CHAPTER I

GEORGE ORWELL: THE MAN AND HIS BACKGROUND
The man and the artist are often inseparable. Because art and the life of the artist are like two sides of a coin and complementary to each other. More than in most cases Orwell's works are closely connected with the events of his life. He may not be remarkable for his imaginative prowess but he is a writer about things he had actually observed and come across. The entire range of his writing is based on his experiences as an Etonian, colonial policeman, tramp, dishwasher, hop-picker, tutor, teacher, reviewer and pseudo-Georgian poet. He commented very directly on the society and the times in which he lived and his strong feelings about social injustice and oppressions were the main motivating force behind all his writings. His essays, journalistic pieces and novels are semi-autobiographical. During the last fifteen years of his life, he spent his time as a book dealer, soldier, farmer, film critic, broadcaster, editor, war correspondent, hospital patient and so on. Betrand Russell has correctly remarked:

"George Orwell is equally remarkable as a man and as a writer .... He sums up Dickens by describing him as laughing, with a touch of anger in his laughter, but no triumph, no malignity...."1

We can catch glimpses of the life of Orwell as a man of action and experience on viewing some characteristic moments through a series of snapshots.
Our snapshot is of the nine-year old Eric Blair (for that is how we must call him until he assumes his pen name of George Orwell on the publication of his first novel) dressed in the uniform of an English preparatory school, St. Cyprian's, which was near Eastbourne, and the year is 1912. His presence in the school suggests his middle class background. He was born in 1903 in Burma where his father was an official in the Opium Department of Indian Civil Service but his mother had brought him and his sister to England in 1904, for it was a custom for the children of Anglo-Indians (the British in India) to be brought up and educated in England. His grandfather was an Anglican priest in Australia and India for a long time. His maternal grandfather was a Frenchman who was resident in Burma. At first he was known as a teak merchant in Moulmein. Eric does not look happy in snapshot, and later in life he was able to state clearly the reasons for his dismal appearance at St. Cyprian's. One reason might be that his family was less wealthy than the families of other boys. Because he came of 'lower-upper-middle-class' who struggled to maintain the appearance of gentility without having resources to do it properly which is represented through the character Gordon Comstock in his novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. 
"Even at the third-rate schools to which Gordon was sent nearly all the boys were richer than himself. They soon found out his poverty, of course, and gave him hell because of it. Probably the greatest cruelty one can inflict on a child is to send him to a school among children richer than himself. A child conscious of poverty will suffer snobbish agonies such as grown up person can scarcely imagine."2

Orwell’s later hatred of the English class system can perhaps be traced back to these early experiences.

The other reason for Eric Blair’s unhappiness at St. Cyprian’s is the way in which the school was run. In his autobiographical essay, Such Such Were The Joys, Orwell describes the rigid and hateful rules, the unfair punishments and beatings of a school dominated by the headmaster’s wife whose inconsistent and rapidly changing moods meant that the happiness or misery of the boys depended entirely on her whim. As he describes:

"... a sense of desperate loneliness and helplessness, of being locked up not only in a hostile world but in a world of good and evil where the rules were such that it was actually not possible for me to keep them ...."3

Here is a model of a totalitarian society that Orwell was later to criticise in Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, a state which is dominated by a single tyrant who manipulates all the resources, of the country and plays on the guilt and fear of ordinary people so as to satisfy his sense of power.
Orwell survived an undistinguished career at Eton in 1917 which had given him freedom to make friends and to explore popular liberal and socialist ideas. And we must emphasise that 1917 is an important turning point in the history of world and mankind. True Marx's writings had shocked the world as far back as 1848 but his teachings were for the first time actually put into practice in Russia in 1917, through what is popularly known as 'the Great October Revolution'. Communism as a form of government and as an alternative to capitalism fascinates the entire world, flaring up young minds, inspiring the downtrodden (with which G. Orwell identifies himself).

