CHAPTER IV

ORWELL'S RADICAL INDIVIDUALISM : CULTURE AND LITERATURE

a) Culture

Orwell's writings - documentaries, novels, essays, letters, journalism and all - present a brilliant critique of a culture and also culture in general. He probes the characteristics of the English culture in particular in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, *Coming Up for Air*, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, "The English People" and other essays on popular culture. Again, in these and other works like *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, we get a picture of culture in general as Orwell perceived and defended it. Orwell's thoughts on culture will have to be first of all interpreted in the context of the English culture, and then in terms of the culture of the humanity as a whole. The study of Orwell's works as a study in culture does exhibit another interesting facet of Orwell's radical individualism.

The term 'culture' has been interpreted differently at different times, and linked to the changes in industry, democracy and class, and changes in art are a closely related response. The development of the word culture is a record of a number of important and continuing reactions to these changes in social, economic and political life. It may be
seen in itself as a special kind of map by means of which the nature of the changes can be explored. Culture is an embodiment of a way of life. It means, "... 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual'."

Raymond Williams who surveys the culture and society of England of about two centuries, i.e. from 1780 to 1950 shows how Orwell belonged to this particular English cultural tradition beginning with Edmund Burke and William Cobbet, and advancing upto William Morris, D.H. Lawrence, and still developing in this way. It is in this great stream of the English cultural tradition that we must trace Orwell's radical individualism.

Culture as a whole way of life is a profound concept, and very necessary for the survival of man. Bronislaw Malinowski points out that culture and freedom are interdependent, and there cannot be the fundamental freedom of survival without culture: "In its earliest beginnings, as well as in its fundamental function throughout evolution, culture satisfies first and foremost man's basic needs. Culture thus means primarily the freedom of survival to the species under a variety of environmental conditions for which man is not

equipped by nature." Culture indicates a set of values, beliefs, ideologies, practices, institutions, and more importantly, the autonomy of the many and diverse institutions within a culture: "A culture functions therefore by means of a system of related institutions. The values of a culture are embodied in its ideals, mythologies, political constitution and economic ideology; its instrumentalities function through the balanced co-ordination and working of institutions. The standard of existence and quality of living depend on the scope, range, distribution and enjoyment of wealth, rights, power, art, science and religion."3

This pluralistic way of and approach to life which ensures the fundamental freedom of survival is the basic tenet of the culture that Orwell depicted in his works. The freedom of survival in a meaningful way, which is living in search or pursuit of meanings in life is the kernel of the sane and healthy culture that Orwell visualised. Orwell wrote and fought against indecency, inequality, injustice, class barrier, oppression, capitalism, imperialism, industrialism

2 Malinowski, p.30.

3 Ibid., p.35.
and glorification of machine-civilization, campaigns of lies, totalitarianism and other perversions of the values of culture. The cultural values that he defended against these cultural distortions were decency, equality, justice, Socialism, liberty, freedom to colonies, sane use of machines with love of Nature, objectivity, truth and democratic Socialist ideals. He saw all around the decay, distortion and destruction of these cultural values. Of course, his attitude to culture was defensive. He fought to defend the cultural values since they were under attack from all quarters.

All the cultural values that Orwell defended were intended to uphold the sanctity of the individual in a free culture. No culture can have any meaning if the individual is denied the fundamental freedom of meaningful living. It has meaning and relevance to the extent the sanctity of the individual is guaranteed against any oppression or onslaught. Culture is the infrastructure for the blossoming of a decent and free individual. In his essay "Culture and Democracy" Orwell flatly states that literature is inseparable from the sanctity of the individual. And as a committed writer Orwell wrote consistently to safeguard this sanctity of the individual. The best means of safeguarding the sanctity of
Decency, Foundation of Culture

For Orwell decency was the foundation as well as the central ideal or value of culture. All the writings of Orwell could be interpreted in terms of his defence of decency against the social, economic and political aberrations of his period. Decency is a vague term, but for Orwell it was the central value from which all other values sprouted. It was not merely the behaviour which took into account the feelings and personality of the other person. It was at once profound and comprehensive. It was an ideal he had evolved from his experiences of social, economic and political evils of his time. In the social context it meant polite behaviour with others without any class prejudices or snobberies; in the economic sphere it meant a fair sharing of the national income and resources; in the political domain it meant liberty of the individual against totalitarianism.

Samuel Hynes observes that decency was the fundamental belief of Orwell:
Out of these experiences of class, oppression, and poverty Orwell evolved the deeply held personal values that give his life and writings the quality of moral integrity. His values were never, strictly speaking political, though they were consistent with the emotional liberalism that Orwell professed, and called socialism. Most fundamentally, he believed in decency. This term implied both a kind of human behavior - decent treatment of one's fellow men preceded all reforms in Orwell's mind - and a recognition of basic human needs - men must have food, shelter, and minimal amount of privacy before they can reach toward higher goals. From decency, liberty followed, for Orwell recognized that freedom depended on the achievement of a decent life. One of the principal themes in his books about poverty (Down and Out in Paris and London and The Road to Wigan Pier) is that no hungry man is ever free; to be poor is to be in chains.⁴

Liberty, justice and equality are all related to decency. Justice is both a consequence and a foundation of decency.

⁴ Hynes, p.3.
Since decency depends on all men accepting every man's right to equal treatment before the law, equality comes not from the law but from the heart. The three evils that dominated Orwell's mind were class, oppression and poverty, and the three values he set against those evils were decency, liberty and justice.  

Stephen Spender shows how decency along with truth was the central cultural value for Orwell:

George Orwell was not a saint - although he was one of the most virtuous men of his day - and he was not a hero - although he was a man of outstanding courage. He was an Innocent, a kind of English Candide of the twentieth century. The Innocent is ordinary because he accepts the values of ordinary human decency; he is not a mystic, nor a poet. Ordinary, and yet extraordinary because his faith in qualities of truth and decency drives like a drill through the facade of his generation. He is a drill made of steel driving through ordinary things.

He happens to believe that two and two make four;  

5 Ibid., pp.3,6.
and that what happens, happens. 6

Orwell's life and writings were one long struggle for affirmation and establishment of decency in all spheres of life. Decency was a rational, moral, cultural, social, economic, political and humanitarian value. Class prejudices, poverty, unemployment, the miserable conditions of the down-and-out, laissezfaire economy, imperialism, Fascism, Nazism, worship of power, worship of money, campaigns of lies, glorification of machine-civilization, brazen destruction of Nature in the name of economic development and all forms of totalitarianism or oligarchic collectivism were pitted against decency.

Class barrier based on snobberies and also economic status separated man from man, and went against decency. Orwell examines the class prejudices based on his childhood experiences. He was brought up with a strong middle-class snobbery that the lower classes smelt: "That was what we were taught the lower classes smell. And here, obviously, you are at an impassable barrier. For no feeling of like or dislike

is quite so fundamental as a physical feeling. Race-hatred, religious hatred, differences of education, of temperament, of intellect, even differences of moral code, can be got over; but physical repulsion cannot." 7 Orwell observes that working class people were dirtier than upper-class people since less than half of working class houses had bathrooms in England in his time. However they were growing cleaner, and wherever bathroom facility was available they remained clean. This prejudice against the working class effectively prevented middle-class people from mixing with working-class people in the spirit of brotherhood. This went against decency. The acute class consciousness and the purse-pride of the snobbish rich boys at St. Cyprian's made Orwell himself to be a victim of class barrier, and "Such, Such Were the Joys" explains penetratingly the humiliations Orwell suffered due to class distinctions in the school.

Poverty is against decency. It shows how the existing economic structure has failed to satisfy the basic necessities of people. Poverty, unemployment and deprivation are the indicators of the denial of a decent livelihood to people.

7 Wigan, p.112.
Down and Out in Paris and London, A Clergyman's Daughter. The Road to Wigan Pier. "Common Lodging Houses", "The Spike", "Hop-Picking" and other writings show how decency is negated by poverty. That is why Orwell proposes Socialism as a remedy against the evils of poverty and unemployment in The Road to Wigan Pier. Again, for Orwell, and the working man Socialism meant justice and common decency. It meant a decent livelihood: "All that the working man demands is what these others would consider the indispensable minimum without which human life cannot be lived at all. Enough to eat, freedom from the haunting terror of unemployment, the knowledge that your children will get a fair chance, a bath once a day, clean linen reasonably often, a roof that doesn't leak, and short enough working hours to leave you with a little energy when the day is done." But the wrong economic set up denied this basic decency, and the answer Lay in Socialism.

It was for defending decency against Fascism that Orwell decided to fight against the Fascists in Spain. When he landed in Barcelona in Spain, he saw a decent revolutionary society in Spain. It was a classless and free society. He

8 Homage, p.244.
felt it was worth fighting for: "If you had asked me why I had joined the militia I should have answered: 'To fight against Fascism', and if you had asked me what I was fighting for, I should have answered: 'Common decency'.” An atmosphere of equality and brotherhood, or decency prevailed in Spain before the revolutionary spirit was crushed, and decency was violated by the Fascists and the Communist Party of Spain.

Orwell pictures many interesting incidents and acts of decency that he witnessed in the course of the Spanish Civil War though his main concern in The Homage is to show how the Communists suppressed the Socialist revolution and decency in Spain. The Italian militiaman was expressing his natural decency when he gripped the hand of Orwell with a feeling of brotherhood: "As he went out he stepped across the room and gripped my hand very hard. Queer, the affection you can feel for a stranger! It was as though his spirit and mine had momentarily succeeded in bridging the gulf of language and tradition and meeting in utter intimacy. I hoped he liked me as well as I liked him." It was decency on the part of the

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9 Ibid., p.46.
10 Ibid., p.7.
little officer who shook hands with Orwell though he knew that Orwell belonged to the outlawed POUM, since the little officer liked Orwell's courage in taking great risk in trying to get the relevant papers for the release of George Kopp. Orwell himself was practising decency even on the war front when he got an opportunity to fire at a Fascist soldier, who was running along the top of the parapet in full view in half-dressed condition, holding up his trousers with both hands as he ran: "Still, I did not shoot partly because of that detail about the trousers. I had come here to shoot at 'Fascists'; but a man who is holding up his trousers isn't a 'Fascist', he is visibly a fellow-creature, similar to yourself, and you don't feel like shooting at him."¹¹

However, the later course of the Spanish Civil War showed how the Communists and Fascists violated decency, and Franco had won in Spain. But for Orwell it was a question of the necessary fight for decency;

The question is very simple. Shall people like that Italian soldier be allowed to live the decent, fully

¹¹ Ibid., p.231.
human life which is now technically achievable, or shan't they? Shall the common man be pushed back into the mud, or shall he not? I myself believe, perhaps on insufficient grounds, that the common man will win his fight sooner or later, but I want it to be sooner and not later - some time within the next hundred years, say, and not sometime within the next ten thousand years. That was the real issue of the Spanish war, and of the last war, and perhaps of other wars yet to come."  

In his essays and miscellaneous writings also Orwell defends decency, and gives short sketches of his conception of decency. Decency becomes one of the criteria of Orwell's literary criticism. Thus in his critical essay on Charles Dickens, Orwell observes: "His whole 'message' is one that at first glance looks like an enormous platitude; if men would behave decently the world would be decent."  

His essay "Shooting an Elephant" shows his dilemma as a police officer about the shooting of the elephant. The Burmese mob expected

12 Ibid., p. 245.

13 Decline, p. 84.
him to shoot at the elephant, but he did not want to do so since the elephant after the attack of the "must" had passed off, appeared calm and harmless. But he was to act the role of 'the pucca Sahib', and much against his conscience and sense of decency he shot down the elephant.

Decency was an integral part of the personality of Orwell. He describes the sad incident of the hanging of a prisoner, and the unspeakable indecency of the whole act in the essay, "A Hanging". It represented the injustice and dehumanising process of administering justice:

When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we are alive. All the organs of his body were working—bowels digesting food, skin renewing itself, nails growing, tissues forming—all toiling away in solemn foolery. His nails would still be growing when he stood on the drop, when he was falling through the air with a tenth of a second to live. His eyes saw the yellow gravel and the grey walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned —
even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone — one mind less, one world less.\(^\text{14}\)

Orwell considered death sentence barbaric, and therefore indecent. In \textit{Wigan} he observes that a hanging judge is worse than a criminal; "I watched a man hanged once; it seemed to me worse than a thousand murders. I never went into a jail without feeling (most visitors to jails feel the same) that my place was on the other side of the bars. I thought then — I think now, for that matter — that the worst criminal who ever walked is morally superior to a hanging judge."\(^\text{15}\)

Decency as a cultural ideal is against all discriminations and ill-treatment on the basis of race and nationality. In the essay, "Antisemitism in Britain", Orwell admits frankly that one could find many passages of antisemitism in the works of Shakespeare, Smollett, Thackeray, Bernard Shaw, H.G wells, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley. Chesterton

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\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 16.

