THE HUMANISM OF GEORGE ORWELL

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This paper argues that George Orwell was a myth maker in the twentieth century, an age of existential perplexities. Orwell recognized that man is innately "patriotic," that the will-to-believe is part of his nature, but that the excesses of scientific analysis have disrupted the absolutes of belief. Through the Organic Metaphor, Orwell attempted to reconstruct man's faith into an aesthetic, and consequently moral, sensibility. Proposing to balance, and not replace, the Mechanistic Metaphor of industrial society, Orwell sought human progress along aesthetic lines. "Socialism" was his political expression of the Organic Metaphor: both advocated universal integrity in time and space.

The sources are all primary. All of Orwell's novels were used, in addition to three essay collections: Collected Essays; The Orwell Reader; and The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, editors, four volumes. Orwell's essays and book reviews contain his best social criticisms.

There are six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which includes a biographical sketch of Orwell, definitions of the Organic and Mechanistic Metaphors, and a comment
on the bibliography. The second chapter examines the oppression of the common man by monopolistic capitalism in colonial Burma and depression-ridden Europe, and Orwell's socialist advoca-
tions. The next chapter deals with Orwell's relationship to the English intelligentsia, his moral outrage at their worship of Fascism and Communism, both equal forms of tyranny in his mind. Orwell feared that without moral revitalization, liberal thought would be finished for all times. The fourth chapter is concerned with the problems of faith in the modern world since man can no longer accept the "soul." Orwell asserts man's innate "patriotism," or desire to be loyal to something eternal, for which Orwell proposes Brotherhood and socialism. The fifth chapter covers Orwell's aesthetic complaints about the contemporary technical world and what he has to say about orthodox scientists. The final chapter redefines the context of these issues and affirms that Orwell was indeed a humanist interested in the total progress of mankind.

The conclusion is that Orwell's ambiguous position as a conservative and a liberal exists because of his implied and never specified Organic Metaphor that would offer man satisfaction of moral and aesthetic demands.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

George Orwell's real name was Eric Arthur Blair, and he was born in 1903 at Motihari in Bengal, India. The second of three children, he was the only son of a minor customs official in the English Bengal Service. His paternal grandfather had served in the Indian Army, and his mother's father was a Frenchman by the name of Limousine, who had spent most of his life managing teak yards in Burma. In 1911, Orwell was sent to the south coast of England for schooling at Crossgates preparatory school until he was thirteen. Taken in at reduced rates because of the family's financial straits, and because he showed some intelligence, Orwell found himself cast in the middle of the upper stratum of English society. Most of the boys there were preparing for such schools as Eton and Harrow. Constantly reminded of his inferior position—that he in fact was a charity case—Orwell withdrew from the mainstream of school life into the surrounding solitary countryside, where he fished and collected butterflies. His essay "Such, Such Were the Joys," written by 1947, recaptures some of that childhood. Orwell was ridden by feelings of inferiority.

in the snobbish and oppressive society around him, and he re-
mained a social introvert throughout his years at Crossgates,
although he developed a glowing love for Nature. In 1916, he
won a scholarship to Eton which he accepted without reluctance.
Life at Crossgates had been miserable.

Unlike his classmates at Eton, Orwell in 1922—upon the
mysterious advice of a tutor—curiously turned away from the
prospects of Cambridge and Oxford: he joined the Indian
Imperial Police in Burma, where he remained for five years.
These were influential years for him since the Burma exper-
ience helped to shape his outraged socialist attitudes toward
Imperialism in particular, and toward oppression in general.
His essays2 "A Hanging" (1931), "Shooting an Elephant" (1936),
"Marrakech" (1939), and his novel Burmese Days (1934) reflect
his attitudes of condemnation toward the colonial experience.

In 1927, Orwell returned to England on a visit, and he
decided to give up his job. Five years of playing the superior
white man was too much for his conscience. He did not exactly
know what he wanted at this time, but he was certain of what
he did not want. The next two or three years found Orwell
living with the impoverished, washing dishes in France, and
tramping in England. His two books Down and Out in Paris
and London (1933) and The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) reflect

Also, The Orwell Reader and An Age Like This, 1920-1940, Vol. I
of The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell.
his protracted concern for the poor. His anxiety over cold, hunger, and filth further kindled his socialist sympathies. These two books are especially documentary, and Orwell is portrayed as the empirical observer protesting against the hard and unromantic fate of people who have only malnutrition and an intellectual wasteland in their lives. Sometime around 1932, Orwell abandoned his real name of Eric Blair, partly because he resented the Norse connotations of "Eric," and partly because "Blair" reminded him of Scotland, where the rich boys spent their summers when he was at Crossgates and Eton. "Orwell" was the name of a river that he had once lived near in England. He wanted to be totally English.

During the early 1930's, Orwell was a tutor and a schoolmaster in a private school at Hayes, England. With his wife, he also kept a village pub and store. In 1934, his second novel, A Clergyman's Daughter, was published, it being a novel concerned with the problems of faith. Then came Keep the Aspidistra Flying in 1936, a socialist's indictment against the tyrannies of monopoly capitalism. After finishing The Road to Wigan Pier for Victor Gollancz, editor of the Left Book Club, Orwell and his wife proceeded to Spain in December, 1936, to help fight for the Republic. Going by way of Paris, Orwell stopped to see Henry Miller. Orwell told the American ex-patriot writer of the plans for Spain. Miller said Orwell was insane if he was going for political reasons, absolutely mad. Yet Miller offered Orwell a tweed jacket so that the
Englishman could complete his journey in style.

Since Orwell had credentials from the English International Labour Party, he joined the Trotskyite POUM instead of the International Brigade. His wife worked in the ILP office in Barcelona. Orwell saw action in Aragon and Huesca, and he was shot through the throat in April, 1937. He was hospitalized in Barcelona, and in May the Communists began their purge of all revolutionary suspects in the city. Released by the doctors, Orwell and his wife, with help from the British Consulate, ran for their lives back to France. The police were in hot pursuit. Shocked by the Communist oppression of all revolutionary groups--of which the POUM was one--Orwell nevertheless was delighted by his experiences of socialism in action. In 1938, he reflected this sentiment in Homage to Catalonia.

After Spain, Orwell went to England for a time, and then to French Morocco. In 1939, Coming Up for Air was published, a novel in which George Bowling represents Orwell's pessimistic feelings about the new age of streamlining and efficiency. Bowling cannot recapture the earlier days of innocence and agrarian peace which Orwell imagined to have existed prior to World War I. After World War II began, Orwell joined the Indian section of the BBC as a writer and propagandist, since he was too old for military service. He resented the oppressive atmosphere of the BBC and left it to become literary editor of the Tribune when Aneurin Bevan was its general editor. Here Orwell wrote "As I Please" articles for the
paper. He also wrote essays and book reviews for the Partisan Review, the Manchester Evening News, the Adelphi, the Observer, and other publications. In 1945, Animal Farm was on the market.

In 1946, Orwell began writing 1984, and he hoped to finish it by the next year. But because of prolonged illness, Orwell continually reset the novel's deadline. It was finally completed in the summer of 1948 and published in 1949. During this year, Orwell was a very sick man, and in January, 1950, he died in London from tuberculosis.

The object of this study is to reconcile the differences of opinion about George Orwell. On the one hand, he has been called a political liberal and progressive. On the other hand, he has been judged as conservative and afraid of change. The point is that Orwell was a humanist with uncommonly good sense, an impressionist with little technical sense. His social criticisms were more balanced than many of his critics have admitted.

The largely unrealized feature of Orwell is that he was trying to regather the scattered and fragmented remains of modern man's religious faith, and crystalize a progressive view for society and the individual. Indeed, there is evidence in Orwell's writings which suggests that he was unconsciously, or at least implicitly, advocating the Organic Metaphor. For society has to an astounding degree emphasized the Mechanistic Metaphor in its thinking. In this study, concepts are the issue.
The Mechanistic Metaphor basically means that life proceeds along rational and logical paths. Indeed, this metaphor intellectually accounts for the rise of industry and technology in modern society: engines, machines, the unison pounding of pistons. It has given man the material progress that he knows today.

But there have been excesses in this application, or at least Orwell thought this to be the case. This is why he called modern progress a "swindle": society has lost a certain vitality by its regimentations, and the individual has been suffering a slow death.

The Organic Metaphor suggests a view of life along different lines. Indeed, life is conceived as flowing freely through novelty and mysticism. Life becomes liberty personified. The Romantics of the nineteenth century, indeed, based their sentiment on this metaphor, on the idea that process is fundamental to life, and that Nature runs through all things. Indeed, the Universe is alive with change and history has continuity. The fundamental difference between the Mechanistic and Organic metaphors is the difference between productivity in the name of efficiency on the one hand, and productivity for aesthetic ends on the other hand.

Orwell was not attempting to replace Industrial society. Rather, his concern was for supplementing the good already accrued with an increased aesthetic sensibility; that is, by blending in the Organic metaphor. For together, both metaphors
could make social progress not a "swindle," but a genuine reality. Since the Organic Metaphor suggests universal integrity and historical continuity, Orwell reduced the general concept into ethical and political particulars such as "brotherhood," "decency," "liberty," and "justice." Indeed, "socialism" was the political means for expressing his aesthetic and moral sensibilities to a world caught in oppressive political tyrannies. Orwell desired the genuine progress of all men, and a generally increased humane sensibility. By directing man's innate "patriotism" through aesthetic channels, Orwell thought that industrial progress could at last become the second half of man's complete progress. Then one could indeed talk about the aesthetics of efficiency.

The context of this study is political, moral, and social. Literary comparisons are mentioned only in this connection. The second chapter thus deals with the exploitations of the common man by an oppressive economic and political system in the twentieth century. The major areas which Orwell protested were colonial exploitation and industrial capitalism. In Burma, the English had created a bureaucratic machine which had robbed and unjustly snubbed the common man. At home, Europeans suffered from the tyrannies of Capitalism, so that the injustice of poverty became an issue. Orwell feared that industrialism must lead to collectivism, and he feared that a professional class of managers might rule Society in the future with no moral compassion. The problem for Orwell was to accept the
collectivists framework and make it "decent" and just for the common man.

The third chapter of this study deals with Orwell's moral outrage toward the English intelligentsia during the 1930's and 1940's. Orwell accused intellectuals of having bad faith in their country, of courting ideologies which only masked the raw hunger for political power. He condemned Fascist, Catholic, and Communist sympathizers in the same breath, for all had betrayed humane sensibilities. For Orwell, the intelligentsia's denial of democratic institutions was not only a political issue, but a moral issue as well.

The fourth chapter deals with the problems of morality and faith in the twentieth century. Man's materialism and talent for scientific analysis has destroyed the myth of the soul, and an existential predicament of values has developed. Orwell believed that every effort to restore religious faith has been a failure since at no time have common decency and justice been a significant factor. He recognized that men must believe in something (he called this will-to-believe "patriotism"), and he recommended "socialism" as the political solution to man's aesthetic and moral needs.

The fifth chapter concerns the aesthetic implications of Orwell's humanism. By projecting impressions of aesthetic deprivation, Orwell in effect advocated a poetic frame of mind for the individual, and a moral criterion for social progress.
The sixth chapter concludes this study. It attempts to synthesize the issues into a meaningful context and illuminate the importance of George Orwell to modern society.

The design of this study has followed an inductive approach from the very start. As a consequence, virtually all secondary sources have been eliminated to avoid unnecessary pedantry. Original insight has been the goal, and to my knowledge, no Orwellian scholar has yet proposed the crucial Organic Metaphor by which to explain what Orwell was about, to explain that he was aesthetically conscious of the humanistic needs of contemporary society.