Orwell's childhood takes after the childhood of Dr. Johnson. Because "both the doctor and Orwell had unhappy childhood, struggled long with severe illness and bitter poverty, spent many years as a hack-journalist and did not achieve fame until their mid forties." Both men were independent, combative, harsh on themselves and others and often wrong headed in a fascinating way. Both had limited imaginations and great critical faculties and their satire was directed against pseudo high principle, integrity and compassion. Both were pessimistic, patriotic, pragmatic, courageous, intellectually curious, scrupulously honest, fundamentally decent, oddly humorous and quintessentially English.
The history of Anglo-Burmese relation began with the first British envoy coming from the East India Company in 1752 and ended in 1948 with the last British Governor leaving Burma. It is the darkest period for Burma, the peasant's rebellion broke out in 1930 when the Government of India Act was passed. During this period the English and Burmese were friends and after 1930 they became political opponents. In connection with the suffering and exploitation of the Burmese people at the hand of Britishers we doubt that Orwell finds a sense of adventure, excitement and commitment as he takes up 'the White Man's Burden':

"To wait in heavy harness  
On fluttered folk and wild  
Your new caught, sullen peoples  
Half-devil and half-child".5

These words of Kipling express the mood of patriotic and condescending dedication with which young men went East to serve the Empire. George Orwell was in Burma during this critical period. His Burmese Days was first published in 1934. It is a valuable historical document reflecting a vivid picture of the tension prevailing in Burma during this period. But such documentary record of Anglo-Burmese relation is written in the shape of a novel which shows Orwell's artistic imagination rooted in historical reality. Orwell himself considers this book as a study in Anglo-Burmese social relationship. His hatred for British authori-
tarianism is further reflected in this novel for his unwilling acceptance of the orders as a policeman. The novel carries the message of socialism which is clear in his condemnation of oppression in all its forms. He wrote a letter to one of his friends Jesse Tennyson:

"In your book you said nothing about economic exploitation of the country ... and though you did mention it, you soft pedalled the social misbehaviour of the British and the friction to which it has laid long period.... We have treated some countries, but on the whole it is sordid story.... Did you ever read my novel (Burma) Burmese Days? I dare say it unfair in some details but much of its simply reporting of what I have seen...."6

Eric Arthur Blair reported for duty with the Indian Imperial Police at Rangoon on 27th November 1922. At that time he was only 19 years old. As a policeman in Burma he was to suffer the frustration of carrying an authoritarian role that he disapproved of and like Flory, the hero of the novel Burmese Days, he must have some times felt disgusted with his own hypocrisy:

"Year fater year you sit in Kipling haunted clubs, whisky to right of you Pinkium 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 fresh from school kicking greyhaired servants. The time comes when you burn with hatred of your own country men, when you long for a native rising to drown their Empire in blood...."7
In his novel *Burmese Days* he himself tries to destroy the conventional picture of the Burmese as an innocent and charming, carefree and child like people. The mood of the novel records the mood of Shakespeare's drama *As You Like It*, given on the title page.

"... this desert is accessible, Under the shade of melancholy boughs."

Orwell initially pictures the ugliness of the countryside throughout the novel with the physical repulsiveness of Burmese men and women. Their meanness, especially, is artistically represented with convincing realism. He deliberately describes the Burmese dance with a sarcastically because they consider it as the acme of their civilization. In spite of all his distaste he cannot but love the Burmese countryside. He highlights the Burmese atmosphere in his novel *The Road to Wigan Pier*:

"I find that anything outrageously strange generally ends by fascinatting me even when I abominate it. The landscape of Burma, which, when I was among them, so appalled me as to assume the qualities of nightmare .... I was obliged to write a novel about them and to get rid of them."

In the same book he also highly appreciates Burmese traditions. Towards the end he could sympathise with the behaviour of the Burmese nationalists and started hating his own position as a police officer. Finally, he resigned his service in the year 1927.
He could speak and write Burmese language well. Earlier the English and the Burmese had a cordial relationship and a healthy social intercourse. Instances of inter-social marriages have been recorded in his novel also. But later on due to some political upheavals of historical interests, the relationship suffered a set back. Orwell clearly points out the racial prejudice dividing the English official from the Burmese which is portrayed through the hero of his novel who had a sordid affair with his maidservant.

The reason for the change of attitude of Englishmen towards Burmese people is that the Burmese gradually became politically conscious and wanted to achieve their freedom. During this tension Montague Chelmsford was appointed to report about cases of racial discrimination to the British Parliament. The young Burmese delegates were invited to Delhi for an important talk to normalise the situation. But the result was failure. But the Burmese started boycotting the English goods as happened during the Indian Non-Cooperation Movement against the British. Young Buddhist monks entered into the political arena of Burma. Young men, children, monks, students and the intellectuals even the rustic peasants of Burma went on boycotting all the English goods. Even the University Act was found to be an utter failure against Burmese political campaign. The entire social, literary and political picture is very efficiently and artis-
tically projected in his novel *Burmese Days*. The nationalistic aspiration depicted in the *Burmese Days* can be compared with that in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*.