\(^{15}\) \textit{Wigan}, p. 128.
carried on endless tirades against Jews in his writings. Orwell observes that antisemitism cannot be cured without curing the disease of nationalism. Like antisemitism, nationalism is also against decency. That is why Orwell pleads for patriotism against nationalism. He points out that 'nationalism' represents aggressive instincts, the assumption that a people can be classified like insects and labelled 'good' or 'bad', and power mania. On the contrary patriotism is very modest: "By 'patriotism' I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force upon other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally."

The perversion and violation of decency reaches a new scale and dimension in Animal Farm. The revolution was carried out in the name of decency for all animals, but once the Animal Farm was set up decency was violated and denied to the innocent lower animals. The revolutionary principles or ideals of liberty, equality and brotherhood were crushed one by one, and finally for the large number of oppressed animals the new regime of the pigs was no better than the old regime.

16 Decline, p.156.
of the human masters. The last paragraph of the fiction is very symbolic and penetrating in this context. The faces of the drunken pigs and the drunken human beings were identical. The poor oppressed animals could not make out who were pigs and who were humans.

A terrible incident of violation of decency takes place in Animal Farm when the innocent, hard working Boxer, now old and ailing is packed off to the horse-slaughterer. An apparent contrast or irony can be observed in Animal Farm. Old Major describes the miserable conditions of animals under the human master; he prophesies the overthrow of the tyrant man. In his address he turns to Boxer and says: "You, Boxer, the very day that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the knacker, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the fox-hounds." When the Animal Farm was set up with the pigs as rulers Boxer met the same dreadful fate foretold by Major, not under the human master, Mr Jones, but under the animal master. Benjamin, the donkey shouts in anguish at other animals, "Do you not understand what that means? They are taking Boxer to the

17 Animal Farm, p.20.
Knacker's! The pigs enjoyed a crate of whisky which they had managed to buy from the money they got by selling the old ailing Boxer to the knacker. This was the violation of decency.

The destruction of decency is absolute in Nineteen Eighty Four. Oligarchic collectivism, the advanced form of totalitarianism has wiped out decency, and the individual has become merely a number. It is a post revolutionary oligarchic collectivist regime which came into existence with an assurance of decency, and then trampled upon it, and erased it once the revolution was over. It is a ghastly world of perversions and betrayal - children betray their parents to the Party, and lovers betray one another. Winston and Julia after their torture, 'cure' and temporary release admit that they betrayed one another:

'I betrayed you', she said baldly.

'I betrayed you', he said....

'Sometimes', she said, 'they threaten you with something - something you can't stand up to, can't even think about. And then you say "Don't do it to

18 Ibid., p.113.
me, do it to somebody else, do it to so-and-so". And perhaps you might pretend, afterwards, that it was only a trick and that you just said it to make them stop and didn't really mean it. But that isn't true. At the time when it happens you do mean it. You think there's no other way of saving yourself, and you're quite ready to save yourself that way. You want it to happen to the other person. You don't give a damn what they suffer. All you care about is yourself'

'All you care about is yourself', he echoed.

'And after that, you don't feel the same towards the other person any longer.'

'No', he said you don't feel the same.'

Unspeakable physical violence and tortures, brain-washing sessions in the Ministry of Love have cowed down the human spirit, and drained all love between man and woman. If there is love it should be for the Party. There does not exist even an iota of decency in such a world of brute force, violence, betrayal and gross distortion.

19 Nineteen Eighty-Four, p.232.
The pyramidal structure of Oceanic society denied the slightest degree of decency. The Outer Party members are kept on bare needs of existence without any freedom. The proles are the low class, and are left to themselves to exist in the jungle of perpetual scarcity, hardship, criminal activities, war scare and servility. Winston believed that if there was hope it lay in the proles, and the future belonged to the proles. The sight of a prole woman, 'a monstrous woman, solid as a Norman pillar, with browny red forearms' reassured Winston that the hope lay in proles. But the Party considered proles as animals and treated them like animals. Winston had a terrible illusion. During the 'mental cure' session in the Ministry of Love O'Brien dispels the illusion of Winston: "Or perhaps you have returned to your old idea that the proletarians or the slaves will arise and overthrow us. Put it out of your mind. They are helpless, like the animals. Humanity is the Party. The others are outside — irrelevant."\(^{20}\) In Oceania there is no decent living; there is only the rotting existence.

**Machine - Civilization and Culture**

Orwell offers profound insights into machine-civilization

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p.214.
in his criticism of the current Socialist projections of his time in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and again in his criticism of the popular culture in his novel, *Coming Up for Air*. One can even read these two works as brilliant commentaries on environment and the necessity of living in Nature without indiscriminate exploitation of Nature in the name of 'progress'. In both works Orwell attacks industrial civilization and glorification of the machine. 'Individualism', 'industrialization', 'machine-civilization', or industrial civilization are related terms. Industrial civilization or the machine-civilization is a product of the machine. Since the mode of production and consumption, and the way of living are closely linked, machine-production leads to machine-civilization. Orwell does not advocate for the wholesale rejection of the machine and return to Nature as Rousseau argued. In fact, what he attacks is the glorification of the machine-civilization. He means to say that glorification of the machine should cease, and the machine is to be accepted as a necessary evil. It should be used wisely and with restraints. His point of view is that machine-civilization is antithetical to decency and cultural values.
Complete mechanisation is complete dehumanisation. In an atmosphere of total mechanization man can not remain man since machines do all kinds of work and deny man the opportunity of living a full life: "It is only in our own age, when mechanization has finally triumphed, that we can actually feel the tendency of the machine to make a fully human life impossible. There is probably no one capable of thinking and feeling who has not occasionally looked at a gas-pipe chair and reflected that the machine is the enemy of life." If one goes along the line of argument of the worshippers of the machine one must realise that all work that is now done by hand will be done by machinery. Everything that is made of leather, wood or stone will be made of rubber, glass or steel. There will be no disorder, no loose ends, no wilderness, no wild animals, no weeds, no disease, no poverty and so on. One can as well add that in such a state there will be no life, no Nature and no culture.

Anybody can understand that in a fully mechanized world all work will be done by machines. But a serious problem arises here. Can man live without work, and what is work and

21 Wigan, p.167.
what is not work? Digging, Carpentering, planting trees, felling trees, riding, fishing, hunting, feeding chickens, cooking, sewing, trimming hats, mending motor cycles are works to some persons, and also plays to some others. When a human being is not eating, drinking, sleeping, making love, talking, playing games or merely lounging about, he needs work, and usually looks for it though he may not call it work. But the machine denies work and a meaningful living to man:

For in a fully mechanized world there would be no more need to carpenter, to cook, to mend motor bicycles, etc., than there would be to dig. There is scarcely anything, from catching a whale to carving a cherry stone, that could not conceivably be done by machinery. The machine would even encroach upon the activities we now class as 'art'; it is doing so already, via the camera and the radio. Mechanize the world as fully as it might be mechanized, and whichever way you turn there will be some machine cutting you off from the chance of working - that is, of living. 22

22 Ibid., p.173.
The machine civilization has led to the decay of taste. Orwell points out that in a healthy world there would be no demand for tinned foods, aspirins, gramophones, gaspipe chairs, machine guns, daily newspapers, telephones, motor cars, etc., and on the other hand there would be a constant demand for the things the machine cannot produce. He observes that the machine-civilization negates the values like physical strength and courage, loyalty and generosity. The machine is against man but it cannot be given up: "The machine has got to be accepted, but it is probably better to accept it rather as one accepts a drug - that is, grudgingly and suspiciously. Like a drug, the machine is useful, dangerous, and habit-forming. The oftener one surrenders to it the tighter its grip becomes."23

The machine-civilization is a highly artificial civilization. Man cannot remain man if he tries to avoid the pain of being human by surrendering himself to the machine. It is of paramount cultural value to shoulder responsibilities, and live a meaningful life. If there are no responsibilities, no work at all, and if there is the machine

23 Ibid, p.178.
to carry out responsibilities there is no ground of justification for man's living. Man as an animal can never be healthy in body and mind, and can never be happy without work because there is no happiness outside work. Denying work is denying the basic biological quality without which a human being is no longer a human being. Orwell argues that the logical end of mechanical progress is to reduce a human being to something resembling a brain in a bottle. But we have not reached this logical end of mechanization as stated by Orwell. However, what Orwell has written against the machine-civilization remains a live issue. We know that we live exposed to the dangers of mad mechanization and industrialisation about which Orwell sounded warning. People want to avoid the pain of being human; they are submitting to machines; they want to make an easy living by their unearned income via the stock market. These are the results of mechanical progress and industrialization. The machine-civilization distorts culture and dwarfs man both in a literal and figurative sense.

Mechanization has no doubt increased material prosperity in its own way, but it is a prosperity in the midst of scarcity; it is a prosperity limited to a minority at the
cost of widespread pollution and destruction of Nature. It has been a breeding ground for poverty, unemployment, slums, filth, and decay of cultural values. Culture loses its substance without Nature. Of course, culture includes even the machine as one of its constituent elements, but the most unfortunate thing is that mechanization has started dominating culture. When a part becomes the whole, the whole loses its qualities and is degraded. That is what mechanization has done to culture. One of the manifestations of the decay of culture owing to mechanization is the large scale pollution and destruction of Nature. The scene of pollution is common in all industrial towns with intense mechanization: "As you walk through the industrial towns you lose yourself in labyrinths of brick houses blackened by smoke, festering in planless chaos round miry alleys and little cindered yards where there are stinking dust bins and lines of grimy washing and half ruinous W.C.S."24 Again Orwell describes the pollution and destruction of Nature in a typical industrial town: "It seemed a world from which vegetation had been banished; nothing existed except smoke, shale, ice, mud, ashes and foul water.... And the stench! If at rare moments you

24 Ibid., p.45.
stop smelling sulphur it is because you have begun smelling gas. Even the shallow river that runs through the town is usually bright yellow with some chemical or other. Once I halted in the street and counted the factory chimneys I could see; there were thirty three of them, but there would have been far more if the air had not been obscured by smoke."25 A healthy culture cannot exist in such a polluted state of Nature.

The machine-civilization has perverted the whole culture into a mercenary civilization. Money has enslaved culture: "Money and culture! In a country like England you can no more be cultured without money than you can join the Cavalry Club... Money for the right kind of education, money for influential friends, money for leisure and peace of mind, money for trips to Italy. Money writes books, money sells them. Give me not righteousness, O Lord, give me money, only money."26 The worship of money-god is the mercenary culture which developed from the machine-civilization. The machine-civilization has developed mercenary capitalism which sees no

25 Ibid., p.95.
end except money, more and more money. One of the dirty tricks of making money in mercenary capitalist atmosphere is that of making money by advertising, which is just a plain cheating of people. Gordon in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* says with reference to the New Albion, an advertising company for which he worked:

The interesting thing about the New Albion was that it was so completely modern in spirit. There was hardly a soul in the firm who was not perfectly well aware that publicity-advertising - is the dirtiest ramp that capitalism has yet produced. In the red lead firm there had still lingered certain notions of commercial honour and usefulness. But such things would have been laughed at in the New Albion. Most of the employees were the hard-boiled, Americanized, go-getting type — the type to whom nothing in the world is sacred, except money. They had their cynical code worked out. The public are swine: advertising is the rattling of a stick inside a swill-bucket."^{27}

^{27} Ibid., pp.58-59.
Orwell depicts another facet of the machine-civilization. He asserts that it led to aggressive imperialism. There had been colonisation before the industrial revolution and mechanization, but mechanization and the machine-civilization made imperialism more aggressive leading to a mad race for acquiring colonies, which finally ended up in the two world wars. Aggressive imperialism was a corollary of the machine-civilization. Imperialism was nothing but the imposition of the machine-civilization on the native culture for looting the natural resources of the colonies and dumping the finished products in the colonial markets:

But we're not civilising them, we're only rubbing our dirt onto them. Where's it going to lead, this uprush of modern progress, as you call it? Just to our own dear old swinery of gramophones and billy-cock hats. Sometimes I think that in two hundred years all this - 'he waved a foot towards the horizon - 'all this will be gone - forests, villages, monasteries, pagodas all vanished. And instead, pink villas fifty yards apart; all over those hills, as far as you can see, villa after
villa, with all the gramophones playing the same tune. And all the forests shaved flat — chewed into wood-pulp for the News of the World, or sawn up into gramophone cases. 28

Imperialism has spoiled culture and Nature and imposed the machine-civilization. Imperialism destroyed not only the native culture of the colonies, but also the culture of the imperialist nation. It is a case of the corruption of the culture of both the victims and victimisers. The onslaught on the native culture is open enough, but the corruption of the culture of the imperialists was very subtle and complex as observed by Flory in Burmese Days: "But it corrupts us, it corrupts us in ways you can’t imagine. There’s an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves night and day. It’s at the bottom of half of our beastliness to the natives. We Anglo-Indians could be almost bearable if we’d only admit that we’re thieves and go on thieving without any humbug." 29 The roots of these evils of imperialism lay in the machine-civilization.