Thus the definition of Orwell as a modern myth maker for existential man, and for an excessively industrial society, has been derived through his own writings. The most valuable source has been the four-volume *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York, 1968). Orwell's essays and book reviews have been the most important of his works concerning social criticism. His "novels" have been less significant. He wrote some poetry, but he was no technical poet. Orwell was best as a pamphleteer, a journalist, a critic, and a propagandist. Orwell had a mission to perform, a moral crusade to endeavor. Certain kinds of media lend themselves better to some purposes than other kinds, and prose added the most expressive impact to Orwell's moral sensibility. His sermon for modern man was a ballad without verse. It was rhetorical propaganda fighting for poetry, or "decency."
CHAPTER II

TYRANNY AND THE COMMON MAN

To Orwell, the twentieth century has been a time of human injustice. Great concentrations of economic and political power have oppressed the common man, and he has stoically suffered their exploitations. Capitalism has been one force to spread misery. In its colonial form, it has demanded a standing army and a corps of civil servants to protect its interests by appropriating lands and suppressing political protests by an indigenous populace. The British soldier has persecuted the Burmese civilian for insolence, Orwell maintained, but the colonial system has alienated the soldier because it has allowed no complete society.

At home in Europe, the tyranny of capitalism has been equally appalling. Poverty and inequality have existed in society unnecessarily, and Orwell protested loudly against the exploitation of Capitalism. But if industrial capitalism must lead to monopoly, as Orwell suggested, then a whole corps of professional administrators must dictate the life and fate of the common man since they would have the power to do so. Here lay Orwell's fear of the future: an elite stratum of social managers which would ruthlessly exploit the man of uncommon simplicity, the proletarian. As Orwell saw it, the working-class man faces a possible future of unparalleled
tyranny and oppression unless some moral antidote can be found.

Having arrived in England from Burma in 1927, Orwell vowed to return never again to his job with the Indian Imperial Police. At the age of twenty-four, he was conscience-stricken by the "inherent evil of imperialism," and sickened by the final realization that he had only been helping to support "a racket." English enterprise had robbed foreign lands, and he would have no further part of the plunder. He determined to remain no longer in "that evil despotism" of colonial administration. Haunted by the faces of Orientals he had beaten and snubbed, he resolved to escape this "oppressive system" of exploitation.

In "Shooting an Elephant," an essay written in 1936, Orwell recalled that one of his most passionate desires had been "to drive a bayonet" through the guts of a Buddhist priest.

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1 Review of "Zest for Life by Johann Wöller, translated from the Danish by Claude Napier," An Age Like This, 1920-1940, Vol. I of The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 vols. (New York, 1968), p. 233. Hereafter this collection will be abbreviated as Journalism and Letters, followed by the appropriate volume and page number. This review originally appeared in Time and Tide, October 17, 1936.


4 Ibid.

priest would have done, actually. In fact, any Buddhist would have been satisfactory; any Oriental, for that matter. Indeed, Orwell suggested that he would have been glad while in Burma to have stuck a bayonet in anybody--white, brown, black, or yellow. The corrupting pressures of imperialism did that to a man.6

Orwell realized that the oppressor may become his own victim. In the colonial scheme, the white man must reckon with the strict official censorship of his public statements. "You are free to be a drunkard, an idler, a coward, a back-biter, a fornicator; but you are not free to think for yourself."7 One's every opinion is formed by "the pukka sahibs' code."8 And in the end, one emerges from the colonies with hardly any personal integrity or self-respect, having developed only a habit of insincerity and dishonor. Living closed off from brotherhood, in such sham and hypocrisy, can only corrupt the soul, Orwell felt. It is better to live "with the stream of life and not against it."9 Honesty, that is the thing: a free flow of intellect and emotion. Better to be a bigot while admitting it "than to live silent, alone, consoling oneself in secret, sterile worlds."10 Yet, better a decent man than any bigot at all.

6Ibid.
7George Orwell, Burmese Days (New York, 1950), p. 69.
8Ibid.
9Ibid., p. 70.
10Ibid.
So much the English have taken from others, Orwell alleged, and so little given in return! Flory, the hero of Burmese Days, says that the Burmese have been taught how "to drink whisky and play football," but nothing significant.\(^{11}\) English schools for natives are good only for turning out clerks who have been taught no practical skill. The English are too afraid of competition, Flory says, and they dare not make the Burmese self-sufficient.\(^{12}\) Before the English ever go back to their island, Orwell maintained, they will have totally destroyed Burmese culture. Again Flory declares that we're not civilising them, we're only rubbing our dirt on to them. Where's it going to lead, this uprush of modern progress . . . ? Just to our own dear old swinery of gramophones and billycock hats. Sometimes I think that in two hundred years all this . . . will be gone—forests, villages, monasteries, pagodas all vanished. And instead, pink villas . . . all over those hills, as far as you can see . . . with all the gramophones playing the same tune. And all the forests shaved flat—chewed into woodpulp for the News of the World, or sawn up into gramophone cases.\(^{13}\)

In "Marrakech," an essay from 1939, Orwell anticipated the rise of nationalism in the world's under-developed countries. Spying a Negro lackey, he saw no contempt or hostility in the boy's face. Evident was only a "shy, wide-eyed Negro look, which actually is a look of profound respect."\(^{14}\) Here was a slave to the white man, a human being who realized no more of his potential for full manhood than what the white

\(^{11}\)Ibid., pp. 40-41. \(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 41.  
\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 42.  
imperialist had said was so. Here was a black man who believed without question the fabrication that Europeans were his superiors, and he was obliged to work with admiration for their benefit.

The colonists were reported to live with an uneasy secret: that things will cozily continue as they are until the underdog snaps awake and realizes the swindle that has been perpetrated upon him; that whites are no natural superiors to blacks, only, perhaps, more audacious and clever. Indeed, the tacit but eternal question among colonists was "when will these people turn on us and declare their sovereignty? When will they see through our lies and throw us out completely? We will be lucky to survive their wrath!"  

With scrupulous honesty, however, Orwell condemned the liberal intelligentsia for clattering about the exploitive evils of the Empire. He pointed out in *The Road to Wigan Pier* that the evils of imperialism were precisely what allowed intellectuals their smug positions and relatively easy life:

> Under the capitalist system, in order that England may live in comparative comfort, a hundred million Indians must live on the verge of starvation—an evil state of affairs, but you acquiesce in it every time you step into a taxi or eat a plate of strawberries and cream.  

If statements are to be more than empty rhetoric, then the critics on the Left were going to have to abandon the colonial system and "reduce England to a cold and unimportant little

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16 *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p. 191.
island where we should all have to work very hard and live mainly on herrings and potatoes." But, Left or Right, Orwell asked, what Englishman can accept such a future? Leftists were notoriously hypocritical about imperialism, Orwell insisted. They consumed the fruits of foreign lands at dirt-cheap rates while conserving their preciously tidy and humanistic reputations: by maligning those abroad who were working for their country's welfare, they were able to be fat and righteous at the same time.

But Orwell was ready to accept an England without a worldwide colonial system. He felt compelled "to escape not merely from imperialism but from every form of man's dominion over man." Returned to the western world, he sought freedom from oppression in the colonies, but he could not escape the general sense of injustice and poverty around him at home. Steadily in his mind, the working man of the West replaced the coolie of the East, and he discovered that "there was no need to go as far as Burma to find tyranny and exploitation." He wanted earnestly to drop out of middle-class society and "get right down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against their tyrants." In his mind, Capitalism was an oppressive system both at home and abroad. Whether it be in England or Asia, or involving European tramps, Asian

\[17\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp.} \ 191-192. \]
\[18\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.} \ 192. \]
\[19\text{Ibid.} \]
\[20\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.} \ 120. \]
\[21\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.} \ 180. \]
\[22\text{Ibid.} \]
coolies, or the haggard bourgeoisie, Capitalism in the long run seemed to offer the least benefits to the most people. It appeared to lead only "to dole queues, the scramble for markets, and war." 23

Indeed, Orwell was not convinced that Capitalism had brought any substantial improvements over Feudalism. Any promise of its superiority seemed negated when he considered "the horrors of the Industrial Revolution, the destruction of one culture after another, the piling-up of millions of human beings in hideous ant-heaps of cities, and, above all, the enslavement of the coloured races. . . ." One monopoly had replaced another, making no substantial material changes for the general public, and allowing no satisfying development for humanistic sensibilities. 24 In *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, Gordon Comstock grasps the essential swindle of the business world: money, not personal relationships, is the supreme value. Money is more important than honesty and sincerity in one's personal relationships; it had become an object of religious pursuit. Given the evident loss of feeling for the simple and decent life, money had replaced the traditional God of one's childhood. No loss of passion existed for this item: with money, salvation is in the pocket. Here was a definite measure of progress.


With money, there is no doubt: one always knows where one stands, just as one knows where one is without it. Capitalism was a system of injustice and exploitation, and it was enough to drive a man to Marxism. But although Orwell was a socialist, he was no Marxist since he remained generally uninterested in technical economic ideas and sweeping political programs. If economics be the key to progress for Marx, then "decency" is the key for Orwell. As he declared in The Road to Wigan Pier, "economic injustice will stop the moment we want it to stop, and no sooner, and if we genuinely want it to stop the method adopted hardly matters."  

In 1933, Orwell feared that the promise of the future could well mean "revolution and famine, or else all-round trustification and Fordification, with the entire population reduced to docile wage-slaves, our lives utterly in the hands of the bankers ... riding us like succubi in the name of Progress." Oligarchy indeed seemed a promise of the future:

The ever-increasing concentration of industrial and financial power; the diminishing importance of the individual capitalist or shareholder, and the growth of the new "managerial" class of scientists, technicians, and bureaucrats; the weakness of the proletariat against the centralized state; the increasing helplessness of small countries against big ones; the decay of representative institutions and the appearance of one-party régimes

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26 The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 181.

27 "Letter to Brenda Salkeld [extract (June ?, 1933)], Journalism and Letters, I, 121."
based on police terrorism, faked plebiscites, etc. all these things seem to point in the same direction.\textsuperscript{28} That direction Orwell called "not inherently democratic" since it led to increasingly centralized power and planning.\textsuperscript{29} Radical centralization can mean an unhealthy provincialism, and Orwell lamented the trends toward "state capitalism" and "national socialism," fearing the eventual extinction of genuinely free enterprise.\textsuperscript{30} The question he asked was not whether the people who wipe their boots on us during the next fifty years are to be called managers, bureaucrats, or politicians: the question is whether capitalism, now obviously doomed, is to give way to oligarchy or to true democracy.\textsuperscript{31}

If the future were to bring oligarchy, Orwell feared that the cult of professionalism would invade the simple and private life which respects Nature and individual eccentricities. As he had George Bowling remark in \textit{Coming Up for Air}, fishing conjures up feelings from some quieter century, certainly not characteristic of the twentieth century:

\begin{quote}
The very idea of sitting all day 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
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{30}"Literature and Totalitarianism," \textit{Journalism and Letters}, \textit{II}, 135. Also in the \textit{Listener}, June 19, 1941.

