

C H A P T E R - I I I

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

In English Literature we find great positive and negative utopias. First of all More's Utopia (1516) was published and it gave the genre its name. In 1651 Hobbes's negative political utopia Leviathan was published and after few years in 1656 James Harrington was published Oceana. It was a positive answer to Hobbes. Negative or non-ideal utopias have been popular since Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726). Afterwards we find few notable utopias as Butler's Erewhon (1872), Wells' The Shape of Things to Come (1933) and A Modern Utopia (1905), Huxley's Brave New World (1932). The most realistic and most frightening of modern utopias is George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-four (1949). For this work and for his fairy tale Animal Farm (1945), Orwell became more popular in the field of literature and readers.

George Orwell was a novelist of ideas like Wells. His teaching was also too explicit to be easily contained in fictional form like Wells. In many ways his essays were more satisfactory expressions of a mind trying to grasp the horrors of the times through which he lived. We find certain elements in Orwell from other writers such as Cobbett's sharp eye for social distress, George Borrow's wanderlust and experience of the company of people living on the fringes of society, Gissing's insight into Britain's class structure and Wells's troubled vision of the future. He very closely watched the growth of fascism in Europe during the 1930's. But he differed from other writers of the time in not allying himself with any political party. He was just as

sceptical about communism as he was about fascism. He fought in the Spanish Civil War and saw a communist government being just as authoritarian as the fascists. During the period of Second World War he didnot fly to America as Auden, Isherwood and Huxley. He experienced that war in London. His response to events was a highly, individual, lonely and honest one. If he gave way to pessimism, it was not without cause.

Generally Orwell's novels are autobiographies. His Burmese Days is an authentic record of a socialist's experience of colonialism. Keep the Aspidistra Flying is a satire on the English middle class. Coming Up for Air is an amusing portrait of England before the First World War. His post Second World War political fiction has had a much deeper influence on contemporary thinking. Animal Farm reads like a children's story. It is set on an English farm on which the animals have all the sensitivity of humans. They take over the farm from the drunken Mr. Jones, and work and share according to the principles of Old Major. But this ideal state begins to break down when the two leaders, the pigs Snowball and Napoleon quarrel over policy. Napoleon gains the upper hand and Snowball is expelled. All the other animals are kept at their work by leader pigs and specially trained dogs. The animals have exchanged one kind of tyranny for another.

Nineteen Eighty Four is another study in tyranny. In its

more fearsome aspects Stalin's Russia has been translated to Britain. Big Brother rules and watches over every action, every thought, even of his subjects. The party is in full control, history has been rewritten. The language has been simplified and the masses are kept down by being kept amused. Winston Smith, a party worker tries to break out with horrible consequences. It is a great science fiction but it doesn't altogether persuade.

'It is not the violence in Nineteen Eighty Four that is the book's most alarming feature and that's why it is so hard to forget, but the control of the mind through the control of history.'¹ In Orwell's Oceania men are manipulated through the manipulation of facts and of the past-although an atmosphere of constant warfare and continual threat is a necessary environment for this manipulation.

Orwell was using directly the knowledge of methods in Nazi Germany. It is full knowledge of which only emerged after the war is obvious. But he was also aware that propaganda in wartime Britain was not essentially different in method from nazi propaganda. In Oceania we find there is a state of crisis which is used as a weapon to get people to do what is wanted to submit to power. They are persuaded that their own individual interests are identical with the national interest. Exactly the same thing was happening in wartime Britain. Individuals were encouraged to believe that their particular effort, their particular sacrifice

would help to win the war. In a crisis situation things can be asked of people which normally they would find intolerable. Britain won the war but Orwell felt that the dangers of such a process must not be ignored. In Nineteen Eighty-Four he shows ordinary people submitting to an appalling life unquestioningly. Orwell is saying that it could happen in Britain, and that the results would be disastrous.²

Here we find that the descriptions of Nineteen Eighty Four usually concentrate on Orwell's vision of totalitarian power. It is very important to note that he saw and experienced wartime Britain with emergency powers and a coalition government with no opposition. Here he finds the seed of such power. The mechanism of democracy was interfered with. The formidable consequences of such interference had occurred in Germany, in Russia, in Spain, in Portugal, but the possibility was everywhere. To Orwell it seemed a very real possibility and all his writing in those last years of his life has an urgency which may seem to us after fifty years. The cold war has taken place. Atomic weapons are under international control. We are more alert to the flaws in the democratic machinery, affluence has made the decay of Oceania seem an unlikely eventuality for eight years from now. But Orwell's urgency was authentic and deeply felt, and the quality of his unelaborate prose convinces us of that. Brave New World is more relaxed and satiric. It lacks this urgency and it described a very distant future.

Orwell is worried about the power of totalitarian control, its methods and its effects, but not about the responsibilities of science. The technology of Oceania is no more sophisticated than that which existed in 1948. In terms of the science fiction it is crude. We find here the life is not easier. Infact many basic technological aids do not work properly. In Oceania all the technological skill is used to create the atmosphere of war because it is essential for Big Brother to maintain power. Orwell sees the dangerous potential of science only in terms of overt power. On the contrary Huxley saw that the subtle influences in life as the germs of the control of humanity in the future.. The explanation for the difference lies partly in the difference between 1930 and 1948. For Orwell in 1948 the overwhelming fact of existence was the terrible success of totalitarian power which Hitler's defeat could not wipe out. According to Huxley eighteen years earlier it was the lack of spiritual and moral values in a society shake by its inability to cope with harsh realities and increasingly dominated by technology. The concerns of the two writers are similar for the quality of life, for human decency, for creativity. It was their identification of the causes of the destruction of what they valued that was inevitably different.

