Chapter VII

Nineteen Eighty Four
Introduction

The novel, Nineteen Eighty Four, has been acclaimed as the most important book of the age. It was written under the influence of illness and Orwell took a period of approximately twenty eight months to complete the novel (from August 1946-November 1948). It created some bitter political controversy when it was first published in June 8, 1949. In this context Orwell has tried to clarify his position in his essays and accepted that his recent novel is not intended as an attack on socialism or on the British Labour Party 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. He did not believe that the kind of society he is describing necessarily would arrive. Keith Alldritt writes about the background of this book:

"The scene of the book is laid is 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."1

The novel was translated into twenty three languages and in 1956 a successful film was made. It is a political novel and shows the influence of Swift's Gulliver's Travels,2 Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karmazov,3 Jack London's The Iron Heel4 and Arthur Koestler's Darkness at Noon.5

Indeed Nineteen Eighty Four is a gloomy work, primarily a satire aimed at Soviet Russia. It is also, in some ways, directed against the British society of Orwell's time. The society of Nineteen Eighty Four embodies all that Orwell hated and disliked in his surroundings: the drabness and monotony of the English industrial suburbs, the filthy and grim ugliness, the food rationing, the rubbish newspapers which contained almost nothing except sport, crime, astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes and films oozing with sex.

Theme

Nineteen Eighty Four, as its title implies, is Orwell's version of future awaiting mankind. The scene of England, known as 'Airstrip One', forms a part of Oceania. A ceaseless, pointless war goes rumbling on, a war in which Oceania is in alliance with Eastasia against Eurasia- at least- that is the statement put out by the Ministry of Truth. In the novel, however, nobody any longer feels certain about anything and it is fairly clear that only four years previously Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia against
the common enemy, Eastasia, and by the end of the book the situation has switched back. Though the war is unending and the population is continually stimulated by news of overwhelming victory or sensational defeat; nothing actually happens.

An occasional rocket falls. A few prisoners are escorted through streets. Life becomes steadily a little glimmer, a little meaner, the house became dirtier and more overcrowded, the food worse. A daily, Two Minutes Hate, directed against the mystical Goldstein⁶ (a Trotsky or Snowball figure) "distracts people from sufferings. Everything is controlled by the party, which is in itself controlled by the Secret Inner Party. The Party’s three slogans are: ‘War is Peace’; ‘Freedom is Slavery’; and ‘Ignorance is Strength’.”

All apparatus of government are concentrated into four Ministers: The Ministry of Truth concerns itself with education, news and art to propagate. The Ministry of Love maintains law and order, largely through the dreaded Thought Police. The Ministry of Plenty keeps everyone down to the barest necessities of life, continually announcing increases in rations, which are actually reductions. The Ministry of Peace is occupied with the conduct of the war.

Orwell’s hero, Winston Smith, works in the Ministry of Truth, where his job is largely the rewriting of history to suit the shifts of Party policy, and removing from previous records the names of persons who have been liquidated in secret revolt against the Party. Winston Smith keeps a diary in which his private thoughts and feelings are recorded- not an easy matter when there is a telescreen in every room through which the smallest action may be observed. He also permits himself the folly of being attracted by a girl in another department of his Ministry.

One day as he is passing here in the office corridor, she passes him a scrap of paper with the words “I love you”. They succeed in spending a day together, and make love in open. From that time they arrange meetings, usually in a room above junkshop. Here they plan conspiracy against the Party, and, believing on very little evidence that a fellow member of their staff- a senior called O’Brien- is also a revolutionary, they confide in him. O’Brien proves to be a pillar of the existing order and Winston is imprisoned, beaten and tortured until all resistance is burnt out of him, and he finally betrays the girl, Julia, who has already betrayed him.

The weakness of Nineteen Eighty Four is a double one. Sick Orwell
has imagined nothing new. His world of **Nineteen Eighty Four** is the wartime world of 1944, but dirtier and crueler and lacks endurance and nobility. Everyone by **Nineteen Eighty Four** is to be a coward, a spy, and a betrayer. Even technically, the book shows little imagination. The war of **Nineteen Eighty Four** is fought with the weapons of 1944, rockets and Tommy guns.

Orwell has removed any real tension from his story by amputating all courage and self-sacrifice from his human beings. The only challenge to totalitarianism comes from the individual’s assertion of personal values and beliefs against mass-standards and from the upholding of human love against artificially stimulated hate. Winston Smith is quite incapable of doing anything. He is a feeble creature himself and can draw no strength from his relationship with Julia. Since what he feels for her is not love, it is merely a tepid mixture of attraction and contempt.

The novel is sub-divided into three parts. Part I puts the hero, Winston Smith, on the stage. It gives a detailed and terrifying picture of the community in which the hero lives. It introduces the handful of characters that serve the plot, including Julia with whom Winston falls in love. It acquaints us with telescreen, installed in every living-room, through which the secret Police constantly supervise the words, gestures, expressions and thoughts of all members of the Party; Newspeak, the language devised by the Party to prevent independent thinking; the Big Brother whose face is to be seen everywhere on posters, etc; doublethink the formula of 100% political hypocrisy; the synthetic gin which alone relieves the misery of the inhabitants; the three slogans of the Party. ("War is Peace"; "Freedom is Slavery"; and "Ignorance is Strength"); and the Party’s technique of obliterating past events in the Party’s interests. The political system which prevails in Ingsoc (English Socialism) is a deliberate attack on socialism and socialist parties generally, not the socialism of equality.

Part II contains the plot which is a very simple one. Winston falls in love with a black-haired girl, Julia. This is in itself an act of rebellion on the part of both of them. The sexual act is a form of rebellion.

Winston and Julia, already rebels, now become more active in their plot against the Party. They contact O’Brien whom they believe to be a fellow rebel. O’Brien gives them a copy of the book supposedly written by Emmanuel Goldstein, the enemy of the Party. Winston reads the book; and it is a typical Orwellian that Julia falls asleep
while Winston reads it aloud to her. Women are not intelligent in Orwell's world. Goldstein's book is called, The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism, and we are given many pages of quotations from it.

Part III of the novel contains the torture, the breakdown and the re-education of Winston Smith, following upon his arrest in bed with Julia by Secret police. Here Orwell's sadism finds full expression. Winston is threatened by hungry rats, implores his torturer to throw Julia to the rats in his place. Winston is thus compelled to betray all that is noble in man and at the end of it he is a broken man, ready for re-education as a willing follower of Ingsoc. The plight in which we find him is the necessary prelude in Oceania because of his "thought crime." In Ingsoc there are no martyrs but only broken men wishing to die for the good of their country. Part III is full of death, decay, dirt, diabolism and despair. O'Brien is the grand inquisitor, and he leaves Winston, and the reader, without hope.