In *Shooting An Elephant* and *Burmese Days*, Orwell describes the grinning yellow faces of young Burmese students jeering at all Englishmen evidently at all English officials who never forgave Burmese boys and girls for participating in the great national strike in 1920. In *Burmese Days*, one of the main characters, Ellis, hated all coloured people especially Burmese. The boys fought with bricks, stones and clubs. Elli narrowly escaped the angry mobs to his office. This incident was based on the author's personal experience in which Miriam Gross was directly involved. It was in November 1924. During this critical period, the British Parliament amended an Act to recruit the Burmese scholars to Imperial Police Service. Simultaneously the Burmese lower rank officials were promoted to their respective higher ranks to pacify the people. The English top ranking officers were given Burmese language training for winning over the Burmese. During this period Eric completed his probationary period and was transferred to Maulmein, where he killed a mad elephant. This is reflected in his essay "Shooting an Elephant". The darkest period of his life is mirrored in his two essays "Shooting An Elephant" and "A Hanging". Both the essays sprang from his experience in Maulmein. By killing
an elephant he felt as though he had killed a part of him-
self. The freedom of the elephant is symbolised by the will
power of Eric. On the other hand, the rouge elephant is
the symbol of innocent human beings. Hence his emergent
sense of guilt after shooting an elephant.

Though Eric did not appreciate the Burmese nationa-
lists, George Orwell was sympathetic towards them. He start-
ed sending some literary articles to "Tribune" during this
period. From this period his mind turned to literature after
his return from Burma.

"That was Blair's state of mind when he return-
ed to England from Burma but, first, having
decided that he wanted to be a writer, he had
simply found cheap lodgings and started writ-
ing. It was not very successful because he
had nothing very pressing to write about and
so it is likely that the two years or so that
he spent tramping and living with the desti-
tute, at first in London and then in Paris,
were as much a quest for experience as a purg-
ing of guilty feelings at having had a middle
class background."9

Then he had begun a very precarious life in 1927 when he
had gone to a poor second hand shop and bought a set of
ragged old clothes. This incident portrayed in The Road
to Wigan Pier conveys a new experience of his life:

"My new clothes had put me instantly into a
new world. Every one's demeanour seemed to
have changed abruptly. I helped a hawker pick
up a barrow that he had upset. 'Thanks, mate',
he said with a grin. No one had called me mate
before in my life - it was the clothes that
had done it."10
In 1936, Orwell met Joe Kennan, an active Labour Party worker who was living in Wigan and working in the coal mines. He inspired him not to be hopeless and arranged him a lodging:

"There was a knock at the door on Saturday afternoon. We were just having tea. And I opened the door and there was this tall Fella with a pair of flannel bags on, a fawn jacket and a mac. And he told me he had two letters, one from Middleton Murry, who was a pacifist author ... (He) he wanted me to find him a type of lodgings of a lower class, practically of a slum character .... I introduced him to some of the lads connected with the unemployed workers' movement ... they did not find these lodgings."11

In the same novel he describes how he gradually came to see a colonial regime in more subtle ways. Anglo-Indian officers were feeling guilty of their posts. This was the personal feeling of Orwell as an inhabitant in a foreign country. The mind of the hero of this novel is identified with the feelings and emotions of the author himself. The entire novel reports his colonial experience in Burma and other places.

Burmese Days is a documentary novel rather than a pamphlet with fictional trimmings. The hero Flory is a complicated and a changing individual, whose criminal confessions were brought to light. The main thrust of this book is unmistakably political. This book and Clergyman's Daughter are two semi-autobiographical novels.
Down and Out in Paris & London is, no doubt, a fair account of Orwell's experience in Paris. Jobless and penniless, poor and utterly dejected with himself, for his unpublished works he is forced to serve in a hotel. But he has no sense of guilt as he says:

"In spring of 1928 I went to Paris, to live cheaply while I wrote a couple of novels. I am sorry to say that they were never published and also learnt French. One of my Paris friends found me a cheap hotel room in the working class district describe in the first chapter."12

Let us see what Orwell describes in the first chapter:

"The rue du coq d'or, Paris, seven in the morning. A succession of furious choking, yells from the street. Madam Manee, who kept the little hotel opposite mine, had come out on to pavement to address a lodger on the 3rd floor. Her bare feet were stuck into sabots and her grey hair was streaming down."13

Again he had mentioned in one of his letters to a friend that he had written his two novels but the publisher had rejected them and he was almost penniless and in urgent need of a job. Tom Hopkin writes about Orwell's arrival in Paris in his British Council pamphlet on Orwell.