\textsuperscript{31}"Second Thoughts on James Burnham," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 374.
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.32

In 1984, democracy is doomed. The ruling class consists of "bureaucrats, scientists, technicians, trade-union organizers, and professional politicians."33 These are the people who have come originally from "the salaried middle class and the upper grades of the working class," having been welded together "by the barren world of monopoly industry and centralized government."34 These people seek only absolute power: material gain makes no real difference. They are professionals acutely aware of their own capabilities and limitations, and they are deadly serious in their pursuits. They brook no opposition. These are efficient people dedicated to the details of securing and keeping political power for its own sake, and, as never before in history, they have the necessary technology to penetrate the individual's private life. Television cameras and other devices for spying on the individual are only tools for discovering and censoring the random daydreams and fantasies of the individual, his vital inner life.35 This is an important aspect of Orwell's objection to

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34Ibid.  
35Ibid.
totalitarianism. For as he wrote in 1941:

Totalitarianism has abolished freedom of thought to an extent unheard of in any previous age. And it is important to realise that its control of thought is not only negative, but positive. It not only forbids you to express—even to think—certain thoughts, but it dictates what you shall think it creates an ideology for you, it tries to govern your emotional life as well as setting up a code of conduct. And as far as possible it isolates you from the outside world, it shuts you up in an artificial universe in which you have no standards of comparison.36

The future was filled with threats of tyranny. Besides fearing the possibilities of total dictatorship, Orwell considered that the future might make war a constant way of life.37 In Coming Up for Air, George Bowling voices his sentiments about the future as war. Months in advance he can feel World War II coming on. His inner peace is founded on the quiet, pastoral English day of pre-World War I when childhood was a joy. Now middle-aged, his serenity is shaken by the wretched Fascist and Communist rhetoric and slogans he hears on every corner. The future for Bowling promises to be full of misery: a war he has no use for, concentration camps, and fanatics. And, sooner or later, he was sure to be in one of those "cork-lined cellars where the executioner plugs you from behind!"38 It is a question of peace, Bowling feels, not just the "absence of war," but an atmosphere in which you are right with yourself

38Coming Up for Air, p. 195.
and everything around you. Peace is that special feeling "in your guts," which may well disappear "if the rubber truncheon boys get hold of us." But after the war is "finished"—that will be when the real terror begins, Bowling maintains. Then will be the endless lines of people waiting for the eternal handouts of foods, clothes, and medicines, while the Gestapo runs everyone about like headless chickens.

The world we're going down into [is a] . . . hate-world, slogan-world. The coloured shirts, the barbed wire, the rubber truncheons. The secret cells where the electric light burns night and day, and the detectives watching you while you sleep. And the processions and the posters with enormous faces, and the crowds of a million people all cheering for the Leader till they deafen themselves into thinking that they really worship him, and all the time, underneath, they hate him so that they want to puke.

In 1945, Orwell wrote that vast superstates were already dividing up the world's markets and territories while threatening permanent war for the future. But such a war would be deliberately protracted, thus making it a not particularly "intensive or bloody kind of war." The immense power of these superstates would never allow a conclusive settlement of conflicts, and the trend could well destroy all international exchange. Given such a scope of isolation, a situation in which the common man would be guaranteed propaganda

\[\text{39}^\text{Ibid.}\quad \text{40}^\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{41}^\text{Ibid., p. 186.}\quad \text{42}^\text{Ibid., p. 176.}\]
\[\text{43}^\text{As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 328.}\]
\[\text{44}^\text{Ibid.}\]
instead of information, and insularity instead of meaningful communication, war could indeed become perpetual since "two and two could become five if the Fuehrer wished it." 45

The politics of 1984 are such that the three superstates of Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia divide the globe. 46 War is an unceasing way of life, "looked upon as normal," 47 a condition which desires no resolution. The grand rivals set only limited objectives, knowing that a genuine "balance of power" prevents any final victory. No real desire to eliminate one's opponents exists because no real conflict of interests exists. More power is the only interest, and so war is never strategic. Each superstate is self-sufficient, and its economy in no way depends on any of the other two polities. 48 The stalemate is generally set while warfare is confined essentially to desolate and uninhabited territories vital to no one. 49 Never is one superstate's vital interests threatened by another. 50

But constant warfare, as Winston discovers, favors the interests of the Party in several ways. First, the problems of unemployment, surplus production, and the looming specter of economic depression are solved. Political stability is enforced by economic predictability. Consumer products are

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45 "Letter to H. J. Willmett (May 13, 1944)," Journalism and Letters, III, 149.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 154.
49 Ibid., p. 155.
50 Ibid.
minimized—life is bleak, and full of cheap gin—and production priorities are geared for the tools of war. In proportion to production, public consumption benefits little. Yet, employment is full: continuous production is guaranteed since consumption by the ceaseless destruction of war is assured.51

A second advantage of warfare to the interests of those in power is that it denies any opportunity to the public to become "too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent."52 Deprived of the habit of private indulgences, the masses are encouraged to transform their sentiments to fanatical patriotism demanded by the war effort. Whether or not a war is actually in progress is irrelevant: what matters is the fanatical state of mind, the blindly zealous patriotism to a greater cause, the perpetuation of those in power.53

Chronic hardship is intended to allow no opportunity for reflection and analysis, nor the leisure for discovering the vast potential of one's self. In a perpetual state of poverty, the Party assumes that rebellion cannot find roots in a tired mind and exhausted body. Power, then, is more greatly assured to the Party through the state of continuous warfare.

A third effect of continuous warfare is the mania for total insulation in the name of national security. As a consequence, no citizen is ever allowed to meet a foreigner, learn another language, or discover another standard by which

51 Ibid., p. 157.  52 Ibid.  53 Ibid., p. 158.
to view the world. An intensive provincialism is the result, and orthodoxy becomes the highest good; thus an unwavering allegiance to the status quo and those in power becomes a sacred task. But if contact with other peoples and different habits of mind were condoned, then the hermetically enclosed world might be smashed, and the propensity for war hysteria, "the fear, hatred, and self-righteousness," would very likely disappear. Thus the real war in 1984 is not among superstates, but by those in power against their own people. War, as Winston reads, is an "internal affair." The fruit of continuous warfare is a stable society, not any new foreign conquests. War thwarts economic recessions, offers an intense orthodoxy and monolithic idea of propriety, and, above all, it supports those in power.

If the totalitarian trend were to develop fully, Orwell speculated, England would surely sink from the world scene as a leading power, absorbed by a single superstate that would yet encompass part of the European continent. But "the United States will survive as a great power," indifferent to who controls Europe, be it Germany or Russia. Orwell thought Americans were essentially pragmatic and opportunistic, and he maintained that most of them would have liked a global division "between two or three monster states which had reached

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54 Ibid., p. 162.  
55 Ibid., p. 164.  
57 Ibid., p. 386.
their natural boundaries and could bargain with one another on economic issues without being troubled by ideological differences. Americans tended to "admire size for its own sake" and glorify success as an end in itself. Their "anti-British sentiment" was most natural to them since they clearly admired the political successes of the Germans and the Russians. As to the choice between Germany and Russia, Americans would opportunistically have sided with "whichever seemed stronger at the moment."

A strong industrial stage of a society's development must produce some kind of political collectivism, Orwell insisted. But, as O'Brien tells Winston in *1984*, collectivism is the very method by which oligarchies remain in tact. Any successful oligarchy depends on the collectivist system to first set the stage for its entrance. Given the collectivist framework, the ruthlessly selfish will take what they will in the name of "the people," confiscating once private properties and the critical positions of influence so as to build their personal power at public expense.

Any orthodox Marxist will insist that socialism is bound to flourish after capitalism disappears. But, as O'Brien indicates, nothing of the sort happened after the revolution of

58 Ibid.  
59 Ibid.  
60 Ibid.  
61 *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p. 220.  
63 Ibid.
the 1950's and 1960's: ruthless groups interested only in raw power seized political control. They were in fact cynical realists with a contempt for humanist ideals, though they established their regime right under the unsuspecting noses of the public because they called themselves "socialists," and were fluent in its rhetoric. Intent on emphasizing their newly won power, these new and arrogant leaders made sure that "economic inequality" became a permanent part of the status quo.64

Socialists had not been able to forecast "the rise of Fascism," Orwell said in 1946, nor had they been able to correctly assess it after its rise.65 For Hitler's "National Socialism" was only an unabashed grab for power, he maintained. And Stalin's Marxian Socialism was sheer barbarism. Fascism and Communism were not genuine forms of Socialism, only cynical schemes imposing more tyranny and elitism. Their mutual aims were to eliminate any individual differences and to impress rigid conventions.66 Although he remained disturbed about the trends of monopoly, Orwell thought an effort "to humanise the collectivist society" was certainly better than trying to call back the past.67 The mode of economy in the nineteenth century

64Ibid.
might have been better in some respects, but, on analysis, few people would really want to go back to it.\textsuperscript{68} Returning to \textit{laissez-faire} economics would probably mean an oppression worse than the systems of modern collectivism:

The trouble with competitions is that somebody wins them. \ldots Free capitalism necessarily leads to monopoly \ldots and since the vast majority of people would far rather have State regimentation than slumps and unemployment, the drift towards collectivism is bound to continue if popular opinion has any say in the matter.\textsuperscript{69}

Thus democratic socialism is no inevitable stage of history, for the future could well become fascist, instead.\textsuperscript{70} With the conditions of true socialism, however, industrialism is inescapable: heavy machinery becomes essential since the demands of socialism necessarily deviate from a strictly agrarian lifestyle. "Socialism is essentially an urban creed."\textsuperscript{71} By definition, true socialism requires constant intercommunication and exchange of goods between all parts of the earth; it demands some degree of centralised control; it demands an approximately equal standard of life for all human beings and probably a certain uniformity of education.\textsuperscript{72}

But the technically grounded state may face a qualitative problem, Orwell felt. The problem is that a machine-oriented society may lose its spiritual priorities and thereby degenerate

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{69}Review of "The Road to Serfdom by F. A. Hayek, The Mirror of the Past by K. Zilliacus," Journalism and Letters, III, 118.
\item \textsuperscript{70}The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 220.
\item \textsuperscript{71}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{72}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
into demanding quantitative production for its own sake.\textsuperscript{73} Certainly an infinite production of airplanes and tractors is not the kind of progress which is genuine socialism. A universal rise in the material standard of living must be accomplished if any progress is to be realized, but that is only part of the picture: more must follow if "progress" is not to degenerate into a society's self-infatuation. A moral standard is also required: an installation of universal brotherhood, of liberty, justice, and decency must also follow if "progress" is to avoid becoming "a swindle."\textsuperscript{74} Implicit in socialism is "justice and common decency."\textsuperscript{75} More than simply correcting economic abuses, socialists must strive to upgrade moral attitudes.\textsuperscript{76} "Socialism means the overthrow of tyranny, at home as well as abroad. So long as you keep that fact to the front, you will never be in much doubt as to who are your supporters."\textsuperscript{77} Socialism demands of its followers great responsibilities, great caution that the movement is not perverted by power-obsessed groups; that material gain does not become an end in itself; and that a spiritual and moral upgrading is as vividly realized as the glittering skyscrapers men have built to honor themselves.

Most Socialists have insisted that man's problems will be solved once all hunger is eradicated.\textsuperscript{78} But Orwell argued

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., p. 221. \textsuperscript{74}Ibid., p. 223. \textsuperscript{75}Ibid., p. 208. \\
\textsuperscript{76}Ibid. \textsuperscript{77}Ibid., p. 254. \\
\textsuperscript{78}"As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 103. Also in Tribune, March 3, 1944.
against this statement:

... the truth is the opposite: when one's belly is empty, one's only problem is an empty belly. It is when we have got away from drudgery and exploitation that we shall really start wondering about man's destiny and the reason for his existence.\textsuperscript{79}

Starvation, he maintained, wrings the mind of all intellectual development since only "the next meal" is interesting.\textsuperscript{80}

In \textit{Down and Out in Paris and London}, Orwell described the slums of Paris as a place where people have grown eccentric from their poverty. Isolated and partly insane, these Parisians no longer strive for normality or decency. Poverty, Orwell explained, tends to lower the level of bourgeois morality, and free one from the compulsion to be proper, "just as money frees people from work."\textsuperscript{81} Later, in the same book, Orwell described Paddy, a tramp on the English road with whom he had traveled. Typifying the general condition of those social rejects during the Depression, Paddy has degenerated beyond all hope of redemption. Having lived for "two years" on just "bread and margarine," his body and soul have become as inferior as the synthetic stuff on which he has subsisted.\textsuperscript{82} "It was malnutrition and not any native vice that had destroyed his manhood."\textsuperscript{83} The ultimate test for life and success in the

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80}"The Spike," \textit{Journalism and Letters}, I, 39-40. Also in \textit{Adelphi}, April, 1931. Signed as Eric Blair.