**As a political Satire Against Totalitarianism**

The novel Nineteen Eighty Four evokes the tone of a life in a totalitarian society but it does not investigate the totalitarian state, its laws of the economy or the prospects of its survival. In this novel Orwell's most profound insight envisions an absolute totalitarianism which precedes individuality in the society. Having experienced the futility of ideological commitment in Spain, having recognized the gap between pronouncements of social amelioration and their inoperability in the industrial towns of England, having finally come to the realization that power, the anathema of liberalism, has become an end in itself. Orwell announces that the man's choices are gone from the world. If John Flory was faced with horrid social and moral alternatives, he had at least the option of suicide in Burmese Days. Winston Smith does not have even that. Howe is quite justified in his critical comment:

"In Nineteen Eighty Four, Orwell is trying to present the kind of the world in which individuality has become obsolete and personality a crime."

The novel shows that in a totalitarian world, man's life is deprived of its dynamic possibilities. Oceanic society may evolve through certain stages of economic development but the life of its members is static. It can neither rise to tragedy nor tumble to comedy. The human personality has here been obliterated; the man has become a function of a process, which he is never allowed to understand or control.
There have been totalitarian societies in the past. But most of them believed in freedom. The totalitarian society of Oceania permits no freedom at all; it offers a total "solution" to the problems of the 20th century: that also means a total distortion of what might be a solution. This totalitarian society assumes that given the modern technology, complete political control, the means of terror, and contempt for moral tradition, anything is possible. Anything can be done with the man, their minds, history, and with language. Reality is fabricated according to the need and will of the state.

The totalitarian society aims at the destruction of the past. One of the most touching scenes in the novel is that in which William Smith is trying to discover what life was before in the reign of Big Brother. The aged prole remembers that the beer was better in the time of Big Brother. He is unable to imagine that present life is better than the life in the past. So he cannot really understand Winston's question if he really feels that he has more freedom now than he had in older days. Winston feels that things have really changed. He tried "to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this...."9

The steady impersonalization, the elimination of the objective truth and the distortion of the past make everything hazy, murky and uncertain. Each individual is with his code number like 6029 (Winston Smith). Even he has a chance of forgetting his own name and identity in process. Such is the horror of totalitarianism that Orwell goes to the farthest logical extreme in order to put up a powerful warning to the world against the enemies of the democracy. These enemies are Communists, Fascists, Nazis and believers in authoritarianism of every hue.

Winston Smith, the protagonist, the last man in Europe, the last survivor of the proud human race is finished. When he contemplates on writing his diary, he fails to remember the date clearly:

"He sat back. A sense of complete helplessness had descended upon him. To obtain with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984."10

The cause of the helplessness of Winston Smith was precisely because "it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two." 11

Although Winston feels that things have changed beyond recognition, under the constant vigil of 'Big Brother', in the Airstrip one in the state of Oceania, he sees scarcely anything of the past to compare with:
“He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this…. But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.”12

In Oceania the individual does not have privacy, nothing to feel as his own—not even the passing thoughts of his mind, or the emotional strains of his heart. Everything is observed, everything is restricted:

“Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love and friendship .... Such things... couldn't happen today. Today, there were fear, hatred and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows.”13

Winston and Julia take the best possible precautions and restrain themselves. But can they escape the notice of the Big Brother, the telescreen and Thought Police?

“Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed—no escape.”14

In the company of Mr. Charrington and O'Brien, Winston harbours his anarchist ideas, his last hopes about the possible rise of the proles one day to bring an end to the tyranny of the Big Brother. Winston continues having some self-satisfaction but soon his chamber is raided. The old benefactor, Mr. Charrington, who had let out the room to Winston, and sold the antique glass paper-weight to him, is at last proved to be the agent of the ubiquitous Thought Police. O'Brien, whom Winston respected and trusted, finally emerges as yet another important member of the inner parties of the Thought Police.

Winston is rounded up and some cop “picked up the glass paper weight from the table and smashed it to pieces.”15 The smashing of the paperweight is symbolic of the breaking of the integrated man of the old order. Winston throughout his whole life has struggled to defend his integrity. His last hope is gone, when he struggles to preserve his sanity by not betraying Julia under the ultimate horror of the rats running over him. He throws Julia to be a prey of rats.

After a long period of physical torture, Winston comes to accept that the Big Brother is infallible, all powerful and immortal and accepts the Party dictation that 'two plus two is five'. O'Brien explains the fact:
“Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is Collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party.”

He clarifies the ultimate motif of the Party to get power: “Power is not a means, it is an end.”

He further explains the unique world of Oceania devoid of human sentiments:

“In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph and self-abasement.... There will be no loyalty, except loyalty towards the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother.”

In short, George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty Four is a powerful satire against the debasing and dehumanizing nature of man. It is the politics of totalitarianism, pacifism, war and regimentation which work as a sweeping force of dehumanization in a society. Robert A. Lee gives the final comment:

“To read Orwell is to recognize the meanings of Ortega Y Gasset’s indictment of twentieth century liberalism.”

All the works of Orwell reiterate the belief that modern liberalism misunderstood the fierce nature of the state. It is improbable to think that his novels, essays and other writings are only against Fascism and communism. It seems that he is against any institution or thought which is totalitarian and inhuman in nature. He was wholly on the side of the oppressed always against the oppressors: “He was against every form of man’s dominion over man.”

Many critics and scholars emphasized the nightmarish quality of Nineteen Eighty Four as an expression of Orwell’s final illness. It appears from his novels that it is not pessimism but it is an association of tragic and artistic integrity which bring forward a realistic perspective of socio-political society. Jean Armstrong writes:

“This is not pessimism, but realism. This is not lack of faith in human nature but a realistic acceptance of it in all its variety. Orwell had great faith in ‘decency’ of the common man.”
The *Nineteen Eighty Four* might be studied as a warning rather than a prophecy. Of course, *Nineteen Eighty Four* reflects a note of hope that is peculiarly Orwellian for he contemplates:

"If there is hope, it lies in proles."\(^{22}\)

Orwell makes his heroes suffer from complex diseases from which, it is hard to recover. Though Orwell does not lose his faith, he makes his character struggle for hope like a plant's struggle to get the light of the sun. Orwell remarks:

"The struggle of the working class is like the growth of a plant. This plant is blind and stupid but it knows enough to keep pushing upwards towards the light."\(^ {23}\)

*Nineteen Eighty Four* is rather the inevitable culmination of Orwell's development. In one sense, the entire book merely portrays successive alterations in Winston Smith's consciousness. It is accepted that the study of "intimate relations" is absent in significant degree. One of the major themes of the book-the impossibility of any significant human relationship in the world of Oceania-expressly justifies the relative absence of relationships and the peculiar treatment of the relationship between Julia and Winston. As Howe says, replying to the supposed absence of any so-called three-dimensional characters in the book:

"In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Orwell is trying to present the kind of world in which individuality has become obsolete and personality a crime."\(^ {24}\)

