in Spain, to which he did not go to fight for the Republicans but to write about them. As Zwerdling notes, Orwell "knew what had happened in Spain, but he did not know why." (Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left*, p. 80.) Richard Vorhees also notes, "Orwell is talking about his feelings after arriving in Spain."


68. Orwell, *CEJL*, IV, p. 94. Of course not all scientists (Sakharov, for one), fail to see the danger, perhaps sharing Robert J. Oppenheimer's belief that "the use of analogy largely through metaphor - adapting a familiar mode of description to a new situation, finding the points of difference, and ultimately determining whether anything remains to the analogy - seems essential to the progress of understanding." (My italics.) Along the same lines, mathematician C.A. Coulson has remarked that the classical view of scientific method as one of fact gathering, hypothesis, and experimental verification, is "at best a half-truth, and at worst a travesty of the way scientists themselves work," while physicist P.B. Lindsay notes that "The intuitive power of the mind in dreaming dreams is the essential basis for the advance of science." (J.F. Davidson, "Political Science and Political Fiction," *Journal of the American Political Science Association*, December, 1961, p. 834.)

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