\textsuperscript{82}Ibid., p. 153.

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid.
modern world has been money, Orwell said, and beggars have been considered failures as a consequence. Because they have "failed," they have been judged as foul. But if begging were suddenly to become a lucrative profession, how quickly it would become "respectable!" Guarantee certain material gain and advantage to handouts, and see how honored and admired panhandlers, tramps, and hoboes become.

But misery, as Orwell saw it, was everywhere, not only among prostitutes and tramps, but in the middle-classes, as well. Indeed, talking about the pretensions of bourgeois life, "respectable" poverty is always the worst. The frightful doom of a decent working man suddenly thrown on the streets after a lifetime of steady work, his agonised struggles against economic laws which he does not understand, the disintegration of families, the corroding sense of shame...

Orwell abhorred the writers, priests, and politicians who criticize "the working-class Socialist" for having material values. The toiling man has only wanted what is basically required in order to live decently:

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.

\[84\] Ibid., p. 174. \[85\] Ibid. \[86\] Ibid. \[87\] The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 181. \[88\] "Looking Back on the Spanish War," Collected Essays, p. 221. Also in Journalism and Letters, II, 265. \[89\] Ibid., p. 222.
This is no more than the critics of Socialism themselves would demand. The real exploiters of the proletariat are the ones who trick the worker into believing that war is for the common benefit, and not "a racket." The real exploiters give war and no bread. The poverty and natural decency of working class people, which Orwell alleged, made him reflect that only the powerless are decent. And yet, lest they be confused, Socialism and Utopianism ought to be distinguished, Orwell maintained. The designer of the positive Utopia has mainly been interested in simplistically showing the perfection of life found in living "more fully." Socialists do not claim to be able to make the world perfect: they claim to be able to make it better. And any thinking Socialist will concede . . . that when economic injustice has been righted, the fundamental problem of man's place in the universe will still remain. But what the Socialist does claim is that the problem cannot be dealt with while the average human being's preoccupations are necessarily economic. It is all summed up in Marx's saying that after Socialism has arrived, human history can begin.

Orwell felt ambivalent toward Marxism since working-class

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90 Ibid.
91 "Letter to the Editor of the New English Weekly (May 26, 1938)," Journalism and Letters, I, 332.
93 "As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 64. Also in the Tribune, December 24, 1943.
95 "As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 64.
Socialists, like working-class Catholics, always put him more at ease than pedantic middle-class Marxists. The former were generally weak on the technical details of their ideology, but their personal loyalty and feeling for justice seemed infinitely more superior to him than the cliché-ridden ideas of the Marxists. He could find no admiration for, or interest in, the dialectical method, for Marxists were only expert jugglers of "the pea-and-thimble trick with those three mysterious entities, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. . . ."\textsuperscript{97} Orwell indeed resented the harm they had done to Socialism in their shameless tactics and in their economic determinism. They had not properly understood that "the essential aims of Socialism are justice and liberty."\textsuperscript{98} Denying the importance of man's spiritual side, they had erred in their intentions for "a materialistic Utopia."\textsuperscript{99} This had consequently made Fascism strong, for "it has been able to pose as the upholder of the European tradition, and to appeal to Christian belief, to patriotism and to the military virtues."\textsuperscript{100} Given this credit against the debit of mass exterminations, it is plain that Fascism contains both good and bad. The task is to extract the good and make the world understand that "whatever good Fascism contains is also implicit in Socialism."\textsuperscript{101} Socialism is the humanist's one real hope against Fascism.\textsuperscript{102} But unless

\textsuperscript{96}The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 253.
\textsuperscript{97}Ibid., p. 209.
\textsuperscript{98}Ibid., p. 246.
\textsuperscript{99}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{101}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102}Ibid., p. 247.
the image "of vegetarians with wilting beards, of Bolshevik commissars (half gangster, half gramophone), of earnest ladies in sandals, shock-headed Marxists chewing polysyllables, escaped Quakers, birth-control fanatics and Labour Party backstairs crawlers" were eliminated, Orwell feared that the public would desert the Socialist cause for the less crankish Fascists.103

The Socialist movement seemed to have attracted "every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist and feminist in England."104 Such cranks discouraged too many "decent people" from becoming Socialists, Orwell lamented. But he added that this was to be expected since Bohemians would rather commune with Nature on their heads than to keep in touch "with common humanity."105

Orwell noted that if the "proletarians" were to constitute the core of the Socialist movement, then it would be wise to define who constituted the "proletarians."106 Certainly, the most common group he recollected was the lower class consisting of dock workers, mechanics, factory workers, and miners. But a second group could add substantial numbers to Socialism: the working middle-class.107 Here were the office clerks, school teachers, engineers, and civil servants who, together with the lower classes, were being exploited by a common oppressor: bankers, industrialists, and other capitalists.

103Ibid., p. 248. 104Ibid., p. 206.
105Ibid., pp. 206-207. 106Ibid., p. 258.
107Ibid.
Together, however, the lower and middle classes could strengthen the Socialist movement for the common benefits of greater social justice and equity. A temporary coalition of interests could mount an effective offensive against the injustices of monopoly capitalism. Orwell was careful to note that the actual dissolution of social classes was perhaps not feasible, contrary to the Marxist position, calling it...

... a wild ride into the darkness, and it may be that at the end of it the smile will be that of a tiger. With loving though slightly patronising smiles we set out to greet our proletarian brothers, and behold! our proletarian brothers—in so far as we understand them—are not asking for our greetings, they are asking us to commit suicide. When the bourgeois ... takes flight ... it may carry him to Fascism.108

If any social class has retained its sense of dignity and responsibility, it is the working class which has not been tempted by revolutionary slogans or wild promises of power, Orwell said in The Road to Wigan Pier.109 In the midst of world-wide economic depression, the common man had resolutely made "the best of things on a fish-and-chips standard."110 Thanks to him, England had avoided any insurrection which "could only lead to futile massacres and a regime of savage repression."111 In his diary, in 1984, Winston writes that all hope for decency and humanism depends on the working class.112 For by not understanding the Party's will to power,

the proletariat preserve their sanity, and protect their inclinations for simple feelings and satisfactions. Uninterested in larger political schemes, they are harmless to the Party. And, because they are the most sane, by virtue of their simple existence, they merely digest the Party's propaganda with no ill effects.\textsuperscript{113}

But Winston, too, values simplicity. Visiting an antique shop one day, he spies a glass paperweight which attracts him less by its magnificent design than by its hint of being possessed by another age, "an age quite different from the present one."\textsuperscript{114} Here is one of those tangible reminders of the past, an item which stubbornly persists in an age which hates concrete reminders of the past, themselves vivid obstacles to a complete revision of history while they last. As the antique dealer tells Winston, the demand for antiques is nearly non-existent in this age of instant revisions.\textsuperscript{115} In fact, anything which echoes the past, anything which is beautiful or which evokes a sentimental feeling is always a little suspect in this age of Party autonomy.\textsuperscript{116} The less historical evidence, the better. With obsolete knicknacks, useless bric-a-brac and sundry ancient symbols of human sentiment, also will disappear the evidence that man is a creature of compassion, conscience, and docency. Given a clean start, Orwell suggested, absolute

\textsuperscript{113}Ibid., p. 129. \textsuperscript{114}Ibid., p. 81. \\
\textsuperscript{115}Ibid., p. 80. \textsuperscript{116}Ibid., p. 81.
dictators might well be able to mold man into a hard and unfeeling diversity, and man's history perhaps will be entirely different: regimented, non-venturous, non-speculative, non-feeling; without joy or hardship; and without honesty or hypocrisy. But Winston imagines a time when individual differences are appreciated for their own sake, when diversity is valued for the promise of its surprises, and when the truth is regarded as concrete, objective, and unmalleable.117

The Party's terrible evil toward its members is in convincing them that "mere impulses" and "mere feelings" do not count.118 To succeed, to survive in the Party, means to deny any personal feelings and to follow the daily revision of reality. Those who insist on an independent inner life are vaporized, "lifted clean out of the stream of history," and erased from any conscious memory.119 But Winston reckons that there must be a healthy antidote to such flagrant corruption, and he realizes that personal loyalties must be fought for if one is to be alive and not merely existent:

What mattered were individual relationships, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself. The proles, it suddenly occurred to him, had remained in this condition.120

The proles were loyal to no absurd abstractions; they were dedicated to a simple life; they alone remained human. They still feel a happiness and simplicity which Winston had

117 Ibid., p. 27.  
118 Ibid., p. 136.  
119 Ibid.  
120 Ibid.
forgotten. Tyranny must mean exploited relationships. For to act with compassion and decency means a certain freedom from oppression for everyone, and the opportunity to be more fully human.

As Orwell saw it, socialism is the common man's answer to monopolistic tyranny. Man's progress depends on compassionate unity, or "brotherhood" which Orwell called "socialism." Yet this dogma is confusing, for nearly every creed claimed some identity with "Socialism." Orwell fought for ideals of "justice," "liberty," "equality," and, especially, "decency." To his mind, these were qualities of brotherhood which generally amount to "democratic socialism." By remaining uninstitutionalized, Orwell managed to remain free from the tyranny of his ideals. Indeed, without a formal program of socialism, and based on his anarchistic temperament, Orwell had the advantage of remaining an eternal critic. But if he was an anarchist, then it was against the perversions of Socialism which he protested. For socialism, to him, could only mean human progress, a condition of the world which required constant examination. In his concern for the individual, he set compassion above propriety. Orwell was indeed a compassionate socialist, not a Socialist.

121 Ibid.
CHAPTER III

DICTATORSHIP AND THE INTELLECTUAL

The working-class man has been one social element affected by twentieth-century dictatorship, Orwell maintained. But a second element of society affected has been the intelligentsia. Indeed, Orwell was inclined to view the proletariat and modern intelligentsia as antithetical in their sentiments toward dictatorship. If the common man was a remarkable example of democratic virtues, then the intellectual was a political novice who flirts with dictatorship. Indeed, Orwell could find little difference between "right-wing" and "left-wing" intellectuals since he viewed Fascism and Communism as equal tyrannies. Both have espoused repressive orthodoxies, and both have censored the eccentricities of liberal thought, he maintained. In this sense, both have been reactionary in their politics, having little feeling for the aesthetic impulse. Thus the intelligentsia have generally sought a stifling orthodoxy and have not sought continuous progressive change for society and the individual. As propagandists and bureaucrats, intellectuals have denied their role as liberal thinkers, always whitewashing the evils of their political camps. With an impulse toward oligarchy, these professionals have threatened the very life of those few who have remained aesthetically and progressively
inclined, and they have clouded the novelist's future with the possibility of total censorship.