Believing that the political aspects of the novel are its only substance, has led critics to misrepresent Orwell's achievement. Richard J. Voorhees, remarks: "*Nineteen Eighty Four* is not really a novel at all. It is a combination of tale of terror and political treatise."\(^ {25}\) It is seldom recognized as a novel. Wyndham Lewis speaks for a substantial body of critics: "The book as a whole is a first-rate political document."\(^ {26}\)

Within this broad spectrum, we can be certain of one specific source, Eugene Zamiatin's *We*, first published in 1924. Writing in the London *Tribune* early in 1946, Orwell praised *We* highly. There are striking similarities between *We* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*. As Isaac Deutscher points out, Orwell's own description of Zamiatin's society reads "like a synopsis of *Nineteen Eighty Four*."\(^ {27}\) According to Wyndham Lewis, the world of Oceania has happiness without freedom:

"The guiding principle of the State is that happiness and freedom are incompatible. In the Garden of Eden man was happy, but in his folly he demanded freedom
and was driven out into the wilderness. Now the Single State has restored his happiness by removing his freedom."\textsuperscript{28}

Deutscher links Zamiatin's book not only with \textbf{Nineteen Eighty Four} but with the metaphor that has been at the centre of Orwell's political and artistic thought since Spain. Frank W. Wadsworth notes when Zamiatin's uncertain hero ponders over the mechanical way of living in the totalitarian society of the people who think might is right: The source of right was might. Right is a function of the might. "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four."\textsuperscript{29}

The effects of absolute totalitarianism on individual consciousness is best understood as "a coincidental realization of an image that graphically epitomizes the loss of human integrity under tyranny".\textsuperscript{30}

The destruction of all human reason is implicit in the statement that two plus two equal five. But the point at hand is generic, not thematic. If the theme implies great political insight, it is also developed from Orwell's imagination. "Within the new social structure a different social group of class-the managers-will be the dominant or ruling class."\textsuperscript{31} These "managers" are later vaguely defined as "simply those who are, in fact, managing the instruments of production nowadays."\textsuperscript{32}

Orwell cites Burnham as maintaining that "politics consists of the struggle for power, and nothing else."\textsuperscript{33} He says that Burnham believes: "Humanity is divided into two classes: the self-seeking, hypocritical minority, and the brainless mob whose destiny is always to be led or driven . . . according to the needs of the moment."\textsuperscript{34}

In looking at his novels we have noted the recurring motif of the "wounded protagonist"; John Flory has his disfiguring naevus; Dorothy Hare suffers her attack of amnesia; Gordon Comstock, sick of the world, becomes physically ill; George Bowling is hurt by an accidentally dropped bomb. And, of course, Orwell himself is critically wounded in Spain, an event he describes at significant length in \textbf{Homage to Catalonia}.

One purpose of each of these disabilities is to separate the character from his society, to symbolically represent the alienation which, in varying degrees in each of the novels, later ends. Winstom Smith, the hero of \textbf{Nineteen Eighty Four}, also is "wounded." "He suffers from a chronic cough and he has "a varicose ulcer above his right ankle."\textsuperscript{35}
Orwell is concerned not only with the failure of communication but with the corruption of language. And the corruption of language is the essential means of tyranny in Animal Farm.

Symbols

Nineteen Eighty Four is full of glaring symbols. Orwell is ‘Everyman and Anyman’; his fate can be the fate of any citizen in this kind of society; at the same time, Winston Smith, like Winston Churchill, is a typical in society—O’ Brien later will say that his uniqueness is the reason the party takes so much pain to educate him back to normality. Winston Smith is the potential hero of the world of Nineteen Eighty Four, the man who can maintain his private virtue against public demands; at the same time his surname suggests that this is impossible, that he can ultimately only share the fate of his fellowman.

Dust is the primary symbol of this world and is used by Orwell as a principal element in the structure of the novel. London, as Winston thinks about it, is the “chief city of Airstrip One”: “...the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow herb straggled over the heaps of rubble.” Dust also characterizes the inhabitants of London who have been fully assimilated into the state. Mrs. Parsons, Winston’s neighbour, the mother of the two horrid children who are members of the “Spies,” a helpless, ignorant, grayish woman who stands for the typical unthinking citizen of Airstrip One, gives Winston the “impression that there was dust in the creases of her face.” The image is exactly chosen by Orwell; as he leaves her house, Winston “noticed with interest that there actually was dust in the creases of her face.”

Winston has committed an inconceivable crime: He possesses a diary; he attempts to record history; he attempts to maintain a physical link with the past. Orwell describes his actions pictorially:

“He put the diary away in the drawer. It was quite useless to think of hiding it, but he could at least make sure whether or not its existence had been discovered. A hair laid across the page-ends was too obvious. With the tip of his finger he picked up an identifiable grain of whitish dust and deposited it on the corner of the cover, where it was bound to be shaken off if the book was moved.”

In marking his diary with this piece of dust, Winston ironically places it under the control of the state. When the Thought Police come and examine the diary,
while Winston still believes himself to be free, "even the speck of whitish dust on the cover of his diary they had carefully replaced." The dust represents both physical Oceania and the inevitability and totality of the state's power and control.

Winston's attempt to subvert his world has twice been symbolically foredoomed to failure. Neither the diary nor the prole are free from control. The major attempt to defy the system, the love affair between Winston and Julia, is similarly haunted.

Winston is aware of the strangeness of the country surroundings, and we are aware, because of the dust symbol, that he is not free. Orwell depicts such a scenario:

"The sweetness of the air and the greenness of the leaves daunted him. Already, on the walk from the station, the May sunshine had made him feel dirty and etiolated, a creature of indoors, with the sooty dust of London in the pores of his skin."41

But their love-making, the "animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire," frees them dramatically. They are not captured; they arrange to meet again. And though in one of their meetings a rocket bomb drops near them and the explosion covers her lips with "some powdery stuff" and though "both of their faces were thickly coated with plaster."42

_Nineteen Eighty Four_ is both suggestive and symbolic. Its protagonist Winston seals his own fate in using dust to "protect" his diary, so does Julia symbolically doom their relationship. Winston and Julia share one more defiant delusion of freedom. O'Brien contacts Winston and truthfully reveals to Winston the ultimate fate of all heretics, and in the course of this conversation symbolically reveals himself to be a representative of the state's power:

"You will work for a while, you will be caught, you will confess, and then you will die. Those are the only results that you will ever see."43

Winston and Julia's capture in the room suggests a new role for the state, that of punisher. Thought Police burst into the room, and as the lovers are taken captive, one of the police picks up Winston's glass paperweight "and smashed it to pieces on the hearthstone".

The paperweight, with its coral centrepiece, has been a symbol of the past: a useless item, valuable only for its beauty, and therefore inimical to the society of Oceania. It proved to Winston that the past existed in a different form; it had specifically
come to represent Winston and Julia's very existence.