Orwell used the word progress with the greatest suspicion. According to him progress could be symbolized negatively by the atom bomb. And technologically it means destruction. Here we find that Orwell's instincts led him to

something like Morris's anti machine utopia. He found modern technology is distasteful and there is very little curiosity about scientific achievement which always interested Huxley. He knew very less about science and could do than Huxley. Orwell shared the feelings of Huxley as well as he shared the feelings of that generation. He was only ten years younger than Huxley. He was that much young to view the Victorian and Edwardian periods with a nostalgia that Huxley could not share. But we also find his maturity state when he was affected by the First War's shattering of traditional values. The comfortable faith of the Victorians in the interweaving of progress and Christianity backed by moral values for the continuing improvement of all of mankind worth improving could not be recaptured.

Orwell differently operated the destruction of belief. He believed that socialism to be the answer. It is not propagandized by the theorists, but a socialism based on simple equality, community, and a radical relationship with work and the land. He experienced it in Spain during the Civil War. It was most important experience of his life and it should be emphasized as an antidote to the pessimism of Nineteen Eighty Four.

In this novel Orwell's language acutely conveys the possibility of disaster. He depicted a state of mind in gracious manner in novel. Orwell had always aimed for a direct and

unadulterated style. And he used the impressive aspect in the novel is his style. It is totally appropriate for the message. There is one moment when the language can't fulfil the requirement but the failure there arises from the choice of an inadequate symbol of the ultimate personal terror. Orwell used in this novel very simple, plain and state language. There is no strain or exaggeration in it.

'The striking feature of society in Nineteen Eighty Four is uniformity and lack of individualism.'³ In the society individualism is a threat of the State. Non-corporate behaviour cannot be tolerated. People are categorized and within the categories. They wear uniforms and they are uniform. Here we also find party members both men and women wear blue overalls. The only necessary distinction is their identification as Party members.

Orwell and Huxley both were trying their level best to demonstrate the dangers of the destruction of individualism; and they set out to describe what the absence of individualism could actually mean. But they had to find some way of making their characters interesting. Even they constructing a plot in which actions would be meaningful. This tends to be a problem of utopian fiction. If life is perfect and standardized, individual thought and action takes on quite a different relationship to society or the state. It is a problem that has not always been handled successfully, but Orwell and Huxley both solve it in the

same way. They use rebellion as a means both of exposing the society they describe and of generating characters that have an interest beyond the individualistic and with whom the reader can feel some kinds of identification. Orwell is demonstrating human nature defeated and Huxley is demonstrating human nature sterilized. Orwell succeeds better in focusing the reader's sympathy. Huxley's characters are not aware of what they have lost while Orwell's Winston Smith becomes increasingly so. Winston's function is crucial. We never find focus of sympathy here. His character is a link with 1948 and we recognize normal human feeling and human behaviour.

Some readers have felt that Winston is very miserable and so that his role is not that much efficient as it is allotted by George Orwell. He is too weak as a rebel and too unsympathetic to retain our concern. Though this happen here afterall this novel is shatteringly effective. We remember it not for its details. It is particular features of Brave New World that linger in the mind, the test-tube babies, the feelies etc. but for its overall effect. Winston does what the author requires of him. Without him the book would lose its real strength and power.

In Nineteen Eighty Four the uniformity is suggested in the opening pages of the novel. In it the elements are the drab sameness of the environment, the characterless blocks of flats,

the seedy atmosphere suggested by the smell of cabbage and blocked sinks, and humanity itself is just another feature that manages to survive in this dreary territory. Winston's vulnerability, his fear, his frialty, his weakness, his capacity for deceit, all emerge as inevitable in terms of the way he has to live, and at the same time, as a trickle of his individuality seeps through, promises only failure if he should take any measures to counteract conformity.

His first act is momentous.

'The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was ill-legal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp. Winston fitted a nib into the penholder and sucked it to get the grease off. The pen was an archaic instrument, seldom used even for signatures, and he had procured one, furtively and with some difficulty, simply because of a feeling that the beautiful creamy paper deserved to be written on with a real nib instead of being scratched with an ink-pencil. Actually he was not used to writing by hand. Apart from very short notes, it was usual to dictate everything

into the speak-write, which was of course impossible for his present purpose. He dipped the pen into the ink and then faltered for just a second. A tremor had gone through his bowels. To mark the paper was the decisive act.'⁴

Through this passage we get certain crucial points about Winston and the nature of his rebellion. That it should even occur to Winston to keep a diary is significant here. For in Oceania the past is not a question of recorded fact which once set down is permanent, but of constant manipulation and obliterations. History is always in the process of being rewritten, so that for Winston to set down a private record in both quixotic and dangerous. To put down on paper words which are not subject to the scrutiny and alteration of the Party is a political act. To write in a notebook that dates from before Ingsoc with an archaic pen, objects from a past which has been obliterated, is a political act. And the act takes some courage - the consequences of discovery are made clear.