28 Burmese Days, p.40.

29 Ibid., p.37.
Coming *Up for Air* is, in fact, a bitter critique of the machine-civilization. The criticism is made against the background of the impending Second World War. The machine-civilization flourishes in the shadow of the war. And it is quite natural that the machine-civilization should lead to another devastating war. What is characteristic of *Coming Up for Air* is that there is a clear and shrewd contrast that is made between two cultures— one culture belonging to the period before the First World War, and another culture dominated by mechanization belonging to the period after the First World War. One can see Orwell's nostalgic longing for the pre-First World War culture. The contrast is between the pre-war culture of Lower Binfield and the brazenly artificial civilization of the Ellesmere road in London which later on engulfed Lower Binfield also.

Orwell cites fishing as one of the distinct marks of the old culture of living peacefully and harmoniously in Nature and contrasts it with the machine-civilization:

*And fishing is somehow typical of that civilization. As soon as you think of fishing you think of things that don't belong to the modern world. The very idea of sitting under a willow tree beside a quiet*
pool - and being able to find a quiet pool to sit beside - belongs to the time before the war, before the radio, before aeroplanes, before Hitler.

There's a kind of peacefulness even in the names of English coarse fish. Roach, rudd, dace, bleak, barbel, bream, gudgeon, pike, chub, carp, tench.

They're solid kind of names. The people who made them up hadn't heard of machine guns, they didn't live in terror of the sack or spend their time eating aspirins, going to the pictures and wondering how to keep out of the concentration camp.  

The novel turns out to be a prolonged commentary on fishing. Fishing is pro-life, pro-man. It is against the machine, against pollution and against war: "To be sitting under the poplar trees, fishing for perch, away from the Company, away from the noise and the stink and the uniforms and the officers and the saluting and the sergeant's voice! Fishing is the opposite of war."  

The machine-civilization has introduced artificial machine made products in all spheres

30 Coming Up for Air, p.76.

31 Ibid., p.85.
of life; it has destroyed Nature; it has led to the decay of taste.

George Bowling, the central character in Coming Up for Air wants to escape for a short period from the oppressive mechanized world of London into the Lower Binfield of fishing culture. He imagines that his wife Hilda with the kids, Mrs. Wheeler, Miss Minns, Sir Herbert Crum and the higher ups of the Flying Salamander in their Rolls-Royces, all the chaps at the office, all the poor down-trodden pen-pushers from the Ellesmere Road, all the soul-savers, Nosey Parkers, the Home Secretary, Scotland Yard, the Temperance League, the Bank of England, Lord Beaverbrook, Hitler and Stalin on a tandem bicycle, the bench of Bishops, Mussolini, the Pope - all of them who were the products of the machine-civilization wanted to stop him. They wanted him to be streamlined and came after him to prevent him from returning to Lower Binfield. This imagined episode reveals the horrible perversion of culture brought about by mechanization.

However, when George Bowling managed to make a short trip to Lower Binfield, and thus escape from the maddening mechanized world of London, he found to his shock that the Lower Binfield of his boyhood days had already been swallowed
by the omnipotent mechanization. The Lower Binfield of his boyhood days had become a dream, an illusion. All the trees around the big pool where Bowling used to fish were felled, and the deep pool adjoining the big pool was turned into a rubbish-dump. There were factories and houses everywhere. This is what mechanization had done to Nature and culture.

Popular Culture

Popular culture means the cultural characteristics or the distinct way of life of a people or the culture of the common man. With regard to the views of George Orwell on popular culture, Jeffrey Meyers writes: "His criticism of popular culture is closely related to Coming Up for Air and includes 'Raffles and Miss Blandish', 'Decline of the English Murder', 'Boys' Weeklies, 'The Art of Donald McGill', 'Riding Down From Bangor' and 'Good Bad Books'." However there are other writings in which Orwell discussed popular culture. One can start the discussion of Orwell's views on popular culture with the picture of the English culture that he gives in The Lion and the Unicorn and "The English People".

Orwell as an English patriot presents a fine depiction of

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32 Meyers, p.49.
the English culture along with its limitations in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, and "The English People". What Orwell portrays in these works is the common man's culture or a people's culture. The English as a people have their limitations as any other peoples. Their limitations consist in the common observations that they are not artistically gifted; they are not musical like the Germans or the Italians; they are not intellectual; they are not masters in painting or sculpture like the French; they cling to everything that is out of date, and are very conservative; they are hypocritical in their attitude towards the Empire; they are, to use the phrase coined by Hitler for the Germans, 'a sleep-walking people'. Apart from these England is the most class-ridden country in the world.

Having pointed out the limitations of the English culture, Orwell observes that the substance of the English culture consists in the privateness of English life. This privateness is manifested in their addiction to love of flowers, other hobbies and spare-time occupations:

We are a nation of flower-lovers, but also a nation of stamp-collectors, pigeon-fanciers, amateur carpenters, coupon-snippers, darts-players, cross-
word-puzzle fans. All the culture that is most truly native centres round things which even when they are communal are not official - the pub, the football match, the back garden, the fireside and the 'nice cup of tea'. The liberty of the individual is still believed in, almost as in the nineteenth century... It is the liberty to have a home of your own, to do what you like in your spare-time, to choose your own amusements instead of having them chosen for you from above. The most hateful of all names in an English ear is Nosey Parker.33

Though Orwell feels that the English are in the process of being numbered, labelled and regimented, he is sure that the power-worship which had gripped Europe as a new religion had infected only the English intelligentsia and not the common people. They dislike wars, and their famous war-poems celebrate defeats. These very same qualities - the splendid as well as the ugly are succintly expressed in 'The English People', as seen by an imaginary foreign observer: "Almost

33 Lion and Unicorn, pp.39-40.
certainly he would find the salient characteristics of the English common people to be artistic insensibility, gentleness, respect for legality, suspicion of foreigners, sentimentality about animals, hypocrisy, exaggerated class distinctions, and an obsession with sport." These are the observations coming from an English patriot. And Orwell considered patriotism a mark of culture. What we observe is that Orwell does not glorify the English culture by pointing out only its brighter side, but gives a balanced and realistic picture by showing its darker side also.

Orwell criticises popular culture in several of his essays and articles, and his criticism of popular culture holds cultural values against cultural distortion. This criticism deals with various elements of popular culture. Thus one can see how his essay, "Decline of English Murder" records the change of the nature of murderers and also the change of the attitude of people towards murder and capital punishment. He makes a comparison between the widely known murderers belonging to the period between 1850 and 1925 on the one hand, and the murderers in the Cleft Chin Murder case

34 CEJL, III, 2.
reported in later period on the other hand. The murderers belonging to the period before 1925 were wrestling with conscience before killing, since they came from a normally decent background. They resorted to murders as less disgraceful acts than being detected in adultery. These were the tragic murder cases which evoked pity for both the victims and the murderers. But things had changed vastly by the time the Cleft Chin Murder took place. The murderers involved were Karl Hulten, an American, and Elizabeth Jones, an Americanised English girl. Both of these were very callous, and in their wanton deeds of murders there was no friction of conscience. Similarly popular sentiments against hanging a woman had also watered down. When Elizabeth Jones was sentenced to imprisonment there was public demand, almost a sort of campaign demanding the hanging of Jones though the hanging of women had gone out of practice. This was due to the effect of war: "Indeed, the whole meaningless story, with its atmosphere of dance halls, movie-palaces, cheap perfume, false names and stolen cars, belongs essentially to a war period." 35

35 *Decline*, p.13.
"Raffles and Miss. Blandish" shows the moral degeneration of the present times by means of a contrast. Orwell points out the difference in the moral atmosphere between the two books, *Raffles* by E.W. Hornung and *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* by James Hadley Chase. *No Orchids* is a 1939 version of glamourised crime, *Raffles*, the 1900 version. Raffles is a gentleman; he does not abuse hospitality; he does not commit murder except the person concerned is very reprehensible; he regards friendship as sacred. On the contrary, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* of Chase which became very popular in 1940 presents the story of utter violence, with the theme of the success of brute force over the weak. Orwell emphasises that *No Orchids* indicates the popular inclinations and the totalitarian trends of the intelligentsia: "It is a daydream appropriate to a totalitarian age. In his imagined world of gangsters Chase is presenting, as it were, a distilled version of the modern political scene, in which such things as mass bombing of civilians, the use of hostages, torture to obtain confessions, secret prisons, execution without trial, floggings with rubber truncheons, drownings in cesspools, systematic falsification of records and statistics, treachery, bribery, and quislingism are normal and morally neutral, even
admirable when done in a large and bold way."\textsuperscript{36} Orwell observes in "The Art of Donald McGill" that the comic post cards of Donald McGill reflect the popular culture. A comic post card is simply an illustration of a joke, invariably a low joke, and it succeeds or fails by its ability to induce laughter. A comic post card is vulgar, obscene, but it is not immoral. Orwell compares comic post cards with the twopenny weekly papers: "Unlike the twopenny weekly papers, comic post cards are not the product of any great monopoly company, and evidently they are not regarded as having any importance in forming public opinion. There is no sign in them of any attempt to induce an outlook acceptable to the ruling class."\textsuperscript{37} This naturally leads the reader to the essay, "Boys' Weeklies" in which Orwell attacks the boys' twopenny weeklies as leading to bully-worship and the cult of violence. They advocate for laissezfaire and continuation of the British Empire: "All the better because it is done indirectly, there is being pumped into them the conviction that the major problems of our time do not exist, that there

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.78.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p.147.
is nothing wrong with laissezfaire capitalism, that foreigners are unimportant comics and that the British Empire is a sort of charity-concern which will last forever."\(^38\) As opposed to the twopenny weekies, the comic post cards are not concerned with the appeasement of the ruling class. The comic post cards contain jokes about sex, home life, drunkenness, public lavatories, inter-working class snobbery, stock figures and politics. They represent the fundamental human desire to be good, and also not to be too good. Orwell wants the comic post card tradition to continue since the popular culture would be poorer without it.

The reading habit of the common people, the money they spend on buying or borrowing books, the comments on 'the good bad books', the suggestion for making poetry popular - are all the related facets of the popular culture that Orwell analyses. In a short article, "Bookshop Memories", Orwell comments on the reading habits of the common people: "Roughly speaking, what one might call the average novel - the ordinary, good-bad, Galsworthy - and - water stuff which is the norm of the English novel - seems to exist only for women."

\(^38\) CEJL, I, 482.
Men read either the novels it is possible to respect, or detective stories. But their consumption of detective stories is terrific. One of our subscribers to my knowledge read four or five detective stories every week for over a year, besides others which he got from another library. In the article, "Books v. Cigarettes", Orwell examines whether buying or borrowing books and reading them is an expensive hobby beyond the reach of the average man as was commonly believed. He says that probably the average person buys three books directly or indirectly in a year and spends £1 on books per year. He concludes that reading is one of the cheaper recreations. In "Good Bad Books" Orwell writes that 'the good bad books' flourish when serious literary works perish. These 'good bad books' prove that art is more than cerebration since they amuse, excite and even sometimes move. In "Poetry and Microphone" Orwell shows how poetry is divorced from popular culture. Ours is an age in which an average human being in highly civilized countries is aesthetically inferior to the lowest savage. Orwell advocates for using radio as a medium for popularising poetry since broadcasting a poem produces an effect both on the poet and the audience.

39 CEJL, I pp. 244-45.
Thus Orwell has covered a wide range of the popular culture in his criticism and analyses of it. He even points out how sport which is another element of the popular culture had become a sort of war minus shooting since it was bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence. This was due to the rise of aggressive nationalism. Thus international sports instead of promoting goodwill promoted hatred: "At the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare. But the significant thing is not the behaviour of the players but the attitude of the spectators: and behind the spectators, of the nations who work themselves into furies over these absurd contests, and seriously believe - at any rate for short periods - that running, jumping and kicking a ball are tests of national virtue." 40

A very interesting aspect of Orwell's interpretation of culture is the relation between smell and culture. In fact, one finds any number of comments that Orwell made on the smells of different origins at different places and times. But the analogy is simple; good smell stands for good culture.
and bad smell for bad culture. Thus Gandhi left a clean smell behind him: "One may feel, as I do, a sort of aesthetic distaste for Gandhi, one may reject the claims of sainthood made on his behalf (he never made any such claim himself, by the way), one may also reject sainthood as an ideal and therefore feel that Gandhi's basic aims were anti-human and reactionary: but regarded simply as a politician, and compared with the other leading political figures of our time, how clean a smell he has managed to leave behind him!" On the contrary Salvodar Dali's life and his autobiography emit bad smell: "It is a book that stinks. If it were possible for a book to give a physical stink off its pages, this one would - a thought that might please Dali, who before wooing his future wife for the first time rubbed himself all over with an ointment made of goat's dung boiled up in fish glue."  