Winston's varicose ulcer marks him as the last in the long line of Orwell's maimed protagonists stretching back to John Flory. Flory's ugly birthmark primarily represents his unbreakable isolation from the society he covets; his acceptance into that society is only temporary, and he dies. Winston's varicose ulcer also represents his isolation from his society. He will have to accept Party's denial of human rationality.

"In the end the Party would announce that two and two make five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it."\(^{44}\)

Wounded Julia meets wounded Winston, and at this point she passes him a note which begins their relationship. Aware of the symbolic pattern, we can anticipate what will follow. As the two solitaries achieve a personal relationship, their wounds heal. For Julia, whose deviation from society is minimal—largely physical and therefore a minor threat to the state the healing process begins almost as soon as the relationship is implicit.

"The next day she reappeared. Her arm was out of the sling and she had a band of stocking plaster round her wrist."\(^{45}\)

Moreover, Winston's complete healing back into "health" of the state is itself a heresy against the state. His wound improves later on.

"Four, five, six-seven times they met during the month of June. Winston had dropped his habit of drinking gin at all hours. He seemed to have lost the need for it. He had grown fatter, his varicose ulcer had subsided, leaving only a brown stain on the skin above his ankle, his fits of coughing in the early morning had stopped."\(^{46}\)

The external pain which the Party wields is different from the pain that Winston's ankle gives him, and one is to overcome the other. When the Thought Police burst into the room above the antique shop, Julia is hit in the stomach, but Winston instead receives "a violent kick on the ankle which nearly flung him off his balance."\(^{47}\)

The torture Winston undergoes in the Ministry of Love avoids the former sign of his selfness: There is careful omission of the ankle among the parts of the body which the Party torturers abuse.

"Sometimes it was fists, sometimes it was truncheons, sometimes it was steel rods, sometimes it was boots. There were times when he rolled about the floor, as
shameless as an animal, writhing his body this way and that in an endless, hopeless effort to dodge the kicks, and simply inviting more and yet more kicks, in his ribs, in his belly, on his elbows, on his shin, in his groin, in his testicles, on the bone at the base of his spine.”

Just as the speck of dust on his diary revealed that book to be under the power of the state, so the Party now symbolically foredooms Winston to acceptance of their values by curing his wound. In language which is reminiscent of his fleeting moment of “health” and the loss of his isolation in his love of Julia, the state now becomes his healer and the eventual recipient of all his love.

He was much better. He was growing fatter and stronger every day, if it was proper to speak of days. Now his ankle is cured; the “curing” of his human reason comes quickly, and it is soon that Winston can write, and believe, that “Two and two make five.... He accepted everything. The past was alterable. The past never had been altered.”59 The next scene finds Winston sitting at a “dusty table” in the Chestnut Tree Cafe. “Almost unconsciously he traced with his finger in the dust on the table: 2+2=5.”

Orwell’s use of religious metaphors, chiefly for the purpose of irony, has been consistent in his work from Burmese Days to this point; the use of religion in Nineteen Eighty Four has been “noted”,51 but its pervasiveness in the novel has been generally overlooked. Orwell’s purpose is satirical. He infuses religious metaphors into a completely secular context to suggest the corruption of the system, the perversion of eternal values by the ephemeral demands of politics.

A recurring image throughout the novel is St. Martin’s church, one of the hazy, unrecallable images that Winston is always trying to locate in time past. But like any other aspect of the past, it has been put to other uses. It has become a “museum used for propaganda displays of various kinds-scale models of rocket bombs and Floating Fortresses, waxwork tableaux illustrating enemy atrocities and the like.”52

The meeting at O’Brien’s home introduces a more far reaching incorporation of religion into the plot. O’Brien first offers Winston and Julia some wine. O’Brien follows this by questioning Winston and Julia in a “routine, a sort of catechism, most of whose answers were known to him already.”

“You are prepared to give your lives?”

“Yes.”
"You are prepared to commit murder?"  
"Yes."

"To commit acts of sabotage which may cause the death of hundreds of innocent people?"  
"Yes."

"To betray your country to foreign powers?"  
"Yes."53

O'Brien's final answers to Winston's query are summed up in the apothegm "God is Power." This new religion, of which O'Brien is a "priest of power," can exist in the terms of deity because it ignores the error of self-rationalization made by tyrannies in the past. Oceania does not make martyrs; it makes converts. It does not allow a man to die a rebel; it "makes the brain perfect"—before it is blown out. In short, "Power is not a means; it is an end."54 "The system which needs no self-justification can dispense with ideology."55

Reality is what the Party today determines it to be; history is relative; the sun is no longer the centre of the universe; the human spirit, which Winston solitarily asserts, ends in a gin-streaked, tearful prayer:

"...his soul was white as snow . . . . He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother."56

A word must be said about the apparent alternatives to this total despair. A recurring phrase throughout the novel is "if there is hope, it lies in the proles."

In terms of Orwell's vaunted socialism and egalitarianism, it is tempting to see the proles as a mode of hope in this "otherwise total tyranny."57 In terms of the political theory presented in the book, such hope is denied. In Goldstein's book (written, of course, by the Collective Party, including O'Brien, who vouches for the truth of its "description"), we learn that "from the Proletarians nothing is to be feared. Left to themselves, they will continue from generation to generation and century to century, working, breeding, and dying, not only without any impulse to rebel, but without the power of grasping that the world could be other than what it is."58

In a world in which power is all-important, the proles do not have the ability to conceptualize change, much less the power to bring about change. The linking of animal imagery with the proles recurs consistently.
“In reality very little was known about the proles. It was not necessary to
know much. So long as they continued to work and breed, their other activities were
without importance. Left to themselves, like cattle turned loose upon the plains of
Argentina, they had reverted to a style of life that appeared to be natural to them, a sort
of ancestral pattern.”

The fate of brutish, stupid animal power has been made only too clear by
**Animal Farm.** In a sense, the proles of **Nineteen Eighty Four** are merely the helpless
animals of **Animal Farm** transposed to a more efficient tyranny.

The apotheosis of admittedly evil, naked power existing for and of itself
is an ultimate extension of the domination of politics over the individual. This is the point
Irving Howe is making when he calls **Nineteen Eighty Four** “the end of the line.”

“A movement in which terror and irrationality play so great a role may
finally have no goal beyond terror and irrationality; to search for an ultimate end that can
be significantly related to its immediate activity may itself be a rationalist fallacy.”

**Control over Language and Political Satire**

Too many details of the novel are unexplained if the theme of language
corrupted and corrupting is slighted. For even O’Brien’s view of the “perfected” world is
couched in terms of the future: the world the Party is creating is a world that “will” happen
and where:

“No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the
future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at
birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will
be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card. We shall abolish the orgasm. Our
neurologists are at work upon it now. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother.
There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy. There will
be no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent, we shall have no more
need of science.”

The control of language is seen in more definite, empirical realizations; it
is even possible to date it. Winston is talking to Syme, whose work in the “Research
Department” is the continuous rewriting of the Newspeak dictionary.