But there is more to Winston and his rebellion than this. His rebellion is at this stage instinctive. Though he understands what might be the effect of his act, he does not understand politics or history. He is aware of the attraction the proles have for him, of his tendency to spend time alone, of the attraction of the beautiful creamy paper of the notebook he bought in a

probe-shop. He knows that his response to these things is dangerous. But he has not related it to anything larger. It is a very small, very personal rebellion and in fact it is never anything more. Orwell would like to tell us that the smallest and most personal of rebellions can damage the fabric of Ingsoc even if it is confined to the individual which is why the party cannot allow the individual any sense that he is acting independently of their dictates.

The Writing in the diary reflects Winston's almost unconscious desire to discover the past. He can only guess at the date. Time doesn't mean anything as it has nothing to relate to either in the past or in the future. Winston tries his level best to bring to the surface dim memories of his mother, his childhood days, what life was like before the revolution. They are not happy memories, they can serve only as images of the past, the nearest he can get to confirmation that the past really existed. This information of Winston's rebellion contains in it all the crucial elements. It is an anti-social act, for it is an expression of individuality. It is a historical act because of it seeks to discover the past. And it is a sensual act because of the pleasure that the pen and notebook can provide. The remaining part of the novel extends and substantiates these elements of his rebellion until the moment of his arrest, when the promise of defeat, which we are never allowed to forget is fulfilled.

Winston's frailty is emphasized at the outset. He is small, his body meagre, a varicose ulcer on his ankle, he is only of thirty nine, he has to take the stairs slowly with frequent rests. The contrast with the enormous face on the poster we come to know immediately. The contrast is extended. O'Brien is a solid, well built man. Julia is healthy and atheletic. Even as Winston's rebellion is developing, his physical inadequacy is always in evidence, and the increased physical well-being which his affair with Julia brings only an ironic preparation for his final defeat.

In the first part of the novel we find establishment of Winston's lack of adjustment to the demands of Ingsoc. At the same time demonstrates the power which has led down over him by the Party. It is not just the paraphernalia of telescreens and thought police that exercise that power, but something much deeper and more dangerous. It is a psychological power through which Winston induce to participate in the Two Minutes Hate with every fibre of his being in spite of his resistance to it.

In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid

joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretence was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic.

With this kind of power, the power to manipulate the worst in human nature the party is surely undefeatable except by an equally violent force. Orwell accepted only reluctantly and after a period of pacifism the necessity to counter Fascism by force and in Nineteen Eighty Four he is exploring some of the implications of this. In Oceania we can see the process of violence breeding violence. In one incident Part II, when he is prevented from sitting next to Julia in the canteen, Winston imagines himself smashing to a pick-axe right into the middle of the face of the man responsible. It is not only under the influence of the Two Minutes Hate that images of violence dominate his mind. He has been infected by the Party ethic and primed to accept O'Brien's ultimate justification of power inspite of the fact that he is trying so hard to rediscover his humanity.

Winston's attempt to do this ripples out from the moment when he first sets pen to paper. He wanders alone in the prole districts and in the savouring of the dirt and the squalor finds

a quality of human life that is both attractive and abhorrent. The life of the proles is dirty and repulsive, but they have freedom which is unthinkable for Party members. There are no telescreens. Winston catches a whiff of real coffee. In the junk shop are real, tangible objects that date from pre-revolution days. His interest in these things is dangerous. Even walking on his own is an anti-social act, although to have shared his walks with one other person would have been even worse. A meaningful personal relationship which is not dominated by the Party is criminal. That's why it is a taste for solitude, ownlife in Newspeak, which could indicate dangerous individualism. Winston commits both these crimes, and with their commitment becomes conscious that they constitute a political act.

The consciousness presented here is important everywhere. Without consciousness his rebellion would be of little importance as Julia's. Julia's crime is that her frank sexuality is unpermissible but she sees her rebellion in personal terms; and she sees the Party's authority only in terms of how it restricts her wants. Winston's awareness is crucial because it articulates and individualizes his rebellion. In a sense it is the thinking that counts more than the doing as the existence of the Thought Police might suggest. Winston is first who attracted towards exposing his thoughts then he is cured of them. Afterwards he has been acting rebelliously the Party has known for a long time. He is arrested when he knows that he is thinking rebelliously and with

deliberate purpose. He is taught how to think right in Party terms and therein lies his defeat and the terrible pessimism of the novel.

Winston's self awareness, through which he can exercise individuality. His individuality intensifies from the point when he begins his diary and is seeking a context for revolt. Julia is a catalyst rather than a fellow conspirator. As they make cautious arrangements to come together Winston's capacity for intense feeling and excitement grows, and he discovers himself capable of a new dimension of response.