"He goes to Paris ostensibly in order to write books and articles of an unknown writer in foreign country and it is clear his real motive must be different."14
Undoubtedly he arrived in Paris with a long cherished hope to publish some articles and books which did not materialise. The last part of his life in Parisian slums. His predicament in Paris and London was what Hemingway had earlier called 'the best part of Latin Quarter'. He experienced extensively the way of working class people lived. In Road to Wigan Pier, he deals with coalminers rather than factory workers. His sympathy for the proletariat is obvious.

No one can be sure from the published works of George Orwell about his socio-political stances. But his novel Coming Up For Air portrays his deep interest in country life and country childhood. In Progress Civique he wrote about unemployment, tramps, beggars and life in Burma.

In February 1929, he was suffering from cold, overwork and probably malnourishment. He was suffering from pneumonia and was taken to nearby hospital at Cochin. He spent several weeks there. The traumatic experiences of all these days about all his suffering are recorded in his novel Down and Out in Paris and London.

Orwell's life at this juncture proves that he was a man of strong determination and willpower. George Orwell's experiences are comparable to those of D.H. Lawrence. The same feelings came to Orwell in the hospital at Cochin. When Down and Out in Paris and London was published, Orwell
was severely attacked by one of his critics. He replied saying that he simply wrote what transpired in a hotel and a restaurant. Though the restaurant does not exist at present the hotel is still there.

The subject matter of his writings are poverty, par­lour socialism, life in coal mines, the Spanish Civil War, the Russian Revolution and the political misuse of language. He might well have echoed W.H. Auden:

"All I have is a voice To undo the folded lie."15

His Down and Out in Paris and London conveys Paris as a city of which he had very happy memories. It had only given him intense private experiences almost literally plunged him into the concerns that made his career as a writer. Until then he had been a potential later day Galsworthy going on East-End, expeditions from a room in Notting Hill. Now he had shared the life that he had looked at. In this sense, although he chose his pen-name three years later Paris helped to make George Orwell out of Eric Blair.

Also this book is Orwell's lively and factual record of his experiences among the poor of two capital cities. Few writers have possessed a greater gift for spotting the personality behind the rags or described the reality of poverty with so little pretense.
Orwell left for Northern England on the 31 January 1935. He went via midlands passing through Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton arranging overnight stops in or near each of these towns. In Manchester, he stayed for few days where he came in contact with the working class people. He found himself sharing a room with an unemployed railway man. Then one of his friends suggested him to go to Wigan, which spirited him to write the novel *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

Orwell left Paris at the end of 1929. Then he took part time tuition, wandered aimlessly to maintain his livelihood. Fortunately he found a part time job in a private school at Hayes and Oxbridge. On the first day of his work he thrashed a boy who was blowing up a frog with a bicycle pump. This particular incident was the subject matter of his short story 'An Idiot'. Last two experiences were incorporated in *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935).

During the period from 1930 to 1935 Orwell constantly contributed his articles to *Adelphi* magazine founded by Middleton Murry in 1923. Really his journalistic output was enormous. He contributed more than seven hundred articles in addition to his books in less than twenty years.

In October 1934, Orwell took a part time job in a Hampstead bookshop. He worked there for a year and half.
This experience is expressed in his book *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. Then he gave up his job and devoted his time for writing the novel *The Road to Wigan Pier*. In Spring he went to the village of Wallington where he finished the book *Animal Farm* did some vegetable farming and kept some barnyard animals which he portrayed in *Animal Farm*. In 1936, Orwell married Eileen O'Shanghnessy who was an ardent student of Psychology at the University of London. This lady was attractive, highly sophisticated and intelligent who was a constant source of inspiration for his writing.

Orwell went to Spain in December, five months after the outbreak of the Civil War. All that time the writers—Hemingway, Dos Passos and Pablo, used to gather at the hotel Florida. But Orwell was very reluctant to meet them. In February 1937, Eileen arrived in Spain to work at independent Labour Party Office in Barcelona. The couple fought the causes in Spain with a passionate belief and strength in their pursuit. She was an anchor for George Orwell.