“We’re getting the language into its final shape—the shape it’s going to
have when nobody speaks anything else”....We’re destroying words scores of them,
hundreds of them, everyday. We're cutting the language down to the bone. The Eleventh Edition won't contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050."62

Like so many other norms which are reversed in the world of Nineteen Eighty Four, the dictionary becomes a means to narrow language, a way to diminish the range of vocabulary. The dictionary predicts and thus determines the choices of speech-and thus thought-and thus action-available to the inhabitants of Oceania.

In George Steiner's words, it is in language that man's "identity and historical presence are uniquely explicit. It is language that severs man from the deterministic signal codes, from the inarticulacies, from the silences that inhabit the greater part of being."63 The loss of choice in language leads to the loss of particularization, and this leads to unconsciousness. Syme again speaks to Winston:

"The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect.... 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."64

He again emphasizes his point:

"The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact there will be no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking-not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness."65

In a world where the past is always mutable in the constant alteration of language, existence is indeed indeterminable.

"... though the past is alterable, it never has been altered in any specific instance. For when it has been recreated in whatever shape is needed at the moment, then this new version is the past, and no different past can ever exist."66

The horrors of the physical tortures, the total lack of privacy, the malevolent secularization of concept of eternity, the absolute tyranny of the state-all these are ultimate in Nineteen Eighty Four. The horror of Winston's fate is not that he betrayed his "inner heart" in asserting his love of his selfhood over his love of Julia; nor is the absolute control of the state over the individual, through physical torture and death or consummate brainwashing, the worst terror that the human being can face.

"The end of the line" in Nineteen Eighty Four is the loss of consciousness-and Orwell specifically defines this as a result of the failure of language. Most disturbing, after all the monstrousness the book implies for the human condition,
that "The Principles of Newspeak" are described in the past tense. If we believe Orwell, we are past Nineteen Eighty Four and closing in on 2050.

Humanism in Nineteen Eighty Four

The term "humanism" was coined in 1808 by F.J. Neithamner for the development of the Greek and Latin classics. It also refers to the term "humanities" or "studies humanities"\(^6\), which was used from liberal or literary point of view by Roman authors like Cicero, Gellius and others. In the middle of the nineteenth century a liberal movement among the European intellectuals, began to gather momentum. The great Italian philosopher, Pomponazzi, has said:

"The dignity of man is not only maintained but man's present, earthly life is credited with a significance that does not depend on any hopes or fears for the future."

Like Pomponazzi, Orwell does not pin his hope in the after-life and credits the dignity of man, and that life is worth-living. Man, in the opinion of Orwell, cannot know the absolute. Orwell saw that in the modern state, there was a tendency towards totalitarianism without the bliss of salvation. Therefore, he daringly argues to rescue man out of abysmal misery and pain and protect his dignity.

Orwell pointedly argues for the viability of the man. In "The Book of Job", there is an emphatic reference to the unfathomable suffering of man. Job suffers because of his faith in God. In his suffering is his redemption. Job said:

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of God".\(^6\)

In the twentieth century, against the religious, conservative and social set up, there ascended secular, humanitarian, liberal and iconoclastic authors who did not belong to any group or doctrine e.g. G.B. Shaw,\(^7\) Karl Marx\(^7\) and George Orwell. These writers wanted to rescue mankind from the hold of capitalist states and expose the exploitation of common man.

Orwell's humanism has an inexhaustible sense of sympathy and deep-seated generosity for the oppressed. Universal brotherhood and restoration of fundamental human values are the basic concern of the writer. Such vision also emanates in Nineteen Eighty Four from human suffering, poverty stricken-life, pretence, exploitation and from man's dehumanization.

Orwell has written that Nineteen Eighty Four is a novel about the
that it is in a sense a fantasy, but in the form of a naturalistic novel. It is intended to show up of the perversions to which centralized economy is liable, and which have already been partly realized in communism and Fascism. Totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences.

Orwell had a well-laid out humanistic philosophy behind him. A brief review of this philosophy provides the format of Orwellian concept of humanism. His humanistic approach stresses on improving human welfare, and it had "basic belief in human potentiality" and human responsibility. He suggested a direct antithesis between religious and humanistic values. Like Arthur Koestler, Orwell wants to form the balance between "the Yogi and the Commissar" or the balance between flesh and spirit. Michael Carter analyses Orwell's novels in terms of conflict between the self and the outside world. He regards *Nineteen Eighty Four* as a repetition of Kafka's novel, *The Trial*, for Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty Four* only discovers evil rather than good.

Like Orwell, G.B. Shaw was a humanitarian who wanted to rescue mankind from capitalism, exploitation, prostitution, violence and such other forms of evil. Orwell wanted to employ conscience and virtue that constitute the idea of "Life Force" in Shaw's humanitarian vision. In Apple Cart, G.B. Shaw writes:

"Keeping our distance is the whole secret of good manners and without good manners human society is intolerable and impossible."\(^{72}\)

Orwell in his essay "Inside the Whale" evaluates James Joyce's *Ulysses* and finds it an exploration in the humanistic tradition. Faulkner considers both James and George Orwell as writers of humanistic values:

"Orwell's values are those of humanism and he suggests a direct antithesis between religious and humanistic values."\(^{73}\)

It would be more accurate to say that *Nineteen Eighty Four* portrays the very real though unfamiliar political terrorism of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia transposed into the landscape of London in 1941-44.

**Nineteen Eighty Four: Its Merits and Shortcomings**

In *Nineteen Eighty Four* the naturalistic setting of wartime London is combined with brutal characteristics of 18th century England to emphasize the moral and material regression under 'Ingsoc'. The people mollify their miserable existence with
large doses of acidic gin, prisoners march through streets and public hanging provides popular amusement.

Orwell's numerous characters in his novels seem to admire domesticity and solitude where there is comeliness, naturalness and human values. He finds the modern man's kitchen deserted and lifeless. His dynamics of humanism extends a profound love and sympathy for the suffering humanity. In Nineteen Eighty Four he portrays dehumanization in a controlled way. He perceives the total destruction of human values, private desires and instincts. Orwell perceives clearly how human will, consciousness, memory and past are controlled by the theory of oligarchical collectivism. O'Brien, symbolic of monolithic state, describes the meaning of politics to his helpless and tattered victim:

"If you want a picture of future, imagine a boot stamping on human face forever." 74

Like Huxley, Orwell can see that man is dehumanized by a sweeping external force. In Huxley's world, destruction of individual takes place by the progress of technology. To Orwell, mechanization is essentially the result of progress. But when it licenses an end in itself, it turns callous and heartless. Socialism then does not serve man, rather it is the man who becomes the slave of the socialistic pattern of society.