'His whole mind and body seemed to be afflicted with an unbearable sensitivity, a sort of transparency, which made every movement, every sound, every contact, every word that he had to speak or listen to, an agony. Even in sleep he could not altogether escape from her image.'⁵

(Part Two, I)

Through this Winston is able to feel like this is important, for it is his strength, a demonstration of human susceptibilities. That he can feel and that he can worry about another human being, he can experience sexual desire all these are plus points in his function as a link between Oceania and normality, Oceania and the present, our present and 1948. His defeat may be implicit

in the opening of the novel but he is not yet defeated. But here we find that ironically his capacity for thought and experience reinforces the certainty that the worst can happen to him. The value of his rebellion, the value of his relationship with Julia and his brief enactment of independence, will be wiped out of his mind. He will be left with nothing. He is not politically fails here but he loses every vestige of his personality that contained humanity. Due to this capacity we find his downfall.

The relationship with Julia is not at all satisfactory. Response from both sides is hardly find. He needs her but politically she can be of no use to him. Julia has no interest in political affairs. She is acute in her understanding of the ways of the Party and she realises why her sexuality cannot be tolerated. She wants to escape the power of the Party, not attack it. Her relationship with Winston is almost entirely sexual. That is also important as the love making scenes in the dream land of the countryside and the womb like interior of the room above the junk shop emphasize, it is not enough. Escape or private satisfaction is not enough. Winston's recognition of this gets him nowhere. It contains a kind of heroism. At the end of the novel he has been forced to deny the values of heroism. We have to see Winston's rebellion as an end in itself as a significant human gesture. It is not just as possible means doomed to failure in the pursuit of ends.

Nineteen Eighty Four is an existentialist text. We must

aware of its way though it is based on pessimistic reaction to political reality. Here Orwell depicted the worth of Winston's rebellion. He fills out the relationship between Winston and Julia, the centre of the rebellion by introducing elements that he himself considered genuine and real. The thrush and its song, the sunlight, the bluebells are suggestive presences during their first meeting in the country, and allow us to forget the threat and the possibility of hidden microphones amongst the natural beauties of the countryside. But Orwell uses here not only aspects of nature but other ways of life. Julia brings with her real chocolate. Later in Mr. Charrington's room, they drink real coffee with real sugar; and eat real bread with real jam. Orwell found the whole idea of the synthetic deeply offensive. There is a memorable scene in Coming Up For Air (1939) when George Bowling bites into a synthetic sausage and is overcome with disgust. For Orwell the synthetic was a sign of moral deterioration. The fact that Julia's use of make-up is also a part of this reality might seem a contradiction. But it is important because in Winston's eyes it enhances her femininity. Therefore her sexuality, and a crucial part of their relationship is natural sexuality. The Party discourages femininity and the hearty, vigorous image Julia adopts is for the sake of Party's benefit. Julia says, "In this room I'm going to be a woman, not a Party Comrade," It helps them especially to Winston as he is trying to regain a sense of the past to rediscover what humanity has lost.

'A yellow ray from the sinking sun tell across the foot of the bed and lighted up the fireplace, where the water in the pan was boiling fast. Down in the yard the woman had stopped singing, but the faint shouts of children floated in from the street. He wondered vaguely whether in the abolished past it had been a normal experience to lie in bed like this, in the cool of a summer evening, a man and a woman with no clothes on, making love when they chose, talking of what they chose, not feeling any compulsion to get up, simply lying there and listening to peaceful sounds outside.' ⁶

- (Part Two, 4)

Winston is trying to reconstruct an understanding of normality but the freedom here is illusory, the pleasure cannot last. Orwell never lets us forget the vulnerability not just of the relationship but of the quality of their feelings. The vulnerability is there because this cannot be a personal affair and because it would never have existed without its extra-personal function. They do not come together simply as a man and woman attracted to each other but as people who have each recognized the mal adjustment in the other.

Here the steps are taken to politicize their rebellion.

Though there is not much interest on Julia's part but the attack on Winston after his arrest is on his new found humanity rather than his politics. It is not political theory or commitment to a decent way of life. One of the important point Orwell depicts is that Winston destroys by brutality and degradation, and if such man's instincts and feelings are destroyed he is nothing afterwards. At the end of the novel Winston is alive but he is nothing. He has been forced to deny everything he might ever have valued. Physically he is wreck but it is his mental degradation that is the Party's achievement. O'Brien makes Winston see as truths precisely those things he had recognized as distortions.

The process of breaking Winston down, is the necessary demonstration of the possibilities of power, and without such a demonstration Orwell's warning would be without its urgent effect. He has to show us that the will, the mind and the body can all be destroyed without destroying life itself and also he shows that the victim infact co-operates with his persecutors that the degradation is voluntary. Orwell had partially based this on what he knew of the operation of the Moscow Trials through which Stalin conducted his purges. We find collaboration between victim and persecutor had been documented in several places. Winston wants to do what O'Brien demands. His attitude towards O'Brien as an almost fatherly protector and he look after Winston's welfare. He yearns to be able to do the right thing. He virtually asks for his final dose of treatment in Room

101 in his reminder to O'Brien that so far he has escaped it and that he has not betrayed Julia.