Orwell became an ordinary soldier in the revolutionary army and was victimised by oppression and hunger. He marvelously escaped to cross the frontier which is clearly shown in the novel *Homage to Catalonia*.

Spanish Civil War is the cross-road of his life from where he looked back at his life with anger. The reason
is the disillusionment with socialism for which he was fighting and a sense of frustration because socialism has come to such an end. The individual, the man, the convictions, the beliefs were crumbling down. The bullet could not sustain the struggle. He came back wounded battered and bruised disillusioned with his life and the causes. This disillusionment left him intellectually inert. In Why I Write he records:

"The Spanish War and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and there after I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it ...."16

In other words, Orwell had come to see the evil of any totalitarian state specially in Russian communism dominated by Stalin who was as oppressive as fascists in Germany or Spain. These are the ideas behind his novels Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four.

In March 1938, Orwell was ill with tuberculosis, a recurrence of his childhood disease. Hence he was unable to travel to India to write for the Lucknow Pioneer and to undertake a research for a book on the Subcontinent. The couple spent the winter in Marrakch, Morocco, where he wrote the novel Coming Up Air. Then he returned to England in the spring 1939.
During the Second World War, Orwell was very much interested to serve in the army but was rejected as medically unfit. His ill health and unfavourable circumstances are projected in one of his essays. He eventually utilized his military experience in Spain by becoming a rather influential Sergeant in the St. John's Wood Home Guard Battalion in May 1940.

George Woodcock meets Orwell early in the war and describes his physical appearance as:

"a tall, thin angular man with worn gothic features accentuated by the deep vertical furrows that ran down the cheeks and across the corner of the mouth ... looked out always sadly."17

In January 1941, Orwell wrote fifteen war time 'London Letters' for Partisan Review. He worked for two years in the B.B.C. for Indian audience as a talk producer. During this period, T.S. Eliot, E.M. Forster and Herbert Reed were famous talk contributors in the British Broadcasting Corporation. This BBC experience is reflected in the novel Nineteen Eighty-Four. In a BBC broadcast of 2nd November 1960, Bob Edwards portrays a vivid picture of Orwell's appearance:

"All six foot three of him was striding towards me and his clothing was grotesque to say the least. He wore riding breeches, khaki puttees and huge boots. I have never seen boots that
were so large clogged in mud ... on his shoulder he carried an old fashioned German rifle, and I think it must have been fifty years old and hanging to his belt were two grenades. Running beside him trying to keep pace, were two youths of Militia, similarly equipped, but what amused me most was that behind Orwell was a shaggy mongrel dog with the word POUM painted on its side."18

In November 1943, Orwell left the BBC and worked as a literary Editor of the 'Tribune'. Orwell highly praises the 'Tribune' for its literary dimension. His comment follows:

"I do think it 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 and speech."19

Orwell was the successful editor of The Tribune and earned a wide name for it. Wooduck has highly praised him as a successful and expert literary editor.

His novel Animal Farm was completed in February 1944. But Orwell was not so satisfied because Gollancz refused to publish it and rejected the novel for political reasons. Prior to it he had also rejected his another novel Homage to Catalonia. But T.S. Eliot, the Director of 'Faber and Faber' was sympathetic to his literary merit. As he writes in a letter to George Orwell.
"We agree that it is distinguished piece of writing, that the fable is very skillfully handled and that narrative keeps one's interest on its own plane - and that is something very few authors have achieved since Gulliver Travel .... Political situation of the present time."20

Orwell was frustrated and took another attempt to publish his Animal Farm. Indeed his novel Animal Farm was published by Warburg in August 1945. It was a crucial moment in the history of the world. Four months prior to the publication of the novel Roosevelt, B. Mussolinie and Adolf Hitler had passed away. On the 6th August a disastrous atomic explosion took place over Hiroshima. During that period Stalin still survived. Really it was a turning point in the world history in which Orwell could publish his masterpiece Animal Farm.

Animal Farm is a parody of socialistic ventures - because the disillusionment in the Spanish Civil War had brought him to an understanding that humanity is not that scrupulous. It always taints and disfigures the truth. As Eliot says:

"Go go go said the bird
Human kind cannot bear very much of reality."21

Therefore, he saw the naked pretention and outright hypocrisy in this world - in the name of value based politics. He was so very much disheartened that he wrote this novel Animal Farm parodying the utopian expectations and the realistic practice.
Half a million copies of *Animal Farm* were straight out through American Booksellers. It reached the record sale having sold eleven millions in 1972.