Orwell used bad smells as symbols of poverty, inequality, injustice, oppression, pollution and destruction of Nature, terror and finally the violation of culture itself. The filth of the room of the Rougiers in Paris slum hotel that could be

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41 CEJL, IV, 470.

42 Decline, p.24.
smelt on the floor below, the unspeakable stench of the spikes
and common lodging houses, the nasty smell of the hospital in
"How the Poor Die" - all show poverty and perversion of
culture. The smell becomes a symbol of class and class
oppression. Thus the middle-class people believed that 'the
lower classes smell'. The nasty smell of the slum dwellings,
the foul smell of chemicals, affluents, dust-bins in the
industrial towns show how mechanization has spoiled culture.
The disgusting stench of decaying food, urine and excrement
represent the atmosphere of the trench warfare in Homage; the
smell of the blood of the animals killed after the fake trials
in Animal Farm expresses terror; the dingy flats with a
mixture of boiling cabbage smell and the reek of sweat, and
the foul smell in the cell of the Ministry of Love in Nineteen
Eighty-Four add to the atmosphere of ruthless totalitarian
oppression. Thus Orwell is very clear on the implication of
the smells: foul smells are cultural perversions; clean smells
are marks of sane and healthy culture.

Truth, A Great Cultural Value

Orwell's life and work can be described as a journey in
search of truth or as experiments with truth. His way of
trying to reach truth is unique. He attempts to express truth
on the basis of his experiences, and unbiased rigorous thinking. His experiences of poverty, class oppression, political oppression and totalitarian politics bring authenticity to what he says. He was jobless and poor when he returned from Burma; he stayed in slums, common lodginghouses, spikes or casual wards and working class dwellings before he wrote about poverty; he had his boyhood shame attached to class oppression, and then his experiences in later life concerning class oppression before he wrote on class oppression; he fought in the trenches during the Spanish Civil War before he wrote on it. Spain offered Orwell a graphic picture of the totalitarian power-struggle which perverted the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. It provided Orwell the most formative experiences with regard to the search for truth. It was a mini-world war involving the Nazis, Fascists, Soviet Communists and the Capitalists before the Second World War exploded. Spain had become a stage for the international political power-struggle. Orwell became a very keen observer and analyser of international power rivalry, campaigns of lies, infringement of liberty and the crushing of the individual by the totalitarian regimes since the Spanish Civil War.
It was since the Spanish Civil War that Orwell became a formidable defender of truth as a great cultural value. It was there that he saw how lies were manufactured and propagated for political expediency and power. The struggle for the revolutionary ideals had vanished, and only the struggle for power had remained. Those who were fighting against the Fascists were debunked as the Fascists, which in fact was a lie, and this lie was spread, and enacted by the Communists. The Communists in Spain proved by their acts that Communism was a lie, and that Soviet Communism was not Socialism, but the worst form of tyranny by the power-hungry oligarchy. Orwell concludes his article, "Looking Back on the Spanish War", with a poem on the Italian soldier who had come to Spain to fight for truth and decency, but was killed by a terrible lie which was buried under a deeper lie:

"Your name and your deeds were forgotten
Before your bones were dry,
And the lie that slew you is buried
Under a deeper lie;"^43

It was truth that was symbolically buried along with the

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43 Homage, p.246.
Italian militiaman who stood for faith in decency, liberty, equality and fraternity, and in short culture.

The Communist Party of Spain supported by the Soviet Union was acting as a counter-revolutionary force by systematic campaigns of lies and bumping off the POUM militiamen whom they called 'Trotskyists'. When Orwell came to Barcelona he found how the campaign of lies and the betrayal of the revolutionary ideals had reached the highest point. Orwell describes graphically the atmosphere of suspicion and lies that prevailed especially in the Hotel Continental as the triangular civil war had reached the fever pitch: "Various people were infected with spy mania and were creeping round whispering that everyone else was a spy of the Communists or the Trotskyists, or the Anarchists, or whatnot. The fat Russian agent was cornering all the foreign refugees in turn and explaining plausibly that this whole affair was an Anarchist plot. I watched him with some interest, for it was the first time that I had seen a person whose profession was telling lies - unless one counts journalists."^44

In their vilification campaigns of lies against the POUM

^44 Ibid., p.135.
militiamen who were genuine revolutionaries, the Communists surpassed the Nazis and the Fascists. In the Communist and pro-Communist press the POUM was denounced as 'Franco's Fifth Column' - a 'Trotskyist' organization working in league with the Fascists. In fact, the POUM was not especially 'Trotskyist', not Fascist. The fact was that the Communist Party of Spain was the 'Fifth Column of the Soviet Communists who were worse liers than the Nazis and the Fascists. The Communist Party of Spain which dominated the government ultimately got the POUM declared as an illegal body by the power of the campaigns of lies. It was a classic case of the suppression of truth by the horrible lies. And Orwell in another essay on the Spanish Civil War, i.e. "Spilling the Spanish Beans" writes : "The Spanish war has probably produced a richer crop of lies than any event since the Great War of 1914-18,... It is the left-wing papers, the News Chronicle and the Daily Worker, with their far subtler methods of distortion, that have prevented the British public from grasping the real nature of the struggle." All these point to the fact that history as a truthful account of what took place was to become henceforth a brazen account of lies.

45 CEJL, I, 269.
written to suit the political expediency of the ruling class.

The campaigns of lies which Orwell witnessed in Spain, and which he fought against, got into his novels Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four since totalitarianism existed on lies. In Animal Farm the campaigns of lies have crushed culture. All the ideals of the revolution are falsified. There is Squealer, the shrewd and Machiavellian pig, present on all occasions and crises of doubts to distort truth and spread lies. According to the lies propagated on the Animal Farm, Snowball was a traitor who did not fight against Jones and his men, and he was in league with Frederick or Pilkington, to destroy the Animal Farm. Frederick and Pilkington the neighbouring farmers were friends or enemies as the occasion demanded. Similarly the ailing Boxer was not sold to the knacker. All these lies were manufactured, propagated and managed by the omnipresent Squealer who could turn black into white.

The atmosphere of the campaign of lies is total and sordid in Nineteen Eighty-Four. There is no objective truth as O'Brien admonishes Winston: "But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make
mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be truth, is truth." 46 Again the practice of doublethink is the very basis of lies in Oceania: "To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from the oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies — all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink." 47

The Party makes history; there is nothing like any objective truthful account of the past. The Party wants to erase historical truth or reality so that people cannot make any comparison between the life in the past and the present. The Party wants to constantly change the past to maintain its infallibility. The past consists in whatever lies the Party wants to impose at a particular time and in a given situation.

46 Nineteen Eighty-Four, p.197.
The oligarchic collectivist regime of Oceania is a superstructure based on lies. Even the names of the ministries of the government of Oceania are based on lies and perversions: "The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture, the Ministry of Plenty with starvation. These contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in doublethink." The slogans of the Party also show the operation of deliberate perversions and doublethink:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

The campaigns of lies nourish totalitarianism. Oligarchic collectivism denies truth, denies culture. Orwell's approach to truth is what can be called a negative approach; it is a defensive approach. What one observes is that lies succeed in Homage, Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. They do succeed, no doubt, in the contexts of these works. Nevertheless Orwell wanted to assert the importance of

48 Ibid., p.170.
49 Ibid., p.7.
truth as a great cultural value by exposing how lies could be used by the totalitarian regimes to wipe out truth. It is in actuality, an assertion of the importance of truth using what can be termed the negative technique.

Sanctity of the Individual

It is clear that Orwell held the sanctity of the individual as the highest cultural value. The sanctity of the individual is the fruit of all cultural values. When all cultural values are distorted there cannot remain the individual, leave aside the sanctity of the individual. Orwell adopts the negative technique to emphasise his point of view, as he does in the assertion of truth. The assertion of the sanctity of the individual by showing how such an individual is defeated by the distorted culture of the totalitarian regime is essentially the negative technique. It denies to assert; it destroys to create. The individuals in the works of Orwell are defeated. It is so in the case of Dorothy Hare, John Flory, Gordon Comstock, George Bowling, the Italian soldier and Winston Smith. They are weak individuals; they do not win against their predicaments. The relevance of the sanctity of the individual is to be seen in their defeats. Why is it that they are defeated? The answer is simple; they
are defeated by distorted oppressive culture.

The individual is no longer an individual if he is crushed by poverty, unemployment or class oppression. Hence the necessity of Socialism to ensure a fair sharing of wealth or income. But equality, decency, justice etc. are negated by the denial of liberty in the totalitarian regime of power existing for power and nothing else. The meaning and nature of the totalitarian politics which destroy all cultures became clear as crystal to Orwell in Spain. The Italian soldier killed by a lie became a symbol of an individual who was destroyed by the totalitarian politics. In Animal Farm the totalitarian regime wiped out all cultural values.

Nineteen Eighty-Four presents Orwell's final statement on the complete violation of culture and the annihilation of the individual by the post-totalitarian State. The individual is debased in an unspeakable way. The culture is perverted to such an extent by the oligarchic collectivist regime that the individual no longer exists as O'Brien tells Winston: "If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man. Your kind is extinct; we are the inheritors. Do you understand that you
are alone? You are outside history, you are non-existent."\textsuperscript{50}

The humanity is in the terrible annihilating grip of the oligarchic collectivist regime. The whole culture is made incomparably oppressive, and the human relationship, creativity, and such other values have vanished: "We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. 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.... We shall abolish the orgasm.... There will be no love except the love of Big Brother... There will be no art, no literature, no science.... There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life.... If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever."\textsuperscript{51}

This is the nightmare of the future oligarchic regime which leads to the termination of the individual and all human instincts and values.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p.214.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p.212.
The picture of the vaporisation of 'the last man' as presented in the imaginative literary work should not make us jump to the conclusion that it is Orwell's vision of life which is utterly hopeless. He only points out the possibility of such a dark and horrible future for mankind if the totalitarian trends he saw were not checked. It is a statement of what needs to be done if the world is not to slip into the nightmare he imagined on the basis of the political crisis of his time. As has been already pointed out he remained a Socialist till the end and remarked that Nineteen Eighty-Four was a picture of the world as it could be. The debasement of the sanctity of the individual emphasises implicitly that the sanctity of the individual should be upheld at any cost.

The desire to survive, to be free to love, to have privacy, to carry out responsibilities in one's own way are the primordial instincts, and also the great cultural values. A culture should have scope and width or breadth for the individual to grow according to his predilections. In the process of governance people should understand that cultural autonomy is retained. Culture does not mean mere politics. It means a way of life characterised by the existence of very
many social, educational, economic and other institutions including political organization, and the autonomous functioning of all these institutions and organizations within a culture. A culture should never be allowed to be dominated and swallowed by a political organization which is one among the several organizations functioning within a culture. This conception of pluralism and autonomy ensures a free culture, and a free culture alone can guarantee the sanctity of the individual. Orwell upholds the sanctity of the individual as the fruit of cultural values by depicting the terribly dehumanising effect of oligarchic collectivism on the individual. He wants the reader to see the sanctity of the individual as the most necessary element of life.

Orwell's understanding and analyses of culture stand for his radical individualism. He defended the cultural values since they guaranteed a meaningful living to the individual, and since they were under attack from all quarters. Of course, the most formidable attack on culture came from the oligarchic collectivist regime. He conceived a free, decent, just culture as the very essence of life. The cultural values that he discusses reveal his humanism and commitment to the sanctity of the individual.
b) Orwell's Radical Individualism: Literature

The life and works of George Orwell reflect his radical individualism not only in the domains of society, economy, politics and culture, but also in the field of literature. In fact, his radical individualism in other domains flow from his radical individualism in the world of literature. He was primarily a writer, a literary artist. In his revealing essay "Why I Write", he asserts that he intended to be a writer from a very early age in his life: "From a very early age, perhaps the age of five or six, I knew that when I grew up I should be a writer. Between the ages of about seventeen and twenty-four I tried to abandon this idea, but I did so with the consciousness that I was outraging my true nature and that sooner or later I should have to settle down and write books."52 The essay gives a short sketch of the development of Orwell as a writer, and explains four great motives for writing, especially for writing prose. The four great motives for writing that Orwell presents are sheer egoism, i.e. the desire to seem clever, to be talked about, to be remembered after death etc., aesthetic enthusiasm i.e., perception of beauty in the external world, or, on the other hand, in words

52 Decline, p.180.
and their right arrangement, historical, impulse, i.e., desire
to see things as they are, to find out facts and store them up
for the use of posterity, and political purpose, i.e., desire
to push the world in a certain direction, to alter the other
people's idea of the kind of society that they should strive
after.