If what Orwell saw as a trend toward oligarchy and dictatorship continued, then writers were either going to have to find other work, or they were willingly going to have to produce the narcotic "that a privileged minority demands" in such circumstances.\(^1\) Especially since Hitler, Orwell maintained, free expression has been shamelessly censored.\(^2\) It seemed to him that newspapers will eventually offer little more than propaganda, advertisements, and "a little well-censored news to sugar the pill."\(^3\) As it was, political persecution and intellectual dishonesty had become the theme of the world, and both threatened to annihilate liberal thought. For indeed, freedom of thought will be at first a deadly sin and later on a meaningless abstraction. The autonomous individual is going to be stamped out of existence. But this means that literature, in the form in which we know it, must suffer at least a temporary death. The literature of liberalism is coming to an end and the literature of totalitarianism has not yet appeared and is barely imaginable.\(^4\)

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1"Why I Joined the Independent Labour Party," An Age Like This, 1920-1940, Vol. I of The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 vols. (New York, 1968), p. 337. Hereafter, this collection will be abbreviated as Journalism and Letters, followed by the appropriate volume and page number. This essay was originally printed in the London New Leader, June 24, 1938.

2Ibid.


Good writing is rarely impersonal, Orwell asserted, and only sometimes mechanical. Superior writing depends on a feeling for honesty and truth, a necessary condition for its sustained quality. A democratic climate is indispensably necessary for significant cultural contributions, Orwell claimed, ignoring such writers as Koestler and Malraux. Dictatorship negates the thoughtful insights of the writer by demanding that his writing be only senseless violence and pornography. Thus, according to Orwell, citizens will remain ignorant of anything but the crude and sensational. Orthodoxy has always damaged literature by its censorship, and literature has always fared worst under repression. "How many Roman Catholics have been good novelists?" he asked. Novels have always been a liberal and progressive-minded art form. Novels, he claimed, are the work of minds intent on honesty, glad to defy old loyalties while asserting new ones. Most superior English writers have tended to be reactionaries, like Yeats, he admitted, yet their superiority has in a large measure been due to their liberal sense of forthright honesty.


6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.


9 Ibid.

10 George Orwell, "Poetry and Prejudice," The Times Literary Supplement, March 6, 1943.
Modern totalitarianism, however, has wanted to crush this liberal quality and to make the writer "toe the line, or shut up."\textsuperscript{11} The choice for unwilling intellectuals and artists under dictatorship is simple, then: (1) silence the conscience and grind out propaganda or (2) quit producing and live a life frustrated by the creative impulse.

Aesthetic writers like Baudelaire and Henry Miller have been passengers on a sinking ship called Liberalism, and they have rapidly become curiosities of the past, slipping from sight in the shadow of a new, and not necessarily improved, era.\textsuperscript{12} Perhaps a job in propaganda or public relations awaits the professional writer in the future, Orwell said; if so, then it is certain that the subjective life will no longer play a substantial part in his work.\textsuperscript{13} The world will no longer belong to the independent writer since significant writers are natural liberals and liberalism is being threatened.\textsuperscript{14} The best approach for the aesthete is to go underground and ride out the political trends, Orwell said. At least in exile, the aesthete might continue to live out the romanticism of his personal pleasures and sufferings, the remains of his subjective life.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11}"Inside the Whale," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 148. Also in \textit{Journalism and Letters}, I, 518.
\item \textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 157.
\item \textsuperscript{13}"Poetry and the Microphone," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 322. Also in \textit{Journalism and Letters}, II, 335.
\item \textsuperscript{14}"Inside the Whale," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 157. Also in \textit{Journalism and Letters}, I, 526.
\item \textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.} p. 158.
\end{itemize}
political preoccupations drive away any interest in liberal criticism, such people have little actual choice in the matter, Orwell insisted.16

Even the best society cannot be shaped around its writers and artists, Orwell realized; for it is the nature of intelligence to plunge ahead and create instability for the more general society.17 But civilization will surely perish if this group is not duly subsidized, he added. State support of the avant garde involves a problem of political priorities that he had never seen sufficiently resolved: the simultaneous guarantees of freedom and bread are virtually impossible for any government to promise its people.18 But innovators of culture must have free exchange if society is to prosper:

Philosophers, writers, artists, even scientists, not only need encouragement and an audience, they need constant stimulation from other people. It is almost impossible to think without talking.19

In 1936, Orwell denounced the blatant censorship of most "propagandist critics."20 Their intentional ambiguities, deceptions, and equivocations irked him. In Animal Farm, partisan tricks never allow one to admit a mistake or weakness.

16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 133. Also in Tribune, April 26, 1944.

Squealer refers to "readjusted" food rations, never directly admitting the critical food shortage. Given such mercuric behavior, then, it seemed to Orwell that propagandists are consistent only in their political opportunism. Most of them praise or degrade books for political reasons and neglect any aesthetic criterion. "The more I see the more I doubt whether people ever really make aesthetic judgements at all. Everything is judged on political grounds which are then given an aesthetic disguise." Art and propaganda are two different things, Orwell maintained, although in some way every painting naturally reflects a political point of view, and "every literary movement centers about a political program." Given such conditions of repression, then, why should men continue to write?

Men write for quite basic reasons, Orwell alleged. If they do not write to make money, then they write to see their own art, of which the worst criticism can only be a lack of

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25"English Writing in Total War," The New Republic, CV (July-December, 1941), 57.
26"Letter to Jack Common (Wednesday, late March?, 1938)," Journalism and Letters, I, 310.
sincerity. The motive is neither commercial nor aesthetic, nor even for fame, then it must be political. It must be to make "political propaganda," the most prevalent motive for contemporary writers. But the greatest failure of propagandists is their own colossal ignorance of what they talk about, Orwell said. He felt that true understanding of political trends means a direct participation in them, and he recognized that few critics have had such experience. For mature judgments, he felt, are the products of being disappointed by political expediencies. Most political writers tend to fight great wars and revolutions only in their minds, and they do not know the pain of battle, he said. To them, struggle is only a word. With such realization, Orwell forecasted a continuation of abused rhetoric and notorious inaccuracies.

The deliberate confusion of art and politics understandably depressed Orwell. Not many people at all have really taken the time to admit that aesthetic criteria for intellectual soundness have been subordinated to political opportunism.

30 Ibid.
To his mind, such an arrangement is no more than a kind of perverse chauvinism. Nearly all the prevailing ideological and political affiliations seemed indistinguishable since all were engaged in the same methods of deception. Orwell was plagued by all those "smelly little orthodoxies" then competing for supremacy. Fascism was "socialism," Communism was "socialism," Capitalism was "freedom," and Catholicism was "salvation." All were swindles and oppressions, and they all smelled the same:

... If you are all right inside you don't have to be told that [a creed]... is putrid. You can smell it—it stinks. All people who are morally sound have known since about 1931 that the Russian regime stinks... The English intelligentsia have been so conditioned that they simply cannot imagine what a totalitarian government is like.

The brands of Fascism subscribed to by Hitler and Mussolini had in fact differed from that of Franco's, Orwell asserted, for Franco's initial efforts had been more to re-establish feudalism than to institute Fascism. Supporting him had been "the aristocracy and the Church" while varied elements of the "liberal bourgeoisie" had allied with the proletariat against

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33 Ibid., p. 258.
34 Ibid.
36 "Letter to Humphry House (April 11, 1940)," Journalism and Letters, I, 532.
such despotism. What one should notice, Orwell stressed, is that in Germany and in Italy the "liberal bourgeoisie" had sided with the Fascists because it was in their interest to do so. But in Spain, a tyranny more ancient than the contemporary forms of Communism and Fascism had attempted a new life in order to crush all liberal and democratic institutions. How then may man claim that progress is inevitable? To Orwell, promises for a better future seemed like a great swindle. The general run of English intellectuals had swallowed the idea that moral progress is an automatic product of technical advance in heavy industry with its superior tanks and bombs. But to Orwell, this was an absurdity. Mere breakthroughs in science need not make the world a better place in which to live, and given the perverse varieties of socialism, the mere hope for liberty and justice need not work wonders, either. Intellectuals had, in fact, merely whitewashed man's cravings for raw power, making it "respectable" through infinite rationalization. Their dishonesty had been shameless.

The general run of politics, therefore, was lopsided for Orwell since no one in power held "both firm opinions and a balanced outlook." No one seemed to see facts clearly.

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38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 "Letter to Humphry House (April 11, 1940)," Journalism and Letters, I, 532.
41 Ibid.
"Everyone is dishonest, and everyone is utterly heartless towards people who are outside the immediate range of his own interests and sympathies." In 1984, the Party's pressure to conform is overwhelming. The citizen is dissuaded from thinking that his personal perceptions are correct; he must deny that any such thing as "external reality" actually exists. The greatest heresy of Party members is to rely on "common sense." The greatest sin to the Party is empiricism, "the evidence of your eyes and ears." Winston is thus the greatest current heretic when he asserts:

The obvious, the silly, and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall toward the earth's center.

As an official writer for the Party, Winston is required to revise one fiction and come up with another. Straight from his head he must invent a new "fact" to fit the newest Party version of man's history. Correspondence with the concrete world is no criterion for truth, he discovers: only consistency with the Party's current program is acceptable.

In Orwell's opinion, the preference for objectivity was yielding to the preference for facts which had "to fit in with

43 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
the words and prophecies of some infallible fuehrer." History already seemed to have "stopped" since no common history could possibly be accepted by everyone. Or, in another way, it seemed that history moves in a spiral pattern. With no actual repetition, past events yet seemed to float into the present. As Orwell said, "Certain figures, arguments and habits of mind always recur." Ideas and sentiments, feelings and perspectives in one age, then, are likely to suddenly surface in a new age, after having been thought dead and finished for all times. To bother at all with a progressive interpretation of history thus mainly indicates an attempt to discover some sterile meaning in a crooked political world.

That sympathy for the truth can be "turned on and off like a tap according to political expediency" struck Orwell most vividly. Modern intellectuals seemed unable to recognize that the imperative foundation for a progressive society must be "common decency," regardless of the special institutions which evolve. Selfish interests have warped the integrity

48 "Letter to H. J. Willmett (May 18, 1944)," Journalism and Letters, III, 149.
49 Ibid.
of intellectual endeavor, and sadly, Orwell admitted, power politics has been a game played by bullies and bigots. Power, consequently, has come to madmen and lunatics who generally give no "damn about the world," and whose only interest is self-interest and feathering private nests. Matters concerning human welfare have been inessential to them, Orwell implied, and decency has become a stranger.

Thus, human progress did indeed seem dubious. World trends in 1944 appeared directed toward non-democratic institutions, toward established caste systems where political power was centralized and hoarded from the common man. Tremors of "emotional nationalism" were shaking the world, and the tendency to discredit the concrete truth seemed especially prevailing. Indeed, "nationalism, religious bigotry and feudal loyalty" were great forces of insanity replacing the instincts for truth and universal brotherhood. As Orwell had asserted in 1941, "no thinking person any longer takes the

55 Ibid.
57 "Letter to H. J. Willmett (May 18, 1944)," Journalism and Letters, III, 149.
58 Ibid.
continuity of civilization for granted."  

Orwell remembered agreeing with Arthur Koestler that by 1936 objective history had died. Both men had been thinking generally about dictatorship and especially about the Spanish Civil War. Orwell said that he had always noticed the typical inaccuracies of newspapers, how events were mistakenly reported, but nothing compared to the way newspapers had misreported the events of the Spanish Civil War. Events had been reported which bore no relationship to factual evidence, not even to common lies or rumors. Monumental battles had been reported when in fact no armies had engaged, and absolute silence had been maintained when "hundreds of men had been killed." He had seen brave soldiers falsely condemned as cowards and traitors, and others who had never seen a shot fired hailed as the heroes of imaginary victories; and I saw newspapers in London retailing these lies and eager intellectuals building emotional superstructures over events that had never happened. I saw, in fact, history being written not in terms of what happened but of what ought to have happened according to various "party lines."