According to Orwell, socialism was brought in the name of human advancement but the irony of the situation lies in the fact that the totalitarian powers govern the common man ultimately. They entrap common man by the slogans, "War is Peace' and 'Freedom is Slavery.' Winston Smith and Julia identify themselves with proles. Therefore, they rebel against the callous and totalitarian world and pass a viable life in isolation.

Orwell's characters are realistic. If the high ideals of socialism became corrupt and anti-people then Orwell has shown without hesitation that he stood by the side of the human mass and no idealism. If property was not removed by Revolution, if the condition of the working people did not improve then he held the ideology to be responsible. Human beings cannot be wrong but often their thoughts are. Therefore, Orwell is neither pro-socialist nor anti-socialist; he is on the side of human beings and their welfare.

The pre- Nineteen Eighty Four world was one where family relations
had meaning and personal sacrifice for the family welfare was possible. But now, during war it is only the proles-considered to be outside civilization - who maintain such unquestioned private loyalties. In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Winston Smith was born in mid forties-when he was about ten, his family disappeared in one of the periodic purges and he is half aware that in some way his mother and sister had sacrificed themselves for his sake.

"Tragedy belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason...." 75

Winston's mother had sacrificed herself to a conception of loyalty that was private and unalterable. Such things, he saw, could not happen today. "Today there were fear, hatred and pain but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows."76

An atomic bomb on Colchester confused street fighting in London, constant hunger and sordid squabbling to get more food, life as an orphan in a Reclamation Centre, a continuous war against Eastasia or Eurasia, a hideously unsuccessful marriage which collapsed. These are the experiences through which he has grown up. By 1984 Smith is thirty nine: small, frail, suffering from a varicose ulcer on his leg and from early-morning coughing fits, living in the collapsing Victory Mansions ('The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats'). He is a citizen of an England which has become Airstrip One, a province of a super- state known as Oceania. He lives in London on which fall twenty or thirty rocket bombs a week, where there are rotting houses empty bomb-sites, electricity cuts, a chronic shortage of one thing after another, cold water, gritty soap, cigarettes that fall to pieces, evil-tasting food, ugly people. Such dinginess, such barrenness and listlessness seem even more truly characteristic of modern life than its cruelty and insecurity.

"The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible and glittering-a world of steel and concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons-a nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting-three hundred million people all with the same face. 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...." 77

There are regulation lunches; the Community Centres, the junior Anti-Sex League, designed to destroy the erotic attachment between people which might set up private loyalties, the Youth League and the Spies, whose members have been issued with ear-trumpets so that they can more easily listen to their parent's conversation. The children have been changed into horrible, ungovernable savages, adoring everything connected with the Party:

"The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother- it was all a sort of glorious game to them ... It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children. And with good reason; for hardly a week passed in which the Times did not carry a paragraph describing how some eavesdropping little sneak 'child-hero' was the phrase generally used-had overheard some compromising remark and denounced its parents to the Thought Police." 78

The Party apparatus of government is everywhere. Above all it exists in Newspeak (the development of Standard English whose sole aim is the narrowing of the range of thought by destruction of vocabulary), and in the telescreens of the Thought Police which can receive and transmit simultaneously. Possibly everybody was watched all time.

In Nineteen Eighty Four, Orwell shows the culture of a perverted English Socialism known as Ingsoc, administered from the Ministries of Truth, Peace, Plenty and Love.

Oceania is governed by an elite-the Inner Party (two percent of the population) which rules on the basis of slogans: 'War is Peace', 'Freedom is Slavery', and 'Ignorance is Strength'. The Party has two major problems: the conquest of the earth and the prevention of independent thought, science existing only in so far as it helps to achieve these. The fundamental principle is that nothing exists except human consciousness and reality-control—a lunatic dislocation of the mind and Newspeak calls it 'Doublethink':

"Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting both of them.... By using the word doublethink one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this
knowledge: and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth." 79

There is denial of past and acceptance of continuous present. This slogan is: "Who controls the present, controls the past." The doublethinker is the complete Partyman, happy in a world where there are no friends but only comrades where a love affair is impossible and erotic enjoyment a crime. The greatest evil is 'thoughtcrime' and the greatest virtue is 'goodthinkful'. In Newspeak there is even the concept 'facecrime' - to wear an improper expression on your face. There is also the concept 'crimestop'. "Crimestop, in short, means protective stupidity." 80

The twin poles of this society are Big Brother- infallible, omnipotent, immortal and omnipresent: through his gigantic photographs-and Goldstein-an Enemy of the People, backslider, anti-revolutionary, defiler of Party purity, author of a terrible book called The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism. In such a world of two unknown, Smith is lost, locked in his loneliness even after working a sixty-hour week in the Ministry of Truth:

"He felt as though he were wandering in the forests of the sea bottom, lost in a monstrous world where he himself was the monster. He was alone.... Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you." 81

Smith attempts to carry on human heritage. During the Hates he comes to feel a sympathy with Goldstein: '...his heart went out to the lonely, derided heretic on the screen, sole guardian of truth and sanity in a world of lies'. He hopes that the proles will eventually rebel and take over the future. He starts believing in the existence of an anti-revolutionary organization known as the Brotherhood, rumoured to be led by Goldstein.

In short, in Nineteen Eighty Four, Orwell not only attacks the inhumanities and callousness brought about by communism and Fascism but remonstrates against all forms of powers and dominions which oppress the downtrodden and common man. Orwell argues eloquently that the revolution, brought in the name of social welfare, is merely a cloak to grab unbridled power. It is a pretension to exploit the common man in every possible way. Orwell exposes the sick world of power-worship and adoration of evil. One of the reasons of power worship, Orwell thinks, is due to abnormal rise in nationalism. In his essay "Notes on Nationalism" he writes:

"The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and
more prestige, not for himself but for the nation."

In the novel Nineteen Eighty Four, Orwell argues for restoration of human dignity which is wiped out by the totalitarian state. As a humanitarian writer, he does not tolerate to see the debasing dehumanizing factors, which delink man from the past. The state provides cheap entertainment and pseudo-propaganda in order to make them unable to think and to make them politically paralyzed. Winston writes in his secret diary:

"Until they become conscious, they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious."[82]

The escape of Winston and Julia from the totalitarian society symbolizes their desire for personal freedom and instinctual life. The politics of dehumanization has caused the decay of English language. The term like 'Newspeak' 'Old Speak', 'Mutability of the Past', 'Big Brother', 'Ministry of Truth', 'Thought Police', 'Doublethink', 'Hateweek,' have entered the dehumanized world of totalitarianism. Such politics of dehumanization led to 'The Mysticism of Cruelty' which reminds Winston cries in Room 101 and ultimately his coming back in the office of Big Brother. In "Politics and the English Language" Orwell condemns the corrupting of language out of its natural shape. He writes:

"Underneath this lies the half conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes."[83]

Orwell never loses hope. He struggles for the restoration of man's dignity and viability. He finds proles above embodiment of truth, integrity and human values. As such they alone can stop the process of dehumanization and bring life back to health and happiness. Through the political fable Orwell establishes the tenacity of man. Orwell is hopeful to the extent:

"Like a phoenix mankind can rise again from the ashes of wars and political slavery to a new morning of hope and cheerfulness."[84]

**Negative Utopian Fiction**

Utopianism is the reaction of the mind to the restraints of the matters. Through Utopianism man attempts to transcend his material conditions, which have been vastly problematic ever since the history of mankind. Man is the only organism for whom his own existence is a problem; from which he cannot escape. "He is trapped in nature...all the same, he is a strangely free prisoner of nature."[85]
The ‘dualistic’ nature of human mind: to live simultaneously in the oppressive grip of the nature and also to disengage itself and live in a construct of the future which is opposite to the present, can be termed as the beginning of Utopia. Among social historians, William T. Moore and Frederik L. Polak, share the view that man’s time consciousness, his time-schizophrenia: division of the continuous time flow into the past, the future and the eternal, are genetically induced. Man is a split creature who can live meaningfully both in past and future. The irresistible power or pull of the future inspires and directs man to reach out above himself, to strive from generation to generation towards another and better times.

It is perhaps as old as the human tendency to place desires above reality and seek fulfillment in contemporary world. It is the desire to seek “the opposite of the real world... in which radical evil has been abolished... wants are satisfied... all avoidable pain is eliminated and pleasure...maximized.” In general, utopia is related to the imaginary concept of life at imaginary island which possesses perfect social and political system where one can have all things of life without strain: freedom from toil, no inhibitions to restrain indulgence and no anxiety arising from the contemplation of death.

In W.H. Auden’s words:

“To the Islands of Milk and Honey
Where there’s neither death nor old age
And the poor have all the money.
The well are full of wine,
New Bread grows on the trees,
And roasted pigs run about
Crying “Eat me, if you please”.

Designs for utopias vary with the belief-system of individual Utopists. There are, however, no significant differences regarding the ends of different Utopian endeavours- abundance with equality leisure with peace and justice all around and may be also the satisfaction of those desires which arise from affluence and leisure. To Utopians pleasure is not a serious indulgence rather a virtue. In Mercier’s words: “Pleasure is not a monster, it is... virtue under gayer title,” Pleasure makes labour less burdensome to anticipate:

“The intervals of repose render...labour more vigorous and it is constantly attended by sports and rural dances. “The culture of the land is moderate, fertile plains resound with song of joy...the task is easy, and when it is done, joy begins...”
Opposite to this concept of perfect peace and bliss, the work of Huxley and Orwell is a systematic release of frame, a painful turning upon their pre-suppositions. Irving Howe analyses:

"Nineteen Eighty Four is a fiction of urgent yet reluctant testimony forced by profoundly serious men from their own resistances to fears they cannot evade."93

Huxley also said:

"Man has made a hell of this world, and has set up gods of pain to rule it. Goatish gods, that revel and feast on the agony of it all, pouring over the tortured world, like those hateful lovers, whose lust burns darkly into cruelty."94

Huxley and Orwell understood the contemporary situation better than others. Orwell had not created world of Nineteen Eighty Four in a void. He had seen that future inexorable taking shape in 1948. Orwell's theme in Nineteen Eighty Four that individual's privacy "the few cubic centimetres in his skull" was seriously menaced in contemporary conditions, was sustained by conditions, was substantiated by conditions actually prevailing in 1948.

These were the conditions Orwell had witnessed developing in the thirties during the war years and after the war. Like Huxley, Orwell is so overwhelmingly concerned over the threatened break down of civilization that the ordinary material of fictional stories as characters and individual relationship seem trivial to him. Nineteen Eighty Four was presumably written to warn us about the land, as society we should avoid, not strive after.

Orwell's moral awareness becomes a component of his technique. In Nineteen Eighty Four Orwell has contemplated a negative Utopia. 1984 is not merely the vision of totalitarian power but of its ultimate effects on human personality. The absence of anyhow of escape from its effects makes it so stark and gloomy. Isaac Deutscher had commented:

"1984 is in effect not so much a warning as a piercing shriek announcing the advent of the Black Millennium."95

The book cannot be merely evaluated only in the light of negative Utopia as it baffles us, leaves the loose ends dangling, which are hard to account for without a very liberal interpretation of norms of this particular fiction. Even Orwell's own description of Nineteen Eighty Four as a "Utopia" a fantasy in naturalistic form fails to account for
these anomalies. A Utopian fantasy should contain logical motives which are
classics of a Utopian world. Mere accretion of details of things which are patched,
discoloured and frayed would not make a form of naturalistic fantasy. The details in the
novel are repetitive and inevitable. Orwell fails to conceive reality. May be Orwell was
groping towards a new genre. He had written:

"This business of making people conscious of what is happening
outside their small circle is one of the major problems of our time, and a new literary
technique will have to be evolved to meet it."\(^{96}\)

May be, he was trying to devise a new form which could retain its nexus with immediate
existence and yet give it the freedom of fantasy.

Probably one way we could look at **Nineteen Eighty-Four** is to
characterize it as a nightmare which has the immediacy and the verisimilitude of the
world as Orwell saw it in the images of loss, disaster and totalitarian horrors of his
times, before and after the war. Added to this are, Orwell's idiosyncratic but powerful
fears of a terrible regression in the power-wielders which could affect the ultimate structure
of life. Therefore he combines the real with the feared, an exact picture of the factual
world with a dream-like dislocation of it. By combining these contrary elements he evokes
in us a sense of the immediate, identifiability and also a "monstrous dislocation" of the
same world leaving us trapped and condemned in a setting that is at once completely
familiar and abysmally strange. The surprising and the fortuitous move side by side in a
world which may be something like the world we know, but in which the irrational and
the catastrophic are the rule.

An attempt to understand the book in the matrix of a negative utopia is
partial. Moreover, **Nineteen Eighty-Four** should be read as a nightmare and its
irrationalities, horrors and glooms are parts of the hypothetical plot. Orwell was
successfully identifying the norms of negative utopian fiction. He is able to warn his
readers of hapless reality constructed by man and kindles a ray of hope of bright future.

**Gulliver's Travels** and **Nineteen Eighty-Four**

A reading of the essay on Swift reveals the full extent admiration wrested
by the genius of the great Augustan from his twentieth century descendant. Orwell has
ranked it as "one of the handful of irrespective masterpieces produced by western man."\(^{97}\)

No doubt, Orwell's **Nineteen Eighty-Four** has been shaped by Swift's great fable
Gulliver’s Travels. Like Gulliver’s Travels, Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty Four’s central problem is the hunt for the human being. Both texts pursue the truth about man seeking the true self, the authentic person who will at last be found beneath the accretions of culture and the drapings of mythology; both end in a kind of conversation in which human identity is exposed to untenable superstitions.