Orwell saw himself as a literary artist with profound
commitments. He wrote for a cause or purpose, and considered
literary art as a craft requiring painstaking efforts. There
should be some experience, observation or information which
exposes injustice or oppression, and which needs to be
urgently communicated, and this should be communicated in an
aesthetic way. He considered the craft or the art of writing
as a very tiresome and painful process. The art or literary
work produced with such efforts should become a means to
convey the message, and in Orwell's case it is the political
message:

Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle,
like a long bout of some painful illness. One would
never undertake such a thing if one were not driven
on by some demon whom one can neither resist nor
understand.... And yet it is also true that one can
write nothing readable unless one constantly struggles to efface one's own personality. Good prose is like a window pane.... And looking back through my work, I see that it is invariably where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed into purple passages, sentences without meaning, decorative adjectives and humbug generally. 53

Here the reader arrives at the dichotomy between the artistic form and the contents, or the aesthetic sense and the message that a writer wants to convey. Orwell was caught up in this dichotomy between the writing for the effect of the content, and the writing for the effect of words or the form. Raymond Williams who analyses Orwell’s position as a writer on this issue comments that this distinction is the product of a divided aesthetics. During the closing period of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century art or literary work had polarised into art for aesthetic pleasure or entertainment and art as a means for conveying a message. There was a school which stood for ‘art

for art's sake'. In this context one can recall the famous quarrel in 1915 between two celebrated novelists, Henry James and H.G. Wells. And Raymond Williams writes: "The important quarrel between James and Wells - between a composed, pure, essentially passive art, and new kinds of projected, committed, essentially purposive writing - came at a time when the development of the novel in twentieth-century conditions was very much at issue.... What was common was a sense of crisis, but alternative ways of describing it were in practice, each in its own way, leading to radical changes in literary form, yet each pulling in quite opposite directions."54

Orwell attacks the writers who stood for the idea of 'art for art's sake', or those who considered art as having no purpose beyond the aesthetic purpose:

In "cultured" circles art-for-art's-saking extended practically to a worship of the meaningless. Literature was supposed to consist solely in the manipulation of words. To judge a book by its subject-matter was the unforgivable sin, and even to

54 Williams, p.36.
be aware of its subject-matter was looked on as a lapse of taste. About 1928, in one of the three genuinely funny jokes that Punch has produced since the Great War, an intolerable youth is pictured informing his aunt that he intends to "write". "And what are you going to write about, dear?" asks the aunt. "My dear aunt", says the youth crushingly, "one does not write about anything, one just writes."

Orwell chose to be a writer with an emphasis on literature as a medium to convey a message without denying the aesthetic purpose. As pointed out by Raymond Williams, Orwell's comments on the 'divided aesthetics' indicated the current polemic of that period. And partly these comments represent Orwell's fear that a writer's preoccupation with the political purpose might make a literary work a non-literary product. He was frank in stating that in a political age in which he lived he was compelled to be a political writer. In such a situation it was natural that literature should deal with political realities. Orwell declared himself to be a

55 CEJL, I, 508-09.
political writer. At the same time he was not ready to give up the aesthetic purpose. He defined his goal of writing very clearly. He announced that he had been trying to fuse the political purpose and the aesthetic purpose into his literary work. He asserted that he was trying to make political writing an art.

Orwell is an acknowledged genius in the English literary world. He shot into world-wide fame when his Animal Farm was published. He was a prolific and versatile writer. Since he lived on writing he was compelled to write more at a tremendous rate. He continuously reviewed books, wrote columns and other journalistic pieces, and managed to write memorable documentaries, celebrated novels and famous essays. From his tremendous and versatile literary output there emerged his master-pieces, Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, his great documentary, Homage to Catalonia, his famous essays, "Shooting an Elephant", "Such, Such Were the Joys", "Charles Dickens", "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool ", "Writers and Leviathan", " Reflections on Gandhi", "Boys'Weeklies", "Politics and the English Language", and many more brilliant pieces of writing. The stamp of a unique Orwellian style is evident in all these and other remarkable works. Orwell's
writings are distinctly individualistic in what they say and how they say.

Orwell was responding to the unusual pressures of the civilizational crisis of his period in a dedicated and forceful manner. Or else he might have remained a minor writer. The tension between his sense of individual integrity and his entry into politics led to the development of Orwell into a great writer. And what is unique about Orwell is that he upheld individual integrity, and also the integrity of being a literary artist even while he was participating in politics as a matter of his duty as a citizen, and writing with an explicit and pronounced political purpose.

It is because of what he said and how he said it that Orwell became an English classic: "... and already the signs are that he is generally accepted as a classic of English literature, whose best books - and even the best passages from his less successful books - will live as long as the English language." J.R. Hammond observes: "Orwell is now acknowledged as one of the most significant writers of the

twentieth century.... The publication of Animal Farm brought his name before a considerably wider readership both in the English-speaking world and beyond.... With the publication of Nineteen Eighty-Four in 1949 his stature as a major literary figure was secure. The adjective 'Orwellian' was added to the language and his early works began to be rescued from the temporary oblivion into which they had fallen." Jeffrey Meyers calls Orwell a literary nonconformist, and offers a brilliant sketch of Orwell's traits as a writer, his affinities with the other writers and their influence on him:

Orwell is a literary nonconformist whose works defy genres, a writer who is hard to place. His satiric style is like that of Swift, Butler and Shaw. He has affinities with the school of the great plain writers - Defoe, Crabbe and Cobbett - the writers of working-class realism, of human beings in conflict with the class structure. Dickens, Kipling, Wells, Lawrence and Joyce influenced his early fiction. Though he was unsympathetic to them, he has some similarities to the Auden-Spender school of the

thirties, who, writes Spender, 'were divided between our literary vocation and an urge to save the world from Fascism. We were the Divided Generation of Hamlets who found the world out of joint and failed to set it right'. But more important than any of these influences and traditions is Orwell's close kinship - in his intense feeling of guilt, responsibility and commitment - to the French novelists, particularly Malraux and Sartre, who began to write during the inter-war years, the 'age of guilt'.

Most of Orwell's critics have acclaimed him as a great writer. His writings have limitations, but at least his famous writings have merits which outweigh their limitations. He stands out as a superb writer of prose which he asserted should be like 'a window pane'. His style is marked by lucidity, precision, concreteness, colloquial freshness, minute descriptive power and a blend of clear reasoning and innate human emotions. It is sometimes factual but always racy; it abounds in generalisations, sometimes producing a

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58 Meyers, p.64.
very grand effect. It is also the style that is satirical holding up to ridicule some perversions or distortions. In brief it is the Orwellian style incomparably.

A widely recognised, and also basic trait of Orwell's writings is their autobiographical strain. But one should not be misled to conclude that the writings of Orwell are just plain autobiography. The 'I' in his writings merges in the objective truth; 'Orwell' emerges as a persona to communicate the objective realities as seen by Orwell, the man and the literary artist. The 'I' to put in T.S. Eliot's phrase becomes an 'objective co-relative'. Thus the autobiographical technique of writing becomes a synthesis of the autobiographical element and the objective truth. Thus the 'I' represents not merely the autobiographical strain, but brings authenticity to what he says. This reflects the essence of the integrity of Orwell as a literary artist.

For Orwell, writing without experiences, or without feeling the realities on one's pulse was meaningless. He should have experiences first, and then write about such experiences. Sonia Orwell remarks that even Orwell's novels are autobiographical: "Apart from Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four all his novels contain straight descriptions of
himself or his experiences in one guise or another, and a whole chapter of *The Road to Wigan Pier* suddenly turns into straight autobiography."\(^{59}\) Orwell's record of his personal experiences in his works becomes at once works of public relevance. The 'personal' and the 'public' merge to evolve a striking technique of presentation of the matter. Hynes observes that what one finally has in this context is the picture of the life of Orwell as well as a personal record of life in England of his time: "Serious writers put their own biographies into their books; whatever transformations the imagination may impose upon facts, what remains is the individual record of life that mattered. Certainly this is true of Orwell. One can trace through his writing the course of his deepest concerns, the episodes that he felt to be significant, and his changing sense of the age. What one has in the end is both a life of George Orwell and a personal record of life in England in the 1930s and 40s.\(^{60}\) One can find a fine synthesis of Orwell the man and Orwell the writer. There could not have been Orwell the writer without the experiences of Orwell the man: "All Orwell's books are

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59 CEJL, introd. XIX.

60 Hynes, p. 5.
autobiographical and spring from his psychological needs to work out the pattern and meaning of his personal experience; his great triumph is his ability to transform his early guilt and awareness of what it means to be a victim, described in "Such, Such Were the Joys", into a compassionate ethic of responsibility, a compulsive sharing in the suffering and degradation of others." 61

In Down and Out, Wigan Pier and Homage, and most of his essays the autobiographical 'I' is dominating. In Down and Out Orwell becomes a persona for the first time. It is his account of his experiences as a dish-washer in a hotel in Paris and then as tramp in London. At the same time this work depicts the life in Paris slums, unemployment, eccentric starving persons, and then again about tramps in England. The autobiographical element gives a comprehensive picture of poverty and suffering. The 'I' is a unifying factor. Wigan Pier contains straight autobiographical descriptions and Homage is a great documentary where 'I' acquires a very profound significance. Whether it is "Shooting an Elephant", Such, Such Were the Joys" or any other piece of writing, the

61 Meyers, p.10.
autobiographical element is elevated to communicate a message.

One can find the autobiographical elements even in his novels. Flory in *Burmese Days*, Gordon Comstock in *The Aspidistra*, Bowling in *Coming Up for Air* and Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* share the ideas and traits of Orwell to different degrees. In *Coming Up for Air* the narration is in the first person, 'I'. The 'I' sets the tone and atmosphere of the novel. The novel becomes the autobiography of Bowling. The 'I' or the autobiographical technique is omnipresent in Orwell's works. But it is not the autobiographical element in a usual way. Orwell has transformed the merely autobiographical strain into remarkable literary works by fusing it with political thoughts and actions. In his endeavour of finding a literary pattern for his experiences involving compassion for the suffering humanity Orwell met with resounding success. The autobiography of Orwell becomes the biography of the deprived and the oppressed. The 'I' transcends the merely personal, and becomes a symbol of the hopes, aspirations, miseries and the vision of the humanity as a whole.

Orwell wrote in different literary forms - novel, documentary, essay - and adopted journalism to make a living
from writing. In the course of his literary career he commented on literature and language in general. What emerges from his works is a distinctly Orwellian style. It is true that he was not a master technician in the sense in which James, Lawrence and Joyce were. But a careful reader of Orwell can find a distinct Orwellian technique of description flowing as an undercurrent in his works. This is what I call the negative technique adopted to assert the positive ideals. It is the negative technique which shapes his literary works. From Down and Out to Nineteen Eighty-Four, the negative technique flows consistently. One can easily understand that all of Orwell's works expose some injustice, some perversion, oppression, and then make suggestions. There is denial, or a picture of life where justice, decency, liberty are denied, and trampled upon. This negative atmosphere is projected to highlight the positive ideals. This is the essence of what I call the negative technique.

In Down and Out poverty and suffering is depicted as denial of decency. There is negation in A Clergyman's Daughter; there is suppression of liberty in Burmese Days; there is denial in The Aspidistra; there is distortion in Wigan Pier; there is aberration in Homage; there is perversion
of decent culture by the machine-civilization in *Coming Up for Air*; there is perversion of all revolutionary ideals in *Animal Farm*; there is 'a boot stamping on a human face' perennially in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; there is such negation, perversion, denial or oppression in almost all works of Orwell. This is the negative technique employed by Orwell. Probably one can infer that this is nothing but nihilism. No, Orwell does not represent nihilism by adopting this negative technique. One of the characteristics of his style is the negative technique because he saw aberrations all around and set out to expose them in his works.

The negative technique of Orwell very forcefully projects the positive ideals. As soon as one reads any work of Orwell one knows what is denied or lacking. For example, "Such, Such Were the Joys", shows how Orwell, then a boy at the school was victimised by class distinction and the school which was no better than any racket. He was denied the usual pleasures of his school career. Negation, denial or oppression has created a terrible vacuum. Since Nature abhors vacuum created by negation, the positive ideals should gush up and pour forth to fill this vacuum. The height of the negative technique is to be found in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The reader
is painfully aware of what is destroyed. Here the negative technique emphasises the positive ideal of liberty. But in some works the negative technique is followed by the direct positive statement of remedies against the evils. However, the negative technique of presentation is one of the distinct marks of the Orwellian style.