In 1984, all vital records of the past have been destroyed, if not deliberately abused. Every bit of recorded evidence has

60 "English Writing in Total War," The New Republic, CV (July-December, 1941), 57.


62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.
been revised, and writers continue to adjust history to the political needs of the moment. "History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right," Winston tells Julia. 67 In the Spanish Civil War, most propagandists had been liars and cowards, Orwell said in Homage to Catalonia, for they had lived "hundreds of miles from the bullets and the mud," smugly creative behind their typewriters and daringly safe from the searing action at the front. 68 They had distorted the truth and "in many cases would have run a hundred miles sooner than fight." 69 But few things change in wartime, Orwell suggested: there is the conscripted civilian who is sent off to kill the enemy, and there are the frenzied journalists who report the "news" to the solid citizen back home, the one who never gets close to the real situation "except on the briefest propaganda-tours." 70 Critical of the dishonesty in news reporting, Orwell said that it may be that "when the next great war comes we may see that sight unprecedented in all history, a jingo with a bullet-hole in him." 71

This statement seems to be an oversimplification, considering the deaths of Ernie Pyle, who was covering the Pacific during World War II; Life photographer Paul Schutzer, who was killed during the 1967 Egyptian-Israeli war; and NBC correspondent Wells Hangen, who was killed in Vietnam during 1970.

67 1984, p. 128. 68 p. 68. 69 Ibid. 70 Ibid. 71 Ibid., p. 69.
If these men were typical of their profession, then perhaps it is right to conclude that "jingoism" was a special, although not unique, feature of the 1930's. Yet falsification had certainly been the order of the day: deception and censorship had been most prevalent. As he remarked, losers will never write their own history: those in power will see to that.72

Orwell said that he was prompted to forecast the world's future as "pretty grim."73 Propagandists had left the past in dispute, confused and variable, but he still trusted that "the liberal habit of mind," that which saw truth as objective and publicly discernible, would somehow endure.74 Reality was more than a whimsical invention for Orwell: it was really "out there," independent of the knower. Yet we could all be coming to a time when "two and two will make five when the Leader says so."75 He could indeed visualize a ruling class which deceives its followers from the truth, but not itself. "One has only to think of the sinister possibilities of the radio, state-controlled education and so forth," he said, "to realise that 'the truth is great and will prevail' is a prayer

72"As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 88. Also in Tribune, February 4, 1944.

73"Letter to Rayner Heppenstall (July 31, 1937)," Journalism and Letters, I, 280.

74"As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 88.

rather than an axiom."76

Totalitarianism is peculiar, indeed, Orwell observed, for "though it controls thought, it does not fix it."77 It establishes truths beyond reproach, yet changes them anytime the situation warrants.78 Dogma in the fascist state is essential since "absolute obedience" is required; yet the "needs of power politics" do themselves inevitably dictate periodic changes.79 This kind of state claims infallibility while concurrently attacking "the very concept of objective truth."80 History, then, shares the curious qualities of being sacrosanct and expendable at the same time.

In further conversation with Koestler, Orwell acknowledged the difficulty of remaining objective, especially after being hit by a bomb.81 The unavoidable horror of such an experience, he said, prompts the conclusion that two arms wrenched from your enemy is just compensation for the one arm lost by your brother.82 Having suffered through the blitzes of World War II, Orwell said that to be both objective and alive means that

76Ibid.
78Ibid.
79Ibid.
80Ibid.
82Ibid.
the only apparent alternatives are to smash dwelling 
houses to powder, blow out human entrails and burn holes 
in children with lumps of thermite, or . . . be enslaved 
by people who are more ready to do these things than you 
are yourself; as yet no one has suggested a practicable 
way out.83

Indeed, Orwell concurred with Koestler that Europe will be 
lost if intellectuals and the general public take even a dis-
interested stand while being bullied by Fascists and Communists, 
alike.84

In Orwell's opinion, intellectual neutrality is not pos-
sible. Rather, solid conviction must meet enemy ideology 
squarely before the decent and civilized way of life can sur-
vive. One must make war on warmongers:

When a . . . population rises in revolt you have got to 
suppress it, and you can only do so by methods which 
make nonsense of any claim for the superiority of . . . 
civilisation. In order to rule over barbarians, you 
have got to become a barbarian yourself.85

In fighting dragons, Orwell said, quoting Nietzsche, one para-
doctically must be a dragon.86 Pacifism will not work, and 
Orwell indeed was willing to physically "fight for Socialism 
and against Fascism."87 Active socialism was the only effective 
kind of Socialism for Orwell: a mere sympathy for it will never

83 Ibid.  
84 Ibid., p. 295.  
85 Review of "Zest for Life by Johann Wöller, translated 
from the Danish by Claude Napier," Journalism and Letters, I, 
235. Also in Time and Tide, October 17, 1936.  
86 Review of "Spanish Testament by Arthur Koestler," 
Journalism and Letters, I, 295.  
87 "Letter to Rayner Heppenstall (July 31, 1937)," Journalism 
and Letters, I, 280.
work. Even the distortion of facts seemed, ironically, a "positive duty" to him during World War II; for, he maintained, real human progress demands "the continuous destruction of myths" and the preservation of concrete facts. Here, then, is what separates Orwell the pamphleteer from Henry Miller the aesthete: Orwell was a moral crusader making vital criticism against dictatorship in the only effective way he knew how: through propaganda.

During World War II, the English common people had been sturdier and less willing to surrender to Fascism than had been most condescending intellectuals, Orwell said in 1946. Some intellectuals, in fact, had continued their defeatism even when victory was clearly in sight, "partly because they were better able to visualize the dreary years of warfare that lay ahead." Imaginations of this sort certainly did weaken morale and do their damage: the best way to stop wars, they had reasoned, is to give up, forfeiting victory. They had grown desperate; the prospect of a lifetime of wars had appeared intolerable to them. But the inclination to predict future

91 Ibid. 92 Ibid.
trends as they currently are is more than "simply a bad habit," Orwell said.\textsuperscript{93} Rather, it is "a major mental disease" rooted in both timidity and power-worship, akin to cowardice itself.\textsuperscript{94}

Yet a second reason for intellectual defeatism, according to Orwell, had been the general disenchantment with England.\textsuperscript{95} Had not Chamberlain bowed and scraped before Hitler? From this experience many intellectuals had found it difficult to restrain their admiration for the determined enemy.\textsuperscript{96} The "power, energy, and cruelty" of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany had appeared attractive, indeed.\textsuperscript{97} The intelligentsia looking to Russia for example had seen a place where the traditional aristocracy had been abolished, and where the proletariat had been solidly disenfranchised.\textsuperscript{98} They had imagined that the Soviets would offer them limitless power, and freedom from the traditional cramps of English society.\textsuperscript{99} Significantly, Orwell maintained, the English intelligentsia had been attracted to the Soviets "only after" the latter's totalitarian inclinations had been clearly established.\textsuperscript{100} What the "English Russophile intelligentsia" had really wanted was to abolish the established socialist premise of equality and create a social hierarchy in which they could grab the power.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{93}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{94}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{95}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{96}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{97}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{98}Ibid., p. 352. \\
\textsuperscript{99}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{100}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{101}Ibid.
Orwell hated the naive liberals who imagined that the nation could be driven into revolution as soon as any "war for democracy" soured. Their "utter ignorance" of political reality sickened him. They were so inexperienced about real revolutions, so ignorant of the fact that revolution is often more tyrannical than the régime which precedes it. Their academic minds and wild imaginations did not seem to understand in any real sense the pain and fatigue, the deprivation and frustration, which he had felt during the Spanish Civil War when the Communists had subverted the revolutionary hopes of the working classes. Insofar as real progress must be gradual, contemporary political ideologists seemed never to account adequately for the evolutionary nature of history since a given era will always contain much of the preceding one.

The fallacy of most leftist thought after 1932, Orwell said, has been in wanting "to be anti-Fascist without being anti-totalitarian." The problem for leftist intellectuals has been that to criticize totalitarianism has necessarily been to criticize Marxism and the Soviet Union. Left-wing intellectuals have not been willing to admit that all political purges and concentration camps were the same. To Orwell, such

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102 "Letter to Jack Common (October 12, 1938)," Journalism and Letters, I, 357.
103 Ibid.
104 "Second Thoughts on James Burnham," The Orwell Reader, p. 348.
105 "Arthur Koestler," Collected Essays, p. 239. Also in Journalism and Letters, III, 236.
"liberals" have equivocated on the term "liberal" when calling Communism democratic:

Fascism is often loosely equated with sadism, but nearly always by people who see nothing wrong in the most slavish worship of Stalin. The truth is, of course, that the countless English intellectuals who kiss the arse of Stalin are not different from the minority who give their allegiance to Hitler or Mussolini, nor from the effeciency experts who preached "punch," "drive," "personality" and "learn to be a tiger man" in the nineteen-twenties, nor from that older generation of intellectuals, Carlyle, Creasey and the rest of them, who bowed down before German militarism. All of them are worshipping power and successful cruelty. It is important to notice that the cult of power tends to be mixed up with a love of cruelty and wickedness for their own sakes.106

The crueler and more sadistic techniques have brought the most applause, Orwell said. Tyrants have been glorified as they have soaked themselves in the blood of other people.107 Nationalism, power-worship, and sado-masochism have all been variations of the same theme which runs throughout "the outlook of all sympathizers with totalitarianism."108

Orwell was indeed bitter toward Communism since it had stolen away so many likely prospects from democratic Socialism.109 It had gone all out "to crush or discredit any party" interested in man's significant progress.110 And so, what an absurdity


107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.


when "right-wing intellectuals" denounced Communists as evil while unwittingly agreeing with them in substance and method!111 "It would be grossly unfair to suggest that power-worship is the only motive for Russophile feeling," Orwell said, "but it is one motive, and among intellectuals it is probably the strongest one."112 To deny a Stalin or a Hitler demands no great "intellectual effort," but a "moral effort" is reason enough.113 The trouble with intellectuals, Orwell maintained, is that they have tended to be so sophisticated that the simplest emotions have eluded them.114 The bourgeois Socialist criticizes the working class's crude habits of language and behavior, and refuses to identify personally with the very people he would defend.115 But Orwell explained that income level naturally dictates personal prejudices and ideologies so that such condescension is to be expected.116

Whereas virtually all intellectuals have sold out to dictatorship of some sort, the working class has never thought

111 Ibid.
112 "Second Thoughts on James Burnham," The Orwell Reader, p. 348.
113 Ibid., p. 354.
114 "My Country Right or Left," Journalism and Letters, I, 540. Also in Folios of New Writing, Autumn, 1940.
115 "Letter to Jack Common (Thursday, April 16?, 1936)," Journalism and Letters, I, 216.
116 "The Road to Wigan Pier Diary (February 6-10, 1936)," Journalism and Letters, I, 173.
that brute power determines what is morally right, Orwell reflected.\textsuperscript{117} The English proletariat in fact have been the epitome of middle-class morality.\textsuperscript{118} The common man has always only aimed for a decent living\textsuperscript{119} and non-exploitation,\textsuperscript{120} at last "technically possible."\textsuperscript{121} Orwell's main hope was that the working class would stay loyal to its traditionally democratic standards and codes of morality, that it would not sell out to dictatorship as he felt intellectuals had done everywhere.\textsuperscript{122} He had "never met a genuine working man who accepted Marxism," and the possibilities of a working class dictatorship seemed most remote.\textsuperscript{123} He confessed to being perfectly horrified by the prospects of "a dictatorship of theorists, as in Russia and Germany,"\textsuperscript{124} since fascist views seemed to have rooted "in the minds of intellectuals everywhere. . . ."\textsuperscript{125}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{117}"Charles Dickens," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 86.
\item \textsuperscript{118}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{119}"Looking Back on the Spanish War," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 216.
\item \textsuperscript{120}"Second Thought on James Burnham," \textit{The Orwell Reader}, p. 353.
\item \textsuperscript{121}"Looking Back on the Spanish War," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 216.
\item \textsuperscript{122}"Letter to Humphry House (April 11, 1940)," \textit{Journalism and Letters}, I, 532.
\item \textsuperscript{123}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{124}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{125}"Letter to Francis A. Henson [Extract] (June 16, 1949)," \textit{Journalism and Letters}, IV, 502.
\end{enumerate}
Orwell believed that English intellectuals had betrayed their country's democratic heritage. They had taken for granted the democratic suffrage guaranteed to them by their country, and they had assumed that the freedoms they possessed were inviolable. Their disloyalty was more than political: it was for Orwell a moral issue which involved ingratitude, bad faith, and the shirking of one's duty. For without dogged perseverance, civilization could not advance, much less survive. The intelligentsia were political reactionaries, and they remained oblivious to the hard realities of political persecution in a totalitarian state.
CHAPTER IV

FAITH AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The rise of scientific analysis and democratic skepticism has helped to speed the decline of absolute metaphysics in the modern world. As a consequence, man has been left with strands of faith from the past, but with no coherent ethical world view. It has been somewhat like grasping at wind-blown leaves and expecting to reclaim the tree. Orwell’s humanism recognized modern man’s dilemma, that fact that spiritually he has been cut loose from absolutes and yet finds it in his nature to want to believe in something eternal. The problem has been to satisfy this urge, to reconstruct an appropriate scheme of spiritual values.