It might be argued that in terms of the reduction of Winston's personality and the dramatic tension of the narrative the last one stage of Winston's treatment is a more effective climax than the episode of the rats. Rats are Winston's ultimate fear, and this has been already demonstrated. It is hard to believe that they could be worse than the experiences. Winston has already had at the hands of the power machine or the betrayal of Julia is essential to the Party's purpose. It is not same as Winston's other submission. At the same time it should emphasized that it is the betrayal of Julia, of another human being with whom Winston had established an extra Ingsoc relationship. It is crucial. Ultimately the message of Nineteen Eighty Four is not political in the narrow sense. It does not create any particular ideas. It is anti-authoritarian, anti-elite, against the concentration of power, against any tendency that might work against a creative, stimulating atmosphere in which the individual can flourish. He always hoped that equality, sharing and co-operation might be a spontaneous development of human nature. He had experienced it in Spain. The necessity for power based politics might be superseded altogether. Orwell's socialism attacked the whole idea of power based politics. This is the positive movement that lies behind the pessimism of Nineteen

Eighty Four. Winston has to betray Julia because he has to deny all that is best in humanity. But at the same time it is just possible to argue that Orwell is alerting us. He shows the potentials of positive human qualities. If the values symbolized by the thrush and the real coffee and the good bread are retained, values that have everything to do with simple, unadulterated experience. Then there is still hope. As a character Winston has no weight of hope. We come to know this from moments in novel where Orwell's own beliefs is certain elementary values come through. He could not exclude them entirely from the novel is significant.

Orwell present warnings based on how human nature might be destroyed. At the end of the novel we find reflection on the fact that heroism has become meaningless. All the best qualities of humanity have lost their function and place. A combination of technology and organization has the potential of removing human suffering can not be denied. Aspects of humanity lost and would, make human beings unrecognizable.

Huxley visualises sex as a means of consuming excess energy. Orwell's sexual repression as a means of generating it. The mass-hysteria, the rallies, the chanting, the manipulated aggression which are a feature of Oceanic life are seen as the result of mass sexual frustration. Sex is discouraged even within marriage. Winston recalls his wife's Party induced frigidity. There

is an Anti-Sex League to which all young people are encouraged to belong. Julia is one of the member of it. As repression has become an aim and a weapon of Ingsoc engineering, sexual union as Winston reflects has all the significance of a political act. In Brave New World sex means virtually nothing, in Nineteen Eighty Four it means almost everything. Julia thinks of her revolt wholly in the terms of sex. Every illicit relationship is a blow struck for self-expression. The metaphor of aggression is apt. 'Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act,' Winston reflects after their first encounter. Sex is an act of aggression against the Party perhaps, but involving the individuals themselves. It can also be a feature of moral corruption, of weakness. Desperately Winston would like to think that the Inner Party is vulnerable. Not super human, not above temptation for that would reveal a crucial weakness.

'Anything that hinted at corruption always filled him with a wild hope. Who knew perhaps the Party was rotten under the surface, its cult of strenuousness and self-denial simply a sham concealing iniquity. If he could have inflicted the whole lot of them with leprosy or syphilis, how gladly he would have done so ! Anything to rot, to weaken, to undermine !' ⁷

- (Part Two, 2)

Ingsoc is beyond this stage of rather primitive rebellion. Behind their apparatus of power, moral corruption and rottenness can flourish and do no damage. As there are the means to make people believe whatever is required, it scarcely matters what the reality is.

It is the distortion of reality that is the most serious threat to human nature in Nineteen Eighty Four. Individuality is damaged not merely by crude force but by the destruction of history. There is nothing to sustain the individual, no rich environment of history and tradition, no growth, no development. Huxley has conditioned the necessity for these things out of society. But in Orwell's opinion there is still a disturbed consciousness of a lack. The conditioning process is still going on and will go on forever. For every time policy changes, the past has to be altered. Stability will never be achieved and it is not desirable that it should be achieved. Human nature is not entirely destroyed, not fully controlled, which is why power has to be brutal and punishment drastic. Correctives will always be a part of never ending process and there will always be rebels, for power itself is the end of power and power must have victims. Without victims power is meaningless. The implications of this vision of power in its effect on human nature are significant. Here Orwell's picture depends on a belief that there is a deep rooted need for power for its own sake. Orwell himself believed this to be true. His observation and experience of war

and totalitarianism confirmed it. But if it is true, then it is important that human nature is not destroyed. Its receptivity and its respect for power must always exist. For power to work, there must always be both O'Briens and Winston Smiths. This is the nightmare of 1984, a situation that will always be in the process of means that will never arrive at ends because it is the means that are important and the ends that are instrumental.

This is the situation that Orwell always attacking seriously. He doesn't show us the destruction of human nature in Nineteen Eighty Four but the terrible demoralization and degradation of human nature. None of his central figures can be allowed considerable stature in order to show us this. If Winston Smith had been allowed to command more respect at the outset, his defeat could be seen as heroic. That would have been contrary to the book's purpose. We must be shown a man, aware of his vulnerability and weakness, brought even lower than he was before.

Mr. Charrington's room is the attempt to achieve normality. But the decision to use it is a political act as their love making. Their fear and knowledge of punishment undermines the normality. Nobody knows what is normality. It is an instinctive feeling that produces Winston's responses to the peacefulness and beauty of the summer countryside and the safety and comfort of Mr. Charrington's room.