In February 1945, Orwell went to France as a war correspondent for the *Observer*. During this period Eileen was seriously ill and bed ridden. She was taken to the hospital for operation but she died there. This incident was a fatal blow on Orwell's life. He not only lost his wife but the only support in his life. Because his wife was not only championing his causes but was fighting and striving for it. Due to such misfortune his own health began to deteriorate.

The grand success of *Animal Farm* was a turning point in his life. He kept a goat in his back yard in 1945 to provide milk for Richard (the child he had adopted) until Orwell's sister's arrival in 1946.

Then Orwell decided to live in Jura in September 1945 but he did not feel comfortable there. The misfortune of his life started tormenting him in his solitude. The grave physical illness due to miserable disaster caused his premature death at the age of 46.

The hot and humid Burmese climate ruined his health. Once in February 1929 he had been hospitalised for pneumonia and in May 1937 for throat complication etc.
His physical ill health and his constant suffering (mental and physical) are very realistically portrayed in his novel Nineteen Eighty Four in which the central metaphor is disease, decay and death. Winston Smith, the hero of the novel suffers seriously from mental and physical agony as Orwell himself did. In this novel, he also portrays:

"A world in which an altogether form of imperialism has triumphed with no prospect of its being overthrown. The three super powers endlessly jostle and change partners, although actual warfare only takes place along their fluctuating frontiers. The disputed areas of the globe are tropical Africa, the Middle East, Southern India and South-East Asia which from conqueror to conqueror and which are treated as an immense reservoir of what is virtually slave lover."22

This novel was written in August 1946 and finished in November 1948. Before the completion of Nineteen Eighty Four he was feeling ill but in April 1947 was bed ridden. In the same year, when he and Richard were on a voyage they faced a shipwreck in a dangerous whirlpool but were luckily rescued by a fisherman nearby. From December 1947 upto June 1948 he spent his time in T.B. Sanatorium at Glasgow. Again he was admitted into another sanatorium at the Cotswold in January 1949. This phase figures his letters and novels. He says:

"May 1947: I have really been in most wretched health this year ever since about January (my chest as usual) and can't quite shake it off."23
Again he goes on saying:

"January 1948: I am still really very ill and weak and on getting here I found I had lost 1 1/2 stone ... I was glad to get away before X-mas so as not to be death's head."24

Most of Orwell's letters and journalism are highly impersonal and moving with personality of an individual in particular and universal in general. In August he announces:

"I intend getting married again to (Sonia) when I am once again in the land of living, if I ever am once again in the land of living, if I ever am I supposed everyone will be horrified."25

While in T.B. Hospital, a Tuberculosis specialist could guess and often said that Orwell was very interested to marry, though death was knocking at the door. In September, Orwell was transferred to University hospital in London. He married Sonia Brownell in October, who was born in India and was a secretary on Cyril Connolly's magazine, Horizon.

Anyhow Orwell did not live to enjoy the grand success of Nineteen Eighty-Four which was published in 1949. It was an instant success considering the fact that eleven million copies were sold just in a few days. It was filmed in 1956 in which Edmund O'Brien took the role of Winston Smith, the hero of the novel.

Orwell's ill health in elaborately described in this Nineteen Eighty-Four and in the novel Animal Farm, weak
lungs that causes Boxer's collapse are a symbol of sick
Orwell: "A thin stream of blood trickled out of his mouth." 26


His satirical essays are not so caustic and pungent and intellectual. All these bear a peculiar blend of gaiety and grimness which is highly appreciated by the modern readers. "Shooting an Elephant" and other "Essays" are posthumous collection of papers by George Orwell which contains
a miscellaneous pieces relating to various phases of this unconventional writer's life. The first two, "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging" deal, like his novel, *Burmese Days*. With Orwell's experience as an officer in the Indian Imperial Police. The first of these tells the story of his reluctant and probably unwise killing of a runaway work elephant.

The shooting of an unruly elephant symbolises the murder of innocence because an elephant has got its right to be unruly in its own habitat but a sensitive and rational animal like man does not have any right to kill that unruly elephant. This incident probably inspires him to compensate for lost lives and causes of animals in *Animal Farm*.