But nearly every attempt to do this on the social scale has been a swindle, Orwell felt, for man qua man invariably becomes the last political choice. Political movements may initially seek power for man’s increased welfare, but such an ambition invariably degenerates into maintaining power as an ends in itself. Liberal movements once in power tend toward the same tyranny as their predecessors. The question for society and the individual, which Orwell saw, is one about faith and what to believe in.

The least credible idea for modern man, Orwell suggested,
is the idea of the everlasting soul. The soul is no longer a reality for man since it has become clear that orthodox Christianity has always lied to him.\(^1\) The soul has always been a fiction, Orwell asserted, and ruling classes have used it to suppress the poor and maintain the status quo. The elite have always exploited the common man and religion has helped them to do it.\(^2\) Indeed, orthodox Christianity has by far been

one of the finest weapons that the rich have ever evolved for use against the poor. . . . If you can induce the working man to believe that his desire for a decent standard of living is "materialism," you have got him where you want him.\(^3\)

Convince a man that his best interests are spiritual, and that they should not be tainted by the corruption and depravity of political questions, then "he will always remain a coolie."\(^4\)

An exploitive myth has thus tried to persuade the poor for nearly two thousand years that justice will come in the next life if they will only carry the burden of their poverty quietly in this life. Fair compensation for their misery will come later, not now. But the cynical have prospered gladly

\(^1\)"Notes on the Way," My Country Right or Left, 1940-1943, Vol. II of The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 vols. (New York, 1968), p. 15. Hereafter this collection will be abbreviated as Journalism and Letters, followed by the appropriate volume and page number. This essay was originally printed in Time and Tide, April 6, 1940.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Review of "Beggar My Neighbour by Lionel Fielden," Journalism and Letters, II, 314. Also in Horizon, September, 1943.

\(^4\)Ibid.
while the innocent have perished suffering. A general lie has run throughout society, Orwell maintained, one which has been imperative to "rip out." For, as he said, "the grave really finishes you." For every progressive thinker, rebellion for democracy was the only sensible choice. To the liberal minded, rejection of the "soul" and its metaphysical trappings has created free and dignified men, innovative types. To the reactionary, conversely, only irresponsible and deviant social types reject the soul. Yet cynicism toward convention has continued to grow over the centuries, Orwell maintained, and behold, social disintegration has been a natural consequence. Democratic revolt has increasingly displaced man's sense of universal community:

For two hundred years we had sawed and sawed and sawed at the branch we were sitting on. And in the end, much more suddenly than anyone had foreseen, our efforts were rewarded, and down we came. But unfortunately there had been a little mistake. The thing at the bottom was not a bed of roses after all, it was a cesspool full of barbed wire.

That "cesspool" was manifest in 1940 when Orwell swore that the world must have reverted to primitive times. Its

5 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
atavistic signs appalled him. The world's rulers had become prancing devils, sadistic madmen, and other lunatics who were supposed to have died out centuries before. Facing O'Brien's prosecution in 1984, Winston discovers the Party's real purpose:

"We are different from all the oligarchies of the past in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resemble ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just around the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is 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."

The Party is the eternal priest of God, and "God is power."

Power is divine: it is the highest value because it controls the minds of men. Indeed, nothing exists outside "human consciousness" to the Party. With the last man will go the whole universe. Reality, according to O'Brien, is entirely within the collective consciousness of the Party: Natural Law does not exist since it is only a mistaken relic from an ignorant past, an incongruity to the Party's reality. Power is the only reality since the Party can say that red is blue, have

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9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., p. 218.
13 Ibid., p. 219.
14 Ibid., p. 218.
the masses affirm it, and then reverse the statement in total accord, an example of Orwell's concept of "doublethink."

Orwell lamented man's loss of moral sensibility. Man has become "rather like a bisected wasp which goes on sucking jam and pretends that the loss of its abdomen does not matter." Man's political myths have so intoxicated him that he no longer recalls his moral nature. The collapse of community has produced "a sloppy idealisation of the physical side of life." In Coming Up for Air, George Bowling complains that there is "something that's gone out of us in these twenty years since the war. It's a kind of vital juice that we've squirted away until there's nothing left. All this rushing to and fro! Everlasting scramble for a bit of cash. Everlasting din of buses, bombs, radios, telephone bells. Nerves worn all to bits, empty places in our bones where the marrow ought to be."

Life is not worth living if one merely seeks leisure and lives "from birth to death in electric light and to the tune of tinned music," Orwell protested. This is not a respectable life-style, nor a truly satisfying existence. Indeed, man requires "warmth, society, leisure, comfort and security," but he also requires "solitude, creative work, and the sense of wonder." If this range of values were widely held, then

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16 Ibid., p. 155.
19 Ibid.
"the products of science and industrialism" could be better selected and distributed by the constant criterion of "does this make me more human or less human?" Then man might be conscious that bliss does not only consist of "relaxing, resting, playing poker, drinking and making love" at the same time:

For man only stays human by preserving large patches of simplicity in his life, while the tendency of many modern inventions—in particular the film, the radio and the aeroplane—is to weaken his consciousness, dull his curiosity, and, in general, drive him nearer to the animals.

At times, Orwell's definition of being human vividly contradicted the Christian definition. Perfection is not an absolute, for example, especially since sins may be committed "for the sake of loyalty. . .". Asceticism, moreover, is dangerous because of the friendships it may discourage. As to the cost of "being human," Orwell said that one should anticipate being finally "defeated and broken up by life," the unavoidable fate of loving someone else. Sainthood and detachment should be avoided "in this yogi-ridden age," in preference to the complete affirming and embracing of the present. The plain and common man is not merely and necessarily "a failed saint," significantly. Miners and insurance salesmen may indeed be virtuous men. In fact, many a good man has deliberately

20Ibid.  
21Ibid.  
23Ibid., p. 456.  
24Ibid.  
25Ibid.  
26Ibid.
shunned sainthood, Orwell alleged, while those aspiring to become saints have, quite likely, never greatly been tempted "to be human . . . ."27 At the bottom of psychological detachment is the urge to avoid "the pain of living, and above all . . . [the pain of] love, which, sexual or non-sexual, is hard work."28 Orthodox Christian and humanistic ideals are not subject to compromise, Orwell emphasized. "The point is that they are incompatible."29 The necessary choice is between "God and Man," and real liberals, because they are progressive by definition, have always picked Man.30

Orwell thus proposed Brotherhood in place of Sainthood, saying that the former appealed to the emotions of almost everyone.31 But brotherhood suggests "a common father," he allowed.32 Community requires some sense of nonpartisanship. Yet most men do feel a catholic spirit to some degree, he maintained, for: "Man is not an individual, he is only a cell in an everlasting body, and he is dimly aware of it."33 No other reason explained why men will sacrifice their own lives. Certainly outright coercion is no reason, he pondered, for what wars would last if armies had to be continually forced

27 Ibid. 28 Ibid.
29 Ibid. 30 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
into action? Orwell concluded that men willingly sacrifice themselves because they are patriots by nature, creatures who love eternal ideals like Justice, Peace, and Honor. Men, in other words, realize "some organism greater than themselves, stretching into the future and the past, within which they feel themselves to be immortal." With some hope, Orwell alleged that men

sacrifice themselves for the sake of fragmentary communities—nation, race, creed, class—and only become aware that they are not individuals in the very moment when they are facing bullets. A very slight increase of consciousness, and their sense of loyalty could be transferred to humanity itself, which is not an abstraction.

But faith has no logical grounds. To have it or not to have it merely indicates a particular "climate of the mind."

As Orwell wrote in 1933:

Sometimes in the middle autumn days,
The windless days when the swallows have flown,
And the sere elms brood in the mist,
Each tree a being, rapt, alone,

I know, not as in barren thought,
But wordlessly, as the bones know,
What quenching of my brain, what numbness,
Wait in the dark grave where I go.

And I see the people thronging the street,
The death-marked people, they and I,
Godless, rootless, like leaves drifting,
Blind to the earth and to the sky;

Nothing believing, nothing loving,  
Not in joy nor in pain, not heeding the stream  
Of precious life that flows within us,  
But fighting, toiling as in a dream.

O you who pass, halt and remember  
Whay tyrant holds your life in bond;  
Remember the fixed, reprieveless hour,  
The crushing stroke, the dark beyond.

And let us now, as men condemned,  
In peace and thrift of time stand still  
To learn our world while yet we may,  
And shape our souls, however ill;

And we will live, hand, eye and brain,  
Piously, outwardly, ever-aware,  
Till all our hours burn clear and brave  
Like candle flames in windless air;

So shall we in the rout of life  
Some thought, some faith, some meaning save,  
And speak it once before we go  
In silence to the silent grave.39

In A Clergyman’s Daughter, Dorothy is struck by a loss of faith in the Christian religion. Unable to recover her original convictions, she nevertheless concludes, after much soul searching, that it is “still better to follow in the ancient ways, than to drift in rootless freedom.”40 Though the Christian ritual promises no substantial satisfaction for her, it nevertheless will provide a congenial habit of mind, offering some emotional security in her own culture.41 Clinging to the framework which she learned as a child, she discovers “something of decency . . . not easily found in the

39”Poem,” Journalism and Letters, I, 118. Also in Adelphi, March, 1933. Signed as Eric Blair.
40 A Clergyman’s Daughter, p. 270.
41 Ibid., p. 308.
world outside." Such a decision is not entirely vapid, Orwell suggested, for it does signify some decision for life and decency.

Orwell believed that men are innately patriotic, but that the problem is to establish proper objectives so that they may progress. Hitler realized the patriotic impulse in people.