Winston remembers the past that is squalor, deprivation, selfishness, misery, nothing to suggest him that the past was better than present except a dim feeling that his mother had a capacity for endurance. The same capacity that he defects in his observation of proles. Winston's memories are of 1948. In 1984 he is of thirty nine and he is trying to reconstruct his childhood. Here Orwells writing is revealing or confirmation of nearness of 1948 to 1984.

Society is not controlled entirely by fear. There is a manipulated systems of rewards and opiates. There is a Victory Gin. There are mass rallies and public hangings and the Two Minutes Hate which serve the double purpose of allowing the individual to forget himself and strengthening the pillars of power. There are cinemas and community organizations which have a similar function. There is synthetic literature and, for the proles, pornography. These are the instruments of defeating self-awareness and conquering individualism. At the end of the book we witness Winston's loss of all control over his own personality. His mind has to accept that he is himself, yet self has been obliterated, self cannot be allowed to exist. He exists, yet does not exist. It is a contradiction he has to accept, just as he has to accept that two and two make five. And not only does he have to accept, he has to believe that there is no irrationality involved. At the end of the penultimate stage of his 'rehabilitation' this is how he sees himself.

'A bowed, grey-coloured skeleton-like thing was coming towards him. Its actual appearance was frightening, and not merely the fact that he knew it to be himself. He moved closer to the glass. The creature's face seemed to be protruded, because of its bent carriage. A forlorn, jailbird's face with a nobby forehead running back into a bald scalp, a crooked nose, and battered-looking cheek-bones above which the eyes were fierce and watchful. The cheeks were seamed, the mouth had a drawn-in look. Certainly it was his own face, but it seemed to him that it had changed more than he had changed inside. The emotions it registered would be different from the ones he felt.'⁸

What Orwell is actually describing here, is the surviving inmate of a Nazi concentration camp. It would not be unfamiliar to readers who had seen photographs and newsreels. The passage goes on to describe Winston's physical condition still further, but the significant thing is the disunity of self, the lack of co-ordination and connection between the inner self and the outer body. "We have broken you up", says O'Brien. The inability of the mind to work in unity with the body is a feature of the breaking up. As long as he stays alive the body exists, but the sense of self has been destroyed. At this stage, all that remains

is his love for Julia, but that does not linger for long. The very fact that he thinks it is still important means that it will have to be destroyed. This love is Winston's last vestige of individualism, and when that has gone there is no hope of any value in memory remaining. Memory is meaningless. Everything that he and Julia have done becomes meaningless, any value that their actions and feelings might have had as ends in themselves is negated.

This is what the destruction of the individual means. The individual is just a cell in an organism, O'Brien explains. Expendable, renewable, its whole significance lying in its relation to the larger organism. When language, memory and feeling, the private resources of the individual, have gone there is nothing left that can confirm an independent existence. In the end Winston gets his 'ownlife' but there is nothing left of him to be aware of the value of being alone.

In Nineteen Eighty-Four it is much harder to trace the positive aspects of human nature that have been destroyed, although the fact of their destruction is so stark. There is no freedom, but what might be the positive results of freedom? Winston isn't clear. What elements of personality would the quality of life that Orwell hints at in the country episodes and in the junk-shop foster and encourage? Orwell is not condemning Ingsoc and totalitarianism because it does not allow great art,

but because it does not allow simple private pleasures. Like Huxley, he is attacking the synthetic society but in what might be called more democratic terms than Huxley. He is not condemning the lack of a suitable environment for the great, but the lack of a suitable environment for the ordinary. Which is another reason why Winston cannot be allowed to be too special. Unlike Bernard, Winston must be 'the common man' - a figure that cannot possibly exist in Huxley's new society. Winston's destruction is the destruction of the common man.

All Winston's attempts to suggest to himself an alternative to the current way of life are extremely tentative, and after his arrest and torture assume the quality of dream. He calls the country of his dreams the Golden Country, and it is a place of sunlight, stillness and peace, but with every suggestion of feasibility wiped out. It is like the 'old world' George Bowling sets out to rediscover. Perhaps these Golden countries never did exist and never can exist. For Winston, the ability, even the desire, to dream will disappear, and Winston will have submitted entirely to Big Brother's version of reality. Orwell's faith in the resilience of human nature, which he genuinely felt most of the time and is expressed elsewhere, led to his understanding of how easy it is for men and women to accept the unacceptable. Resilience, tolerance, cheerfulness in adversity, are good qualities with which to fight and win a war, but Orwell saw that the habit of responding to the excessive demands of an emergency could

lead to an acceptance of authority, whatever form that authority took.

Orwell maintained that every worthwhile piece of writing he produced had a political intention, but we should not interpret that as meaning that he had a party-political case to make. He was highly suspicious of political parties, and was himself the member of one, the Independent Labour Party, for only a very brief period. Orwell never failed to write with a moral purpose, but that he saw morality, realistically and rightly in political terms. He was a political writer because he recognized the way in which political power influenced the lives and aspirations of ordinary people.

The object of political power in Oceania is to eliminate memory and self-consciousness in order to perpetuate political power. 'Orthodoxy was unconsciousness' is the way in which orwell sums it up. Winston comes face to face with the paradox implied in that.