Orwell wrote six novels, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, *Burmese Days*, *Keep The Aspidistra Flying*, *Coming Up for Air*, *Animal Farm*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Of these *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* brought him world fame, and made him a classic. In his novels poverty and oppression manifest themselves as the two main related themes. *A Clergyman's Daughter* and *The Aspidistra* explicitly deal with poverty. *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* deal with totalitarian oppression. *Coming Up for Air* shows how machine-civilization has perverted culture, and *Burmese Days* condemns imperialist oppression. There are minor thematic variations in respect of emphasis, but the two main related themes of poverty and oppression run through all of his novels, and also through all of his other writings implicitly or explicitly. Later the two themes of poverty and oppression merge in one theme i.e., oppression. Poverty was the result of economic oppression and when the
Communist regime was set up in the Soviet Union with the ideal of economic equality and removal of poverty, it led to the emergence of an oppressive regime which crushed liberty. The crushing of liberty led to the denial of equality. And ultimately the regime negated both economic equality and liberty of the individual. Thus what gives unity and integrity of vision to Orwell as a literary artist is this great theme of oppression against which he proposed liberty and the sanctity of the individual. Thus the commitment to the theme of oppression ensures unity of purpose and clarity in all the novels, documentaries, essays and miscellaneous writings of Orwell.

Orwell's novels have their own pattern. The structure of Orwell's novels becomes clear in his own statements on the novel as basically a medium to tell a story: "But the novel is a popular form of art, and it is no use to approach it with Criterion - Scrunity assumption that literature is a game of back-scratching (claws in or claws out according to circumstances) between cliques of highbrows. The novelist is primarily a story teller, and a man may be a very good story teller (vide for instance Trollope, Charles Reade, Mr. Somerset Maugham) without being in the narrow sense an
'intellectual'. He appreciated the realistic novel, and modified it to suit his imaginative projections. He points out that 'realism' when applied to novels normally means a photographic imitation of everyday life: "A 'realistic' novel is one in which the dialogue is colloquial and physical objects are described in such a way that you can visualise them." He praises the realistic strain in *Tropic of Cancer*, a novel in the autobiographical form by Henry Miller: "For the truth is that many ordinary people, perhaps an actual majority, do speak and behave in just the way that is recorded here. The callous coarseness with which the characters in *Tropic of Cancer* talk is very rare in fiction, but it is extremely common in life; again and again I have heard just such conversations from people who were not even aware that they were talking coarsely."

Orwell could not, and did not want to write novels in the style of the outstanding writers of the nineteen-twenties who put the main emphasis on technique. He considered D.H. Lawrence who wrote with a purpose as lacking what later on was

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61 CEJL, I, 253.
62 CEJL, III, 244.
63 CEJL, I, 497.
called social consciousness. James Joyce was a pure artist as a writer could be. But Orwell was greatly impressed by *Ulysses* because the artistic device was used by Joyce to project a vision: "But *Ulysses* could not have been written by someone who was merely dabbling with word-patterns; it is the product of a special vision of life, the vision of a Catholic who has lost his faith. What Joyce is saying is 'Here is life without God. Just look at it!' and his technical innovations, important though they are, are there primarily to serve this purpose." 64

Orwell is a political novelist, and he presents the political realities of his period in an artistic way. This is his pronounced literary ambition. This accounts for his lack of interest in the new techniques and experiments being carried out by the novelists of the nineteen-twenties: "There is no trace anywhere of a desire to express himself with the literary competence of, for instance, *Sea and Sardinia* by D.H.Lawrence, or the stylistic resourcefulness of Conrad, though he greatly admired both these writers. Nor is there any expository clarity of Wells, on whom he modelled

64 CEJL, I, 508.
himself."

It is so since he wanted to assert his role as a committed writer. And J.R. Hammond observes: "The principal literary influences upon him throughout his adolescence and early manhood were in the naturalistic tradition and it was not until 1933, at the age of thirty, that he read for the first time James Joyce's *Ulysses* : a work which exercised a deep influence on his attitude of mind and approach to literature." Joyce had made his novel an effective artistic medium for expressing his vision, and Orwell got the inspiration from Joyce to make his novel a medium, of course, to express the political realities and insights.

Orwell's novels have technical shortcomings. Critics point out that Orwell does not figure as a brilliant storyteller and that his novels do not have well-knit plot with the exception of *Animal Farm*. His novels exhibit weak characterisation: "His heroes are all isolated figures who resist a hostile society for a time, and try to exist by their own standards, but are then forced to capitulate. Certainly, Orwell never seems to have overcome a tendency to believe that the worst was always bound to happen." Orwell is criticised

65 Lewis, p.153.
66 Hammond, p.35.
for not having experimented with the form and techniques of writing a novel and for having used the old Edwardian model. Oxley points out that Orwell cannot be considered a 'poetic' writer, an inventor of symbols in the way Dickens or Lawrence or William Golding were. He observes that even in the obviously imaginative part of his work there are indications of non-literary direction, and that in the context of the novels his stories suddenly stop being imaginative and start to become essays." Wyndham Lewis calls Keep the Aspidistra Flying and Coming Up for Air as 'two dreadful books', and says about A Clergyman's Daughter that Orwell himself was so much dissatisfied with it he did not want it to be reprinted.

With the exception of Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four which show the mature style of Orwell as a novelist, the technical limitations of the other novels in respect of storytelling, plot, characterisation, lack of innovation in technique and profound imaginative quality seem to be obvious and correct at first sight. But a careful reader of Orwell cannot fail to perceive a definite pattern even in the novels excluding Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. David Wykes points out how the books and the early novels of Orwell have a definite pattern. He observes that the books that Orwell
wrote in the 1930s have the pattern of a journey. Orwell journeyed to Burma, Paris, Wigan, Spain and each journey produced a book. Dorothy goes on a journey in *A Clergyman’s Daughter*, Bowling goes to Lower Binfield; John Flory has gone to Burma in *Burmese Days*. Then the pattern of explaining the conditions of life for people placed in specific physical and moral location follows. Orwell’s novels and books fit this pattern of exposition. And Wykes writes: "Both patterns, however, indicate elements in Orwell’s literary make-up that he had to transform in order to achieve the successes of *Animal Farm* and *1984*.”68

It should be noted that characterisation in the novels is weak in the sense that the characters succumb to the circumstances and not transcend the circumstances. The creation of the central characters, Dorothy, Flory, Comstock, Bowling, Winston Smith is, in fact, a study in failure. They are victims of the circumstances. They set out to change their circumstances, but ultimately surrender to circumstances. They are all anti-heroic characters. However it is interesting to observe that in the context of the novels

in which they appear, they succeed in conveying the message that Orwell wants to convey. They are not heroes, but only the media for expressing their creator's ideas and experiences in a given literary context. Moreover these characters are just ordinary people who are brought on to the centre stage in the novels to express the writer's observations and experiences. Being ordinary, the characters represent the humanity as a whole. These characters depicted against the background of the Great Depression, imperialist rivalry and totalitarian oppression could be only victims and not the conquering heroes.

The characterisation in the novels is weak in the sense that the central characters are not heroes. But the description of their physical appearance is very graphic. Dorothy is a girl of middle height, rather thin, but strong and shapely with unremarkable face, beautiful hair and childish earnestness in her eyes. Flory is a man of thirty-five, of middle height with 'a hideous birth mark' on the left side of his face. U Po Kyin, a Machiavellian character in Burmese Days is a very fat man. He is proud of his fatness and saw his accumulated flesh as the symbol of his greatness. Gordon Comstock is aged twenty-nine and moth-eaten. Bowling
is called Fatty though he was not 'disgustingly' fat. Winston Smith is a smallish, frail figure, and the meagreness of his body is emphasised by the blue overalls, the uniform of the Party that he was wearing. His hair is very fair, his face sanguine, and his skin was roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

The novels are not lacking in physical description be it of characters or the setting. The central characters are weak because they submit; they don't transcend. But then, that was what their creator wanted them to be.

Orwell may not be a 'poetic' writer in the sense of creating symbols, metaphors and imagery. But he is a poetic writer in a different sense. He uses bits of poetry in his novels. The hop-picking song and other pieces of rhyme in A Clergyman's Daughter, Gordon Comstock's "London Pleasures" in The Aspidistra, the revolutionary but funny song "Beasts of England, Beasts of Ireland" in Animal Farm, the poem on the Italian militiaman in "Looking Back on the Spanish War", the 'prolefeed' song sung by the prolewoman and the good old religious rhymes in Nineteen Eighty-Four do create a poetic atmosphere and add to the final impression of his novels and books on the mind of the reader. Another factor is that
Orwell's novels and writings rouse the deepest compassion for the victims. If poetry is concerned with compassion Orwell's novels can be considered poetical. Moreover *Animal Farm* runs like a poem and the animals become superb symbols of greed for power, cruelty, oppression, innocence and submission in political, economic, moral and cultural context.

Orwell is a great writer of descriptive prose. His power lies in depicting a scene or setting in a concrete and clear way. And Hammond considers this element in the novels as a very distinct mark of the Orwellian style:

As a naturalistic writer in the vein of Zola his undoubted talent lay in the power to evoke a setting with such clarity that the picture remains in the mind long after the book has been laid aside. One thinks of the white man's club in *Burmese Days*, Gordon Comstock's lodgings in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, the hop-picking sequence in *A Clergyman's Daughter*, the childhood fishing idyll in *Coming Up for Air*: these are described in prose of such vigour that the episodes as a whole come to life in an extraordinary way and animate the novels with
One of the interesting qualities of Orwell’s novels is their circular pattern. The central characters set out to change or escape from the existing situation but at the end revert to their original condition. Or the situation described at the beginning seems to change but it finally remains what it was at the beginning. Thus it can be stated in respect of these characters that in their beginning is their end. Thus in A Clergyman’s Daughter, Dorothy escapes from the stifling life in the rectory to return to it at the end. Flory seems to have a sort of tolerable relief from the dehumanising imperialist regime in the context of his relationship with Elizabeth, but before his marriage with Elizabeth materialised he was pushed back to the original degraded condition and commits suicide at the end. Gordon escapes from the world of money-god to surrender to it again. Bowling escapes from the machine-civilization of London and goes on a trip to Lower Binfield to find the same decay and degeneration of mechanized life of London and returns to London. In Animal Farm, the animals effect a revolution, and change the Manor Farm into Animal Farm which becomes the Manor

69 Hammond, p.40.
Farm again with all its cruelty and injustice. Winston Smith entertains the idea that the Party, Oceania and Big Brother should perish and in the end one finds how things are as they had been. The obvious advantage of this technique is that it has enhanced structural unity of the novels, but its shortcoming is that it has weakened the characters.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Orwell's style is its colloquial or conversational tone that runs consistently in his novels. One finds the effective use of common phrases and the dramatic technique in the novels. From *A Clergyman's Daughter* to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* one can find brilliant dialogues. The conversations range from the informal speeches of tramps and ordinary men to the speeches packed with ideas and arguments as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The dramatic technique employed at the appropriate stages of narration has added to the realistic strain in the novels. In *Coming Up for Air*, it is the device of dramatic monologue that adds to the realistic strain and the structure of the novel.

Orwell is a distinguished novelist and his style is unique for the reason that he is a novelist of ideas. His position as a novelist and writer of ideas consists in his analyses of social, political and cultural crises of his
period. His criticisms of the injustice of class distinctions and exploitations, economic injustice, the Socialist leaders, machine-civilization, imperialist oppression and his espousal of Socialism as a remedy against social and economic evils are embodied in his novels and books. A Clergyman's Daughter denounces poverty; Burmese Days exposes injustice and brutal repression of imperialism; Coming Up for Air decries machine-civilization; Animal Farm demolishes the Socialist facade of the Stalin regime; Nineteen Eighty-Four presents a profound critique of totalitarianism.

As a novel of pure ideas Nineteen Eighty-Four deserves a special study. The varied and profound experiences, and the clear and consistent thinking and reflections of the entire life-time of Orwell, the ideas he developed in his books, essays, reviews and columns find their fusion into one whole in the form of Nineteen Eighty-Four. Thus Nineteen Eighty-Four, the last novel of Orwell becomes a play of ideas, bringing its author world wide fame as a political thinker and also as a novelist. The novel presents analyses of man-woman relationship, parent-child relationship, propaganda of lies, polity, party politics, international politics, economy, class structure in society, the subject of war, power mania,
language, literature, culture etc., within the context of the imaginatively projected totalitarian regime. It is because of his quality as a novelist of pure ideas that Orwell remains one of the great novelists.

Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four are Orwell's two masterpieces which established his stature as a great writer. In these two works he succeeded in fulfilling his goal of fusing aesthetic and political purpose. These are the products of a mature novelist. But they exhibit two different forms: Animal Farm is a fable or 'a fairy story', and Nineteen Eighty-Four is the modification of the realistic novel to suit the writer's imaginative projection. Animal Farm shows Orwell's triumph as a storyteller, and also his achievement in merging artistic and political purpose in a convincing model or form. It can be read as children's story in the manner of Swift's Gulliver's Travels. At the same time no sensible reader will fail to understand that it is written to demolish the myth of the Stalin regime in the former Soviet Union as a Socialist State. Thus an apparently simple story becomes a great political allegory dealing with a profound political truth that denial of liberty will lead to the defeat of the revolutionary ideal of equality itself. Meyers points out:
"But Orwell's book belongs with Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), Gide's *Return From the U.S.S.R.* (1937) and Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1941), three prescient attacks on the Stalinist regime; and it anticipates post-war denunciations like Crossman's *The God That Failed* (1949) and Djilas' *The New Class* (1957)."70

John Strachey considers *Animal Farm* as Orwell's masterpiece, and holds it to be superior to Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* which he calls a reportage. Tom Hopkinson associates it with *Darkness at Noon* and observes that these are the two works before which 'the critic abdicates'. Bertrand Russell remarks that Orwell will be remembered for his political writings and especially *Animal Farm*.