In his essay 'The Tramp', the man emerges with encyclopaedic experiences. He experiences in order to write. The social consciousness and political cross currents are felt in his bones enriching his brain. His *Down and Out in Paris and London* is not only a journey it is a sage of experiences. The suffering has gone into his talent. The social structure, the isms of the world, the beliefs of the peoples have not moulded him but have been interpreted by him. The prophetic and allegorical visions of the man in his works spring out of an utter disillusionment and review of the political philosophies. The banner of Communism
which in his time was ruling the world had its own prejudices and shortcomings. The idealistic promises of socialism were outrightly found by him as pretensions and hypocritical. The naturalistic and racial chauvanism behind the sporting activities have been portrayed in one of his essays 'The Sports'. Besides being a novelist he is a modern day Bacon.

The traumatic childhood of George Orwell is a product of declining middle class background which is flashed in most parts of his essays and novels. Orwell in certain phase of his life was almost a hippie figure not because he liked it, as he has recorded, but due to a certain deprivation during his childhood gave birth to a socialistic bent of mind. It is obvious. It is curious to compare the stories of his life with other great personalities in the world those who led such a precarious life.

Stephen Spender goes to comment on Orwell's England Your England in New Yorker:

"George Orwell is an extremely English writer. He is a man with grouse. He holdsforth about grievances - the intelligenta, the rich, the stalinists, nationalist of every kind. He has simple views about matters which more learned men have not been decided about."27

His essay Charles Dickens is the longest of Orwellian essays with a critical approach to Dicken's attitudes to society, class, money, sex and politics. On the other hand,
this essay expresses Orwell's serious attempt to be Dickensian in his literary output. Orwell comments Dickens, who is neither a 'proletarian' nor a 'revolutionary' writer. 'Inside the Whale' (1940) is the title essay of his first volume of essays. He defines his own place in contemporary literature with a sympathetic contrast to Henry Miller. He suggests his own characters, incidents and ideals through the definition of positive and negative elements of English life.

'England Your England' (1941) pictures the cultural characteristics and the class structure of England. Orwell presents a good comparison of his worldwide experiences with English life. He gives a concrete description of the sounds and smells of England after his return from abroad. He says:

"The beer is bitter; the coins are heavier, the grass is green, the advertisements are more blatant. The crowds in the big towns seen to be with their mild nobby faces. Their bad teeth and gentle manners are different from European crowd."28

In his essay 'Reflection on Gandhi' (1949) Orwell says that Gandhi, in fact, if studied objectively, was totalitarian autocratic and a self styled leader. He criticises Gandhi for his inhuman tendencies (those who aspire to sainthood have never felt much temptation to be human beings)
and for his willingness to let his wife or child die rather than give them animal food. The limit of what we will do to remain alive, Orwell believes, is well on the side of chicken broth. Yes, to err is human and he was a human. That is why, the sainthood that he has been thrust upon him is criminal. Orwell's review on Gandhi is a courageous denouncement of the great men. One can always recount the incident when Mr. Gandhi threatened to step down from the primary Congress membership just because Subhash Bose was selected as the President against his (Gandhi's) will.

Most essays of Orwell are cast in the satirical frame but are not as caustic as Swift's and Addison's. They carry on his personal subjective inner feelings derived from his experiences of the outside world. He is an utopian because he is not a true lover of his contemporary society. But he is a victim of historical situations which play an important role in his literary stances.

As a novelist he does not fit into the grand company - E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Wood, James Joyace and Joseph Conrad. His novels are social documents. To some extent he may be compared with 18th century Swift, whose Gulliver's Travel is a lampoon like Orwell's Animal Farm which is based upon the political manoeuvring in Russian Communism.
In his final work Nineteen Eighty-Four, Orwell pictures one man's valiant but ineffectual stand against an omnipotent world of moral and ideological degradation. The description of Winston Smith, 'dirty, rotting, emancipated, stinking like a goat, confronting himself in a mirror in the ministry of love', recalls Swift's description of the revolutionary Yahoos in Gulliver's Travels. In every respect he was found to be a disciple of Jonathan Swift especially in his Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four which are the most sensitive reactions to the political world in which George Orwell had to live.

In any case his stances and outlooks do not sound like writers of that of the writers his age because he was more concerned with his society. His uniqueness lies in his equalization of fantasy with reality. The two planes of reality are synonymous in George Orwell. He had been mesmerised with democratic socialism but found it a fantasy. He is a lesser Dickens of the 20th century.
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3. Orwell George, *Such Such Were the Joys*.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., Preface.
11. In a BBC Television 'Omnibus' Programme, 1970.