'The party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist ? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all the others accepted the lie which the Party imposed - if all records

told the same tale - then the lie passed into history and became truth. 'Who controls the past', ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'. And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now had been true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory.' ⁹

(Part One, 3)

The process Orwell is exposing here is that which allowed Stalin, for instance, to announce the Nazi/Soviet Pact in 1938 as if he and Hitler had always been the best of friends. Doublethink gives the party absolute control. It is a much more subtle and complex process than simply using threats to impose a creed. Smoothly operated it requires an instant changes of gear the moment, or even a hairsbreadth in anticipation of, a change of line is announced. Brutality is a significant political weapon, but there comes a point when it is no longer necessary. When doublethink has been fully achieved, when people can employ and eliminate the process simulataneouly, the revolution is complete and force is merely an expression of power, not a means to an end : except that perhaps doublethink can't operate effectively without an intimate knowledge of the reality of force.

Newspeak is an important element in this. Its object is to boil language down to its ultimate reduction. Language is also a weapon, but again once doublethink has been perfected, the necessity for language other than the language of doublethink becomes minimal. Thinking and feeling, even communicating, become wholly irrelevant concepts. The basic relationship between the State and its citizens is the relationship between power and its victims, the boot stamping everlastingly on a face, as O'Brien puts it later in the book. That is the only significant relationship, and it can scarcely be called human. Power has to be given a human face, Big Brother on the poster, but that is only because it needs to be identified, and the victim must confirm the relationship by loving its source. The victim must be willing. Doublethink is a means of making the victim willing.

Winston's job is the rewriting of history. He has to alter the documentation of the past so that it will conform to the current interpretation of the present. If Oceania changes sides it must be established that it has always been on the side it changes to. The process is somewhat crude. Altering documentation seems an elaborate way of rewriting history in a society where documents are not important anything. Who will read the old newspapers that Winston meticulously alters ? But of course it is no more crude than the kind of juggling with facts that politics frequently entails. Winston as a rewriter must not be aware of himself as altering facts, but of correcting errors. But he

is not submissive enough to doublethink to be unaware of exactly what he is doing.

If there are any conspicuous flaws in the instant alteration of history for instance, the wrong slogans on the posters when policy is changed in mid-speech at a vast rally—these can be blamed on the enemy's underground spies and agents. And in order to maintain the useful belief in enemy agents, periodically people have to be arrested and purged for that particular crime. Fear is a key weapon. People must be made to believe that they can inadvertently commit crimes, and they must also believe that even their own thoughts belong to the State. People disappear and are never heard of again. There are occasional public trials of arch enemies. Above all, no one can be allowed to feel secure.

At its crudest, power is the manipulation of primitive emotion. Every element of thought and feeling can be eliminated except for the crudest form of hatred and mass hysteria. The communal hysteria of the Two Minutes Hate, the orgiastic Hate Week, are ways in which Big Brother can be loved. Huxley all but kills emotions, but Orwell describes a situation in which near-animal emotion is the only significant human expression. That he drew to a great extent on the spectacle of the massive Fascist rallies and the abject, masochistic confessions of the Moscow Trials is quite clear. Before Hitler the potential of the mass

rally had never been fully explored. No one who has heard a recording of a Hitler rally, or seen a film, can have escaped the frisson that comes from the terrifying spectacle and sound of thousands of voices joined in unthinking emotion, thousands reacting like automatons to the bidding of a single man. It was mass ritual pushed to its furthest extremes. Orwell saw what it could do, and in recognizing its power over vast numbers of people could contemplate a situation in which it was a major expression and prop of power. Power both feeds mass hysteria, and is fed by it.

In order to maintain the purity of these crude, animal responses, the Party destroys everything that could give individuals any illusion of independence, or pride, or spiritual sustenance. There must be no way of satisfying private needs—there must be no private needs. Daily existence is stripped of all possible colour or variation or pleasure. The necessities of life are stripped to the minimal requirements, and the basic acts of eating, drinking and love-making are made to seem as unpleasant as possible. The canteen where Winston eats is disgusting, with its sour smell, spilt food, almost inedible stew, oily-tasting gin, a grim, noisy, overcrowded environment which removes any pleasure there might possibly be in satisfying the appetite. This stripping process induces a submissive population, and a population more receptive to synthetic, State-controlled entertainment. Inner resources are whittled away, for they cannot flourish

in the desert which the State has created, and thus dependence on the State is increased.

But why, is the question we and Winston inevitably ask ? What is it all for ? O'Brien asks this same question of Winston in the final pages of the novel, but his answer is naive, though the one that most of us would produce. Winston says that the Party needs to maintain power for the good of the majority, that all these unpleasantnesses are a means to an end, that the end is the happiness of mankind, which is more important than freedom, that only the Party is able to understand and achieve what is good. This, Winston thought, and millions of others have thought, was the justification of power. It was the justification that Orwell had witnessed being used by Hitler, by Stalin, by Franco, and, though so different in degree, by Roosevelt and by Churchill. The end justifies the means, the equation that has so fascinated and disturbed Orwell's contemporary Arthur Koestler, who had had a more intimate experience of its effects. But O'Brien contradicts all that, and by contradicting it throws doubt on all possible uses of that rationalization of power.