*Animal Farm* is a great artistic work. Its story is told in a racy style. It has a tightly knit plot. It shows the descriptive power of Orwell's style at its best. The Manor Farm is changed into the Animal Farm by a revolution carried out by animals to become the Manor Farm again. Thus it has an astonishing structural unity. The human master was cruel, but then the pig master was no less cruel than the human master.

70 Meyers, p.131.
Boxer who was told by Old Major that in his old age he would be sent to the Knacker under the human master was any way sent to the knacker under the pig master. In the last scene of the banquet the members of the human delegation from the neighbouring farm and the pig masters booze heavily and are shouting at each other. The other innocent exploited animals peep through the window of the farm hall, and they were unable to make out who were human beings and who were pigs. Thus it becomes a superb work of art: "There is no looseness anywhere in the structure. The story is rounded, the end joining the beginning. The opening speech of the old boar, Major, is answered at the end in the words of Mr. Pilkington and Napoleon. The various levels of satire are similarly rounded, so that the story and all its implications form circles each in its own plane." 71

Nineteen Eighty-Four, the last novel of Orwell is an imaginative projection of a post-totalitarian regime. It has a story, but it is a story more of ideas than of the personae. Winston Smith, the central character, Julia, his lover, and O'Brien, the wielder of power and the rest of the characters

71 Brander, p.172.
come as media for expressing ideas. The story and the
personae appear as means to project the unspeakable terror,
oppression, and perversion of culture in the oligarchical
collectivist regime of Oceania. Nineteen Eighty-Four is a
manifestation of the post-totalitarian ideology, i.e.,
oligarchic collectivism. It gains its supreme structural
unity by the play of ideas, and becomes a great book of
political thoughts and also art. "The Theory and Practice of
Oligarchical Collectivism" appearing in the middle of the
narration does not seem to be out of the context; "The
Principles of Newspeak" appearing as appendix is also a part
of this profound critique of totalitarianism.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is a masterpiece of political
speculation based on the political conditions of Orwell's
time. As Orwell himself clarifies the society he describes
could arrive and he does not mean that it will arrive:

'Nineteen Eighty-Four' is a profound, terrifying, and wholly
fascinating book. It is a fantasy of the political future,
and, like any such fantasy, serves its author as a magnifying
device for an examination of the present."72 Meyers observes

72 Lionel Trilling, "Orwell on the Future" in T.C.I.
1984, ed. Hynes, p.25.
His expression of the political experience of an entire generation gives 1984 a veritably mythic power and makes it one of the most influential books of the age,... As Harold Rosenberg states, 'The tone of the post-war imagination was set by Orwell's 1984: since the appearance of the work, (the theme of) the dehumanized collective haunts our thoughts.' Orwell's unique contribution to English literature is a passionate commitment, a radical sincerity and an ethic of responsibility that ultimately transcends his defeated heroes."73

Down and Out in Paris and London, The Road to Wigan Pier, and Homage to Catalonia, the three documentaries of Orwell show a distinct phase of his development as a writer in 1930s. The movement of development of Orwell as a writer is very clear from Down and Out to Homage: "In his non-fictional works, however, those book-length essays sometimes called 'documentaries' - Down and Out in Paris and London The Road to Wigan Pier, Homage to Catalonia - Orwell could exploit the method employed by many realistic novelists he admired; he found the extraordinary in the ordinary."74

73 Meayers, p. 154.
74 Wykes, p. 5.
Orwell's first book contains the story of the social outcasts and the hotel workers. The workers in hotels who remain unemployed at intervals whenever they are sacked, the tramps, beggars and the lowest of the low are depicted in an extraordinary fashion.

*Down and Out* includes two parts - the first part deals with the life of poor, unemployed and eccentric people in Paris slums, Orwell's experiences as a *plongeur* and other hotel workers; the second part deals with his experiences as a tramp and the life of other tramps and beggars. In the first part it is the life of the workers in the underground kitchen of restaurants or hotels, and in the second part it is the life of the people who have hit the bottom of poverty. In short it is the life of the people of abyss. In both parts at first the misery and squalor are stated and then finally there is reflection on these evils followed by suggestions for removing misery and squalor. This pattern and the persona of Orwell lead to the unity of structure.

*Down and Out* exhibits the descriptive power of Orwell's style. The descriptions of a typical Paris slum, Hotel X where Orwell worked as a *plongeur*, the spike or casual ward, the common lodging house etc. are very picturesque. The
description of the underground kitchen of the Hotel X shows the photographic quality of Orwell's style: "He led me down a winding staircase into a narrow passage, deep underground, and so low that I had to stoop in places. It was stifflingly hot and very dark, with only dim yellow bulbs several yards apart. There seemed to be miles of dark labyrinthine passages - actually, I suppose, a few hundred yards in all - that reminded one queerly of the lower decks of a liner; there were the same heat and cramped space and warm reek of food, and a humming, whirring noise (it came from the kitchen furnaces) just like the whir of engines." 75

There is lively characterisation. The character sketch of Charley, Boris, Paddy and even Bozo is admirable. In this context Hynes observes:

The heroes who are missing from the novels appear in the documentary books - active, admired sometimes larger than life. They are men like the coal miners in The Road to Wigan Pier whose demonic underworld lives Orwell seems to envy even while he deplores their working conditions, the Spanish militamen in Homage to Catalonia, and the shrewd, independent-

75 Down and Out, p.54.
minded tramps of Down and Out in Paris and London. Most of them are from the working class, but Orwell does not treat them as representatives of a class, in a strict political sense, but as possessors of a kind of natural energy that comes from sources outside man's social existence. They are Orwell's essential men, and they are the centre of what hope he had for mankind. Their collective energies flow through these books and give them a vitality that the novels do not have.76

The Road to Wigan Pier is written in two parts - the first part describes the conditions of work of the coal miners, the unemployed miners and the squalor of the industrial towns; the second part explains how Orwell became a Socialist, and the criticism of Socialist leaders of England of his time. The book like the other two documentaries depicts his journey to the industrial towns and also his journey as a Socialist, and thus runs like a picaresque novel. The later part of the book is an expose of the wrong interpretation and propagation of Socialism by the middle-class Socialists.

76 Hynes, p.9.
two parts of the book seem to be independent of one another spoiling the structural unity. But the persona of Orwell acts as a unifying element of the book.

_Homage to Catalonia_ is the most unified of the documentaries. It gives an honest, truthful and personal account of the Spanish Civil War. The writing of _Homage_ was a challenging task since the truth about what happened in Spain was distorted by the campaigns of lies and the truth needed to be written in a factual way offering Orwell limited scope to write imaginatively. However he admits that this clearly political book was written with detachment and regard for form. It is his honesty and courage in joining the POUM' to fight against the Fascists which bring authenticity, credibility and strength to this book. In this book Orwell is the principal character, a revolutionary militiaman fighting for decency as well as writer.

_Homage_ is a very interesting book from many angles. One can read it as a war memoir, as a penetrating autobiography with deep political insights, or as a realistic novel. It can be seen as a book of a travel by which the traveller gets valuable experiences and education. In _Homage_ Orwell is an actor, victim, student, observer, analyser, judge and finally
writer. Orwell joining the POUM to fight for decency as he saw in Barcelona, his participation in the war-operations on the Aragon and Huesca fronts, his return from the Aragon front and involvement in the Barcelona fight, his experience of the vile and malicious campaigns of the Communist Party of Spain, his observation of the change of Barcelona's revolutionary atmosphere, the return to the front to be wounded, the last stage of his involvement in Spain and his escape from Spain avoiding the arrest are all unfolding in an impressive and brisk style.

_Homage_ shows how Orwell realised that the Spanish Civil War was a political war; it was a rehearsal for the devastating Second World War since the Fascists, the Nazis, the Soviet Communists and the Capitalists did play their role in it overtly or covertly. The Spanish Civil War demonstrated to Orwell that the Soviet Communism was not Socialism, and that the Soviet Communists were no better than the German Nazis in respect of suppression of the liberty of the individual and equality. Spain revealed to Orwell the similarities between Nazism and Communism. As Orwell returned to Barcelona he found that the revolutionary ideas of decency, equality and brotherhood had vanished, and the city
had reverted to the pre-revolutionary capitalist atmosphere:

"When I first reached Barcelona I had thought it a town where class distinctions and great differences of wealth hardly existed.... Now things were returning to normal. The smart restaurants and hotels were full of rich people wolfing expensive meals, while for the working-class population food-prices had jumped enormously without any corresponding rise in wages."77 Thus Homage is a profound tragedy.

In Homage there appears the technique of contrast employed effectively. There is the contrast between the revolutionary and decent Barcelona that Orwell saw at the beginning and the pre-revolutionary bourgeois society to which Barcelona, indeed, Spain had reverted. This is a major contrast, the contrast between the revolutionary ideal and the political reality. There are contrasts implicit or explicit between the revolutionary war and politics, between high idealism and complete disappointment, between fact and fiction, between truth and lies. The Italian militiaman appearing at the beginning of the book becomes a symbol of decency for which a revolutionary war was being fought. There is a bright hopeful situation at the beginning, but it ends in

77 Homage, p.110.
gloom. From this emerges Orwell's enlightenment and also an effective pattern of exposition.

The essays of Orwell have added new dimensions to his literary career. He wrote essays voluminously. Some of his essay are famous, and many of them are brilliant both in content and style. Anything under the sun can be the subject of an essay, and Orwell's essays deal with many things under the sun. His essays cover not only the historic subjects of the rise of Fascism, Nazism, Stalinism, the depression, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, post-war reconstructions and the nuclear war, but also other interesting and sometimes bizarre subjects. Thus there are his essays on hop-picking, the spike, common lodging house, clink, twopenny weeklies, comic post-cards, the common toad, English cooking, directions for making a cup of tea, murders etc.

Orwell published four volumes of essays: Inside the Whale (1940), The Lion and the Unicorn (1941), Critical Essays (1946) and The English People (1947). Four other volumes of his essays, Shooting an Elephant (1950), England Your England (1953), Such, Such Were the Joys (1953) and The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell (1968) were
published posthumously. Hammond traces the development of Orwell as a major essayist in English: "Orwell's career as an essayist began with the publication of 'A Farthing Newspaper' in 1928 and ended with 'Reflections on Gandhi' almost exactly twenty years later.... In all he wrote some 100 essays, 70 book reviews and 72 contributions to 'As I Please' in Tribune. In the process his style matured from the diffident (but still recognisably Orwellian) tone of the early essays to the polished, self-assured, incisive manner which has made his name a hallmark for all that is finest in modern English letters." 78

Orwell's essays defy classification since they are amazingly varied, and since the autobiographical, political, sociological and cultural matters are mixed up in the essays. However for the sake of a convenient study his essays can be classified into autobiographical, literary, sociological, political and cultural essays. As in the novels and the documentaries, in the essays also the autobiographical 'I' occurs as an impartial and objective observer. The 'I' is dominant in the autobiographical essays, and it takes a

78 Hammond, p.187.
subdued role in other essays. The central themes of poverty, justice and liberty which run through his novels and documentaries flow in the essays also. These central themes are the unifying elements in the essays. The representative essays belonging to the five broad groups of essays can be studied on selective basis in order to understand the features of Orwell's essays.

While studying Orwell's essays, it is natural to start with his autobiographical essays. "Shooting an Elephant", "How the Poor Die", "Such, Such Were the Joys", are the famous autobiographical essays. There are other interesting autobiographical essays like "Why I Write", "Bookshop Memories", "Marrakech", "Confessions of a Book Reviewer" etc. The essays "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging" are based on Orwell's experiences as an imperial police officer in Burma. "Shooting an Elephant" is a memorable personal essay which throws light on the decadent British Empire with its oppressive and destructive impact both on the natives and the members of the imperial administrative machinery in the colonies. The essay opens in a highly personal and absorbing style: "In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people - the only time in my life that I have been
important enough for this to happen to me." The opening creates a suspense as to why the writer was hated by large numbers of people. The essay proceeds to explain why the writer was hated and the realisation by the writer that the British Raj was a tyranny. It explains how the writer was forced to shoot an elephant that had ravaged the bazaar and killed a coolie. The elephant had become calm and harmless after the attack of "must" had passed off. But the crowd of two thousand Burmans expected Orwell to act the role of 'Sahib' and shoot the elephant though he did not want to shoot the elephant. He realised how he had become a puppet in the situation. The victimiser had become a victim. The actor was acted upon. Forced to shoot the elephant Orwell shot down the elephant and the essay ends with the sentence: "I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool."^\textsuperscript{80}

The essay reveals the penetrating descriptive power of Orwell. The shooting at the elephant and the collapse of the elephant on the ground with a crash is described in a graphic way:

\textsuperscript{79} CEJL, I, 235. 
\textsuperscript{80} CEJL, I, 242.
In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time - it might have been five seconds, I dare say - he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upwards like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a
tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time.
And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a
crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I
lay.81

The description is as though a painter would have drawn the
picture of the collapsing position of the elephant with the
deft strokes of his brush. The narration is minute and
picturesque.