Gulliver travels to all those strange places and meets all those remarkable people. He is not able to find the truth of the external world but he discovers his self and it is most appalling discovery. He realizes that this experience is contrary to the complacent assumption enshrined in the logic books: homiest animal rationale. The pool in Houyhnhmmland reveals a very different, nauseating reality. In the same way in Nineteen Eighty Four Winston is taken to room 101, to be broken with revelation of his own turpitude. In Gulliver’s Travels the investigation of the truth is conducted in the mode of comic satire while in the other it is conducted depressingly and in a humorous way. It confines its readers to a pessimistic prison. The search for the self ends in both works in catastrophic success; the chill disclosure of human corruption occurs in Houyhnhmmland and Oceania alike.

A critical evaluation of Swift’s work establishes the fact that intimidation is the prime objective of Swift’s satire. Swift proposes that the idea of autonomous self in Christianity and humanism are not alike, it is mere delusion. As Gulliver moves from society to society; to be mounded in each fresh set of cultural assumptions he realizes there is no self at all, no central human core. The man is shaped by environment, he is deficient in any fixed or permanent characteristics, is short or tall, clean or unclean, only by comparison; he is a relative creature giant among Lilliputians, Lilliputian among giants, Yahoo among Houyhnhnms, horse among men.

According to Swift, a man is a mechanism, a function of his environment, imprisoned in a system, which he evades. What makes the travels so chillingly modern is its assumption of a man as the sum of his codes, programmed like a computer to follow instructions, incapable of change until a reprogramming occurs. There is no self apart from society, no nature but only the culture. This is the truth that Swift sends Gulliver travelling to learn. He sets out on his final voyage convinced of certain unpregnable truths: that England is the queen of nations and man the crown of creation: that society, with all its institutions and artefacts is the incontestable sign of
human existence.

In Houyhnhnmland Gulliver is made aware of the frauds that have been practised upon him; man is not animal rationale but yaho; society exhibits not the glittering evidence of human achievement but the proof of human depravity. Winston Smith is engaged in a similar search, which culminates in a similar disaster. Like Gulliver, he desperately strives to know reality regardless of existing fears. There are the adamantine truths e.g. love is stronger than hate; the skull is inviolable realm; the past is unalterable and truth is objective. From the outset, he is prepared for the worst and the worst is that he will be caught tortured and executed. But he knows that the truths he cherishes are insuperable and when his body is dead, his ideals will have triumphed.

The book Nineteen Eighty Four is a grim warning not to let things get so bad else we are forever lost. Swift wishes his readers to act outside and after his text, to stop being the yahoos we are; Orwell wishes his readers to act outside and before his text, least we become slaves of his prophecy. Prevention is Orwell’s aim, and not simply because prevention is better than cure, but the far more terrifyingly urgent reason that there must be prevention because there is no cure-Oceania is too late for salvation. O’Brien’s view of the “perfected “world is couched in terms of the future: The world the Party is creating is a world that “will” happen:

“ No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card. There will be no loyalty, except loyalty toward the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother. There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy. There will no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent, we shall have no more need of science.”

Nineteen Eighty Four records an education as Winston is taught painfully, to discard mistaken views of the world in favour of harsher, more correct ones. His final transformation is as shocking as Gulliver’s; Gulliver changes from lover of humanity to misanthrope, Winston from freedom fighter to power-worshipper, rebel to lickspittle. The full enormity of this metamorphosis can be gauged only by someone familiar with Orwell’s political views as expressed repeatedly throughout his essays and reviews. The easiest way to clarify all this is to consider the great change we
experience in passing from the world of Conrad to that of Orwell. Much more important than the forty-odd years are the two World Wars that separate Heart of Darkness from Nineteen Eighty Four.

Orwell’s dismay in the face of the atrocities left no corner of him where even a scintilla of an earlier romanticism could lodge. Consequently, his attitude to evil is closer to Swift’s icy disdain than to Conrad’s ambivalent fascination confronting Kuntz. If the key-note of Heart of Darkness is horror, that of Nineteen Eighty Four is disgust. It is a book dense with disgust relieved only momentarily by the excursion to the Golden Land or by the line, anachronistic marital companionship of the room behind the antique shop. The tortured Winston undergoes in the Ministry of Love:

“Sometimes it was fists, sometimes it was truncheons, sometimes it was steel rods, sometimes it was boots. There were times when he rolled about the floor, as shameless as an animal writhing his body this way and that in an endless, hopeless effort to dodge the kicks, and simply inviting more and yet more kicks, in his ribs, in his belly, on his elbows, on his shin, in his groin, in his testicles, on the bone at the base of his spine.”

Further, Winston’s final surrender is complete and terrible. There seems to be no more profound rendering of the denial of human integrity and human values in modern literature than Winston’s final loss of self as O’Brien threatens him with torture by rats, for Winston “the worst thing in the world”:

“Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don’t care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!”

It is all the more shocking that the hero of his last book should end up as the most despicable power worshipper, wallowing disgustingly to what has unmanned him. It is difficult to believe that substitution of roles has been achieved by anything other than disgraceful means.

Winston is like Gulliver; he is shown as denying the values once expressed. The problem is that in each case the writer makes it impossible for us simply to repudiate the renegade as a traitor to the great tradition to which we still unswervingly belong. If, as we hope, Gulliver and Winston are wrong, they are so in a way that makes it very difficult to eschew their company.

The beliefs they reject are ours too, among our most prized
possessions; and it is inconceivable that their creators expect us to follow these defectors all this way, abandoning wives for stables and loving our violators. But, why, then, do Swift and Orwell impede the reader when he understandably tries to extricate himself from a compromising involvement with the renegade.

When Gulliver gazes into the pool and sees staring back the face of the Yahoo, he is not just a harmless lunatic inviting our pity or derision-he is clearly commissioned by Swift as our delegate to Houyhnhnmland and it would be altogether too facile to pronounce him insane for daring to call us yahoos. When Winston cracks 80 shamefully, yet so inevitably, in Room 101, we witness not just an individual lapse but the fall of the man.

Conclusion

In the end we may conclude that Nineteen Eighty Four has been shaped by Swift's famous fable. Orwell has been able to create his own dark masterpiece. Hopkinson reports Orwell's himself saying of Nineteen Eighty Four: "It wouldn't have been so gloomy... if I hadn't been so ill" Indeed, Nineteen Eighty Four is an unbearably gloomy work describing and implying conditions and situations of horror and desperation that one can think are unequalled in modern literature. Robert A. Lee also claims it "as a gloomy creative work of Orwell, which is matchless."

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22. Nineteen Eighty Four p.783.
32. Ibid., p.77.
33. Ibid., p.353.
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50. Ibid., p.293.
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80. Ibid., p.169.
81. Ibid., p. 25.
82. "Notes on Nationalism" The Collected Essays, Journalism and

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92. Ibid., p. 483.


98. Nineteen Eighty Four, p. 270.

99. Ibid., pp. 243-44.

100. Ibid., p. 286.

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