A number of readers have criticized Orwell for his inclusion of a large chunk of the theoretical exposure of Ingsoc, the invented Goldstein's 'Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism.' It is necessary, though, for the theories and the motives and the origins of Ingsoc to be described, just as the

theory of stability, as well as the practice, must be demonstrated in Brave New World.. By the time we reach this stage in the book we have been given a taste of the methods and we have seen Winston's and Julia's tentative rebellion. The introduction of a further dimension to what we know of the political structure is important. In effect, the Goldstein passages explain how and why it is that in 1948. Ingsoc seemed more probable than Huxley's Brave New World.

'The world of today is a bare, hungry, dilapidated place compared with the world that existed before 1914, and still more so if compared with the imaginary future to which people of that period looked forward. In the early twentieth century, the vision of the future society unbelievably rich, leisured, orderly, and efficient - a glittering, antiseptic world of glass and steel and snow white concrete - was part of the consciousness of nearly every literate person. Science and technology were developing at a prodigious speed, and it seemed natural to assume that they would go on developing. This failed to happen, partly because of the impoverishment caused by a long series of wars and revolutions, partly because scientific and technical progress depended on the empirical

habit of thought, which could not survive in a strictly regimented society. As a whole the world is more primitive today than it was fifty years ago.' ¹⁰

(Part Two, 9)

This explains the defeat of science, a case Orwell has to put, and the theory goes on to explain that science is only necessary to develop armaments which are needed to pursue warfare, the primary aim of which is 'to use up the products of the machine without raising the general standard of living'. War is a method not of defeating another nation, for the war must not be allowed to end, but of defeating the people, the mass of society, not necessarily by killing them, but by making life as minimal as possible. 'The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labour. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depth of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent'. But why make the materials, why not simply put an end altogether to an industrialized society ? Manufacture has to go on because labour is a means of slavery, an instrument of power, and productive labour is a psychological necessity. Simply digging holes in the ground or building useless monuments would provide 'only the economic and not the emotional basis for a hierarchical

society'. In order for Party members to remain fanatically loyal, which is what power requires, they must believe in the reality and the necessity of war and the necessity for production and hard work. There must be conspicuous consumption so that there can be conspicuous effort.

The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism is carefully and convincingly worked out, and that plus Orwell's appendix on Newspeak show his impressive grasp of the psychology of politics. The structure of power, the manipulation of people and history, the function of misuse of language, had been preoccupations of Orwell's for all of his writing life. In Nineteen Eighty-Four they are fiercely crystallized into an alarming emotional and intellectual whole. But the ultimate explanation is not provided until very near the end of the book. In his reading of Goldstein, Winston reaches the passage where the motive power is about to be explained, when his and Julia's illusory peace is shattered by the Thought Police. Reality takes over from the written word.

It is a brilliantly contrived moment in the novel. Winston has been reading aloud to Julia. First Julia, then he himself, fall asleep. Winston awakes to a new awareness of beauty, a fresh understanding of hope. The sky is cloudless, the birds are singing and the proles, Winston, feels, are immortal - 'they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could

not kill'. And as long as he can keep that thought alive in his mind he can share some of the hope for the future. But the thought does not survive for long. Immediately the arrest takes place, the process of killing the mind begins. The hope, it is exists, is an objective hope. Neither the proles nor, in the end, Winston, are aware of it, and if the hope cannot actually function in the minds and imaginations of individuals it doesn't really exist. Winston has broken off in midsentence in his reading of Goldstein, just when he was going to learn about power. And then there is 'a stampede of boots up the stairs. The room was full of solid men in black uniforms, with iron-shod boots on their feet and truncheons in their hands.' This is their first direct experience of brute force. This O'Brien will later explain, is power and the object of power, the boot stamping on a human face. The black uniforms and iron boots are what power is about.

When Winston offers the answer, "You are ruling over us for our own good", O'Brien has one more lesson to teach him, the most crucial lesson fo all.

'We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power --- Power is not a means to an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the

revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.

The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power.'¹¹

If there is a flaw in Orwell's thesis it is that there is a gap in the rationality of this final lesson. Of course, his argument is that humanity can be forced to accept the irrational along with anything else. If thought processes can be ignored, destroyed, done away with, overridden, distorted, what possible weapon is left for the individual ? The only answer in Nineteen Eighty-Four is that life, in some sort of recognizable way, goes on; hope lies with the proles. They love and marry and breed and grow prematurely old. It comes back to human nature. Orwell does seem to be suggesting that human nature, in some primitive form, will continue to survive and that eventually out of that might grow imaginative thought strong enough to challenge Big Brother.

The proles exist as they do not because the Party can't control them but because it can't be bothered. The Party destroys any oddities and anyone with dangerous potential, but does not consider the survival of human nature on the level of the proles as worth worrying about. From this stem Winston's belief that hope lies with the proles.

In this novel the destruction of traditional units of

cohesion is a basic requirement. Family relationships, sexual relationships, any kind of relationship that demands loyalty and trust, have to be destroyed so that the loyalty and trust can be directed towards the State.

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- 4) Orwell George, Nineteen Eighty Four
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- 5) Ibid., p. Part Two, I
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- 7) Ibid., p. Part Two, II
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- 9) Ibid., p Part One, III
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