"A Hanging" is a very short essay which begins in an
impressive narrative style. The mentioning of 'a sodden
morning of the rains', 'a sicky light' coming down 'like
yellow tinfoil', the small animal-cage-like cells in which
there were condemned men due to be hanged within the next week
or two create an atmosphere of all pervading gloom and
oppression. The gloom momentarily ceases to be overwhelming
when the essay ends with an absurd cheerful note generated by
the sense of relief after the prisoner was hanged and the
dirty job was over: "We all began laughing again. At that
moment Francis's anecdote seemed extraordinarily funny. We
all had a drink together, native and European alike, quite

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81 CEJL, I, 241.
amicably. The dead man was a hundred yards away. "82 The subject of this humane essay exposing the perversion of justice itself is the unjust taking away of a life. And why? The answer is obvious 'it is for maintaining the tyrannical imperialist rule'. The central idea of condemnation of the sentence of death is restated by Orwell in Wigan when he declares that the worst criminal is morally superior to a hanging judge.

Orwell is a master of narrative style. He heaps details upon details to bring out the squalor of the hospital in which he was an inmate for several weeks. He describes the terrible conditions and agonies of the dying patients. He explains the dirt and filth in the hospital, and the impersonal handling of the patients as specimens by the doctors. The squalor, the debasing and dehumanising conditions of dying in the hospital provoke Orwell to question the meaning of 'natural' death: "One wants to live, of course, indeed one only stays alive by virtue of the fear of death, but I think now, as I thought then, that it's better to die violently and not too old. People talk about the horrors of war, but what weapon has man

82 Decline, p.19.
invented that even approaches in cruelty some of the commoner
diseases? 'Natural' death, almost by definition, means
something slow, smelly and painful."\(^83\)

"Such, Such Were the Joys" is the longest personal essay
organised into six parts dealing with his experiences at
St.Cyprian's, the preparatory school. The first part deals
with the humiliation and the overwhelming sense of guilt of
the bed-wetting episode; the second part depicts St.Cyprian's
as an expensive and snobbish school where Orwell was insulted
as a boy taken at reduced fees, and rich boys were favoured;
the third part describes some good memories of expeditions,
games etc., and the bad memories of dirt and filth; the fourth
part deals with the episode of homosexuality; the fifth
explains the contradictory religious, moral, social and
intellectual codes presented to the boys at the school; the
sixth part offers a comparison between the educational
atmosphere when Orwell was at St.Cyprian's and long after he
left the school. This autobiographical essay has a neat
pattern and exhibits the mature style of Orwell. The style of
vivid, conversational, descriptive realism that Orwell had

\(^{83}\) Ibid., p.38.
developed in Homage is present in this essay. Alldritt Keith points out: "There is no other piece, I think, which demonstrates more clearly or more succinctly the fundamental uncertainties in his mind, nor is there any other piece which better shows how his fragmented view of experience conditioned his manner with the essay. The craft of the essay, misunderstood in "A Hanging" but in "Shooting an Elephant" already maturing, is in "Such, Such Were the Joys" at the highest point to which Orwell was able to develop it. The Orwellian form is here fully achieved."

Orwell wrote essays on Charles Dickens, George Gissing, Arthur Koestler, Rudyard Kipling, Swift, Wells, Wodehouse, Henry Miller, and the related literary essays, "In Defence of the Novel", "The Rediscovery of Europe", "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool" etc. These essays show Orwell's position as a literary critic. One finds how Orwell's literary essays are not confined to literary criticism. He introduces sociological, political and cultural criteria in his literary criticism. The critical essay on Charles Dickens is the longest of Orwell's essays. It is organised into six parts.

and analyses the attitudes of Dickens towards society, class, revolution, childhood, money, poverty, nationalism, mechanization, sex, comedy, morality etc. Orwell analyses the works of Dickens from the social, political, cultural and also literary angles. The essay exhibits a vigorous and fresh approach to the study of Dickens and his works. The last sentence brilliantly points out the essential literary stature of Dickens: "He is laughing, with a touch of anger in his laughter, but no triumph, no malignity. It is the face of a man who is always fighting against something, but who fights in the open and is not frightened, the face of a man who is generously angry - in other words, of a nineteenth century liberal, a free intelligence, a type hated with equal hatred by all the smelly little orthodoxies which are now contending for our souls."\textsuperscript{85}

Orwell was influenced by Swift as he was by Dickens. He admired \textit{Gulliver's Travels} but criticised the dark misanthropic vision of Swift in his essay, "Politics Vs. Literature: An Examination of \textit{Gulliver's Travels}." He finds similarities between Swift and Tolstoy, and points out that

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Decline}, pp.140-41.
both of them exhibit their inability to believe that ordinary life is worth living, their anarchistic outlook covering an authoritarian caste of mind, their hostility to science, their impatience with opponents and their abhorrence and morbid fascination towards sex. Orwell observes: "Such people are not likely to enjoy even the small amount of happiness that falls to most human beings, and, from obvious motives, are not likely to admit that earthly life is capable of much improvement. Their incuriosity, and hence their intolerance spring from the same root". 86 Orwell also shows the greatness of Swift: "Swift did not possess ordinary wisdom, but he did possess a terrible intensity of vision, capable of picking out a single hidden truth and then magnifying it and distorting it. The durability of Gulliver's Travels goes to show that, if the force of belief is behind it, a world-view which only just passes the test of sanity is sufficient to produce a great work of art." 87

"Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool" is another remarkable literary essay, which deals with Tolstoy's pamphlet on Shakespeare, in which Tolstoy attacked Shakespeare as an

86 CEJL, IV, 217.
87 CEJL, IV, 223.
immoral and unrealistic dramatist. Orwell points out how Tolstoy first criticised the plot of Shakespeare's King Lear's as stupid, verbose, unnatural, unintelligible, bombastic, vulgar, tedious and full of incredible events and other faults both moral and aesthetic. Then Tolstoy proceeds to attack Shakespeare as lacking power to delineate characters and also as lacking a consistent vision of life. Orwell points out that the criticisms of Tolstoy raise the problem as to how Shakespeare is still so generally admired. Orwell exposes the fallacies and malicious nature of Tolstoy's attack on Shakespeare. He points out the merits of King Lear and asserts that about a dozen of Shakespeare's plays have a meaning and even a moral. And about the great tragedies Orwell observes: "All of these tragedies start out with the humanist assumption that life, although full of sorrow, is worth living, and that Man is a noble animal - a belief which Tolstoy in his old age did not share." The essay has a neat pattern: it enumerates Tolstoy's denunciations against Shakespeare and then exposes their fallacies.

Orwell's essay on Arthur Koestler appreciates Koestler's works as concentration-camp literature. Koestler's works

88 CEJL, IV, 298
are examined from the political perspective. But Orwell observes Koestler had no picture of the future after he rejected Stalinism and later he came to represent hedonism. Orwell points out that *Darkness at Noon* is Koestler's masterpiece in which the effect of the story is not spoiled, but it avoids the central problem of revolution in a subtle way. "Inside the Whale" is another remarkable essay; it appreciates the realistic strain in the novels of Henry Miller; it gives a picture of the contemporary English literary scene and the varying emphases on technique or aesthetic motivation given by the old and new generations of writers; it shows how Miller was a novelist without any political commitment.

Orwell is a highly individualistic literary critic who contributed his own ideas to the polemic on the content and form, or the message and aesthetic pleasure in literature. He admires James Joyce, but observes that Joyce is obsessed with technique. His broadcast talks, "The Frontiers of Art and Propaganda" and "The Rediscovery of Europe" and his essay "Why I Write" clarify his position as a writer. He could not avoid being a political writer in a political age in which he lived. His goal was to fuse the political motivation and aesthetic
motivation into his artistic creation. He succeeded in this endeavor as is evident in *Homage*, *Animal Farm*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and his great essays. Orwell's contribution to literary criticism is considerable.

The sociological, political and cultural essays do not need elaborate treatment since I have dealt with them in the previous studies related to Orwell's outlook on society, politics and culture. These essays have poverty, oppression, decency, justice, liberty as their central themes and are written in the familiar Orwellian style. In many of his essays one finds the statement of simple facts of a situation or his own experience followed by explanation, reasoning and suggestions or conclusion. Generally speaking compassion for the oppressed and the zeal for the sanctity of the individual against totalitarianism run through these essays. One finds Orwell's style characterised by clarity, vividness and freshness in these essays. Orwell is a major essayist.

The study of the Orwellian style of writing shows how he was preoccupied with the accurate use of language. His essays, "New Words", "The English People" and "Politics and the English Language", and the appendix, "The Principles of Newspeak" in *Nineteen Eighty Four* treat the matters and
problems related to the use of the English language. In New Words Orwell pleads for the invention of new words since he observes that the English language is 'practically useless for describing anything that goes on inside the brain'. In his essay, "The English People" Orwell writes: "To write or even to speak English is not a science but an art. There are no reliable rules: there is only the general principle that concrete words are better than abstract ones, and that the shortest way of saying anything is always the best."^89

Language, for Orwell, is not merely a medium of communication, not merely a vehicle of feelings, experiences and thoughts in literature, but an irreplaceable indicator of social, political, economic, moral and cultural spheres of life. It is associated with liberty, truth and all great ideals of life. "The Principles of Newspeak" shows how language is distorted to suit the demands of the totalitarian regime. The Newspeak, the official language of Oceania is a perversion of language to make all modes of thoughts impossible. The vocabulary is cut down and the meanings of words are twisted to tell lies. Orwell found in his own time

^89 CEJL, IV, 26.
how the political parties distorted language to camouflage reality. Therefore Orwell emphasises that the use of language without any perversion is necessary to ensure freedom and all other great ideals of life. He had been a careful student of language. One finds him trying to tackle the problem of the misuse of language in one of his "As I Please" columns in the Tribune: "... I pronounce sentence of death on the following words and expressions:

Achilles' heel, jackboot, hydra-headed, ride roughshod over, stab in the back, petty-bourgeois, stinking corpse, liquidate, iron heel, blood-stained oppressor, cynical betrayal, lackey, flunkey, mad dog, jackal, hyena, bloodbath."90

"Politics and the English Language" offers a more elaborate treatment of the careless use and also deliberate perversion of language, and the suggestions for reforming it. Orwell opines that the decline of language has ultimately political and economic causes: "Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take

90 CEJL, III, 108-09.
the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not exclusive concern of professional writers."\(^{91}\) He emphasises that the bad habits like the use of dying metaphors, operators or verbal false limbs, pretentious diction and meaningless words should be avoided in prose construction: "A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?"\(^{92}\) Orwell sees a close link between language and thought: "But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought."\(^{93}\) He is for a meticulous use of language to express truth or reality. He is one of the masters of English prose, and his prose is 'like a window pane', at once lucid, concrete, incisive and fresh. One finds this style of prose in his essays, novels,

\(^{91}\) CEJL. IV, 128.
\(^{92}\) Ibid., 135.
\(^{93}\) Ibid., 137.
documentaries and journalistic writings.

The study of Orwell's documentaries, novels, essays, "As I Please" columns and other journalistic writings show how he is not merely one of the major English writers, but also a writer of world stature. Wherever the civilizational crisis generated by the violent clash of ideologies and the Second World War is brought up for discussion Orwell's name and ideas are sure to find a place. Whenever Fascism, Nazism or totalitarianism is the subject of debate his views are bound to be mentioned. He is a renowned writer of documentaries, a famous writer of fiction, a great novelist of ideas and a well known essayist. He considered writing both as an art and a medium for conveying a message. His style derives strength and validity from his commitment to defend decency and liberty. He knew what he wanted to say; he knew how to say it. In his case ideas and experiences choose words and expressions. His greatness as a writer lies in his success in fusing the political realities and aesthetic motivation into artistic works. His style is ordinary and also extraordinary, flexible and also tight, precise and also suggestive, negative and also positive. His satirical style is obvious in Animal Farm, and in this context he stands comparison with Swift, and
does not come out inferior. He is one of the great satirists and an undercurrent of satire flows in his works. His style is humane, compassionate and represents the yearnings for a free and responsible individual. It is the distinct Orwellian style. He did not belong to any school of art or literature, nor founded one himself. From his works Orwell emerges as a unique literary artist, in fact, as a radical individualist in literature.