He knew that human beings don't only want comfort, safety, short working-hours, hygiene, birth control and, in general, common sense; they also, at least intermittently, want struggle and self-sacrifice, not to mention drums, flags and loyalty-parades. However they may be as economic theories, Fascism and Nazism are psychologically far sounder than any hedonistic conception of life. The same is probably true of Stalin's militarised version of Socialism. All three of the great dictators have enhanced their power by imposing intolerable burdens on their peoples. Whereas Socialism, and even capitalism in a more grudging way, have said to the people "I offer you a good time," Hitler has said to them "I offer you struggle, danger and death," and as a result a whole nation flings itself at his feet.43

Indeed, the English Communist "who died heroically in the International Brigade was public school to the core."44 Only his loyalties had shifted, "not his emotions."45 All this means is that the "spiritual need for patriotism" transcends particular ideologies: in themselves, the bogus promises of Fascism, Communism, Capitalism, and Catholicism work no magic.46

42Ibid., p. 270.
44"My Country Right or Left," Journalism and Letters, I, 540. Also in Folios of New Writing, Autumn, 1940.
45Ibid. 46Ibid.
Successful ideologies always contain an element of intense patriotism since it is "a devotion to something that is always changing and yet is felt to be mystically the same."\textsuperscript{47} It bridges "the future and the past,"\textsuperscript{48} and it is the vivid present which offers vitality and enthusiasm for living, transcendent of its long-term context. Thus, from Orwell's view, a patriotic anarchist is entirely possible.

While in Spain, Orwell discovered the magnificent performance of the Anarchist faction in the POUM.\textsuperscript{49} Indeed, apart from the Communists and labor coalitions, the Anarchists had been sterling examples of what the Left is supposed to be. Orwell explained that his original motive for joining the POUM had been merely to strike a blow against the Fascists. But more basic reasons for fighting had been to help preserve his concept of fundamental decency: respect for fair play, individual differences, and truthfulness.\textsuperscript{50} He thus admired the Anarchists for their genuine "hatred of privilege and injustice," for their resolute sincerity in what they were doing, and for their steadfastness of principle and purpose, vague as their philosophy was.\textsuperscript{51} Yet, despite any academic shortcomings, the Anarchists fought well, and they were determined to resist any force which would jeopardize the democratic gains which western

\textsuperscript{47}Section iii of Part III ("The English Revolution") in "The Lion and the Unicorn," \textit{Journalism and Letters}, II, 103.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., pp. 47-48.  

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., p. 64.
man has acquired down through the centuries.\textsuperscript{52} Indeed,

During the first two months of the war it was the Anarchists
more than anyone else who had saved the situation, and much
later than this the Anarchist militia, in spite of their
indiscipline, were notoriously the best fighters among
the purely Spanish forces.\textsuperscript{53}

But if Anarchists were heroic in Orwell's eyes, then the
Stalinists were absolute swindles. For in matters of philosophy
the Anarchists and Communists aimed at kinds of society which
were "quite irreconcilable."	extsuperscript{54} Contemporary Communism would
always emphasize "centralism and efficiency," while Anarchism
would always stress "liberty and equality."\textsuperscript{55} Implicit in this
assumption, then, is that state planning necessarily tyrannizes
individual liberty by deciding: who will have children when;
how much you will make and spend; what you will spend your
money on; what is pleasurable and prestigious; and, indeed,
what constitutes honor. Such regulation Orwell rejected as a
form of despotism, notwithstanding the possibilities of full
employment, sleek fire trucks, and well-scrubbed faces. Here
then was one part of Communism's swindle: it promised an ef-
ficient system which, by definition, must counter the welfare
of the individual, that creature who is necessarily devious,
exotic, surprising, and unpredictable.

But a second part of the Communist swindle involved the
war in Spain, itself. Implicit in the Civil War had been plans
for a revolution by the working classes. And yet the Communists

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{54}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{55}\textit{Ibid.}
joined Capitalist opponents in denouncing its fruition, claiming that revolution would be a premature stage in the historical dialectic, and that Spain therefore first required a temporary condition of "bourgeois democracy" with no explicit time limit. Capitalist opposition to the revolution naturally embraced the Communists' decision since substantial private investment had been sunk into Spain. And so, when it was all sorted out, the Communists had allied with the Capitalists against the worker, a swindle indeed. Communism, as Orwell noted, had actually become a force on "the extreme Right," clearly "an anti-revolutionary force." Thus the patriotism of Marxist intellectuals was directed toward their historical method which rationalizes life itself. Their active faith in the materialist dialectic made them so sure of the truth that they never concerned themselves with what was happening inside the heads of others. Their literature tended only to rationalize their mistakes and reaffirm their assumed infallibility. Catholic intellectuals, moreover,

56 Ibid., p. 52. 57 Ibid. 58 Ibid., p. 58.
60 Ibid., p. 258.
were without rival to Orwell in rhetorical arguments since they especially were careful to say nothing that was truly informative, being mainly interested in their own self-defense and justifications. Their publications were "either a stream of cheery insult at biologists and Protestant historians, or an attempt to bluff the fundamental difficulties of faith out of existence." To accept the Catholic view means accepting "exploitation, famine, war and disease as part of the natural order of things," Orwell felt. During the Spanish Civil War, in fact, everyone knew that "the Spanish Church was part of the capitalist racket." The one certainty about Catholic history, Orwell said, is that you can always be sure of getting "the minimum of everything."

To Orwell the mere patriotic institution of industrialized economies and highly centralized governments did not seem adequate to deal with man's material and spiritual needs alone. For contemporary technology and politics had in fact created an intense nightmare of perpetual war and starvation as ends

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63 Ibid. 64 Ibid.
66 Homage to Catalonia, pp. 53-54.
67 "Letter to Brenda Salkeld [extract (July 27, 1934)]," Journalism and Letters, I, 137.
in themselves. Contemporary politics had deliberately lapsed into the barbarism of creating concentration camps with "slave populations toiling behind barbed wire. . . ."\textsuperscript{68} Beasts, blond and otherwise, were wielding highly sophisticated weapons and calling themselves "men." But to trade moral sensibility for more political power is hardly profitable, Orwell suggested. The trade is never even, and one never gets one's value's worth since the new possession is inflated in reputation and morally debased.\textsuperscript{69} Skepticism is indeed necessary in the progress of a society, but it should not turn to cynicism since all is for naught if the sense of compassionate morality is tossed away. Without decency, a society must be bound for "barbed wire."\textsuperscript{70}

Thus, one should not hope for revolutions, Orwell said, for they are simply a means of flooding civilization with subhuman debris.\textsuperscript{71} Revolution might produce some relief, but in the end the only real difference is that new legs stand in old boots, no real difference at all.\textsuperscript{72} Every revolution is bound to fail, he thought,\textsuperscript{73} for securing personal power has invariably been part of the radical's struggle to realize the perfect

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{68} "Notes on the Way," \textit{Journalism and Letters}, II, 16.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{71} "As I Please," \textit{As I Please, 1943-1945}, Vol. III of \textit{Journalism and Letters}, p. 57. Also in \textit{the Tribune}, December 3, 1943.
\textsuperscript{73} "Arthur Koestler," \textit{Collected Essays}, p. 248. Also in \textit{Journalism and Letters}, III, 244.
\end{flushleft}
The perversity of violence and greed in the name of democratic revolution is obvious in Animal Farm, where Orwell mockingly wrote:

ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL
BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

Revolutionaries, subsequently, are often no more than deranged psychological cases since "normal healthy people are no more attracted by violence and illegality than they are by war." Those who would do violence to the basic symbols of society must be maladjusted individuals. Such iconoclasts must be miserable creatures who are alienated even from themselves, and intolerant of those who enjoy the simple freedoms in everyday life. The political imagination of the eternal revolutionary "must be either reactionary or nihilistic," Orwell said.

But the majority of radicals are reactionaries, he clarified. The revolutionary might have been a liberal once, but by World War II it was apparent that he craved absolute power as much as any fascist tyrant. Surely a

75 George Orwell, Animal Farm (New York, 1946), p. 123.
Also in Journalism and Letters, IV, 219-220.
78 Ibid.
79 "Charles Dickens," Collected Essays, p. 84.
80 "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool," Collected Essays, p. 432.
Also in Journalism and Letters, IV, 301.
person is right, "liberals" argued, if he seeks no material gain for his political efforts, and avoids political scandal.\textsuperscript{81} But, "the more you are in the right, the more that everyone else should be bullied into thinking likewise," Orwell retorted.\textsuperscript{82} Besides, revolutions accomplish only half of their task: they invariably alter the structure of society, but they ignore man's basic hunger for power which is the real problem. The superficial objective of structural reform being achieved, no further criticism may be expected.\textsuperscript{83} But the "appetite for power" remains.\textsuperscript{84}

Barbarous and indecent behavior is the central evil and the real point of analysis. For war rends and tears civilization for reasons different from what we might imagine: the material damage is not crucial, Orwell thought; "nor even . . . the slaughter of human beings . . . ."\textsuperscript{85} Rather, war stimulates distrust and hatred, the more fundamental injuries against humanity. The real evil lies in behaving so that the "peaceful life becomes impossible,"\textsuperscript{86} which is more than the mere "absence of war."\textsuperscript{87} Peace is a kind of "belly-to-earth attitude"

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{81}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{82}Ibid., pp. 32-33.
\item \textsuperscript{83}"Charles Dickens," Collected Essays, p. 84.
\item \textsuperscript{84}"Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool," Collected Essays, p. 432.
\item \textsuperscript{85}"As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 199-200. Also in the Tribune, August 4, 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{86}Ibid., p. 199.
\item \textsuperscript{87}"Letter to Jack Common (December 26, 1936)," Journalism and Letters, I, 368.
\end{itemize}
in which the vivid particular reigns over the abstract system, and in which grasses, woods, and waterfalls are abundant and unspoiled. It roots in such simple policies as "in the long run it does not pay to tell lies." Peace therefore implies decency, which implies personal honesty and aesthetic affirmation of Nature. Orwell went so far as to say that

by shooting at your enemy you are not in the deepest sense wronging him. But by hating him, by inventing lies about him and bringing children up to believe them, by clamouring for unjust peace terms which make further wars inevitable, you are striking not at one perishable generation, but at humanity itself.

In 1944, Orwell said that he did not believe that shooting people really matters. What is crucial is that "you do not hate" while pulling the trigger. The war had necessitated killing, obviously, but it appears that Orwell was trying to salvage and regenerate some mutilated values of humanism and decency within that framework. But his sense of humanity did not admit martyrdom or weakness. He felt that weak defense is asking for trouble. Throwing down weapons merely means that some cynic will use them. To deny power is to encourage

88"Letter to Henry Miller (August 26, 1936)," Journalism and Letters, I, 228. Signed as Eric A. Blair.

89"Letter to the Editor of Time and Tide (February 5, 1938)," Journalism and Letters, I, 298.


the bully.

Every war is horrible, Orwell realized, but pacifism can hardly be justified: for how can one be neutral when repression threatens progress? The point is that war may indeed be chosen for moral reasons, though no conscientious person can be indifferent to the perplexities of such a decision:

You can't ignore Hitler, Mussolini, unemployment, aeroplanes and the radio; you can only pretend to do so, which means lopping off a large chunk of your consciousness. To turn away from everyday life . . . is . . . like telling ghost stories in the dark.94

To proclaim that all is well, that no malicious political maladies exist, in fact helps to bring dictatorship a step closer to never being eliminated.95 Thus the existence of humane societies depends on common good will, but, ironically, good will is impotent if no authority enforces it.96 Force must preserve civilization, Orwell insisted. But since force must always be maintained, the real issue concerns "degrees of violence."97

Societies without legal compulsion must decide what is right on the basis of informal general consensus, Orwell said;


95 Ibid.

96 "No, Not One," Journalism and Letters, II, 166-167. Also in Adelphi, October, 1941.

97 Ibid., p. 167.
and yet, mass opinion more generally tyrannizes the individual than any pragmatic judicial system. Real inflexibility and tyranny, Orwell implied, lies in Rousseau's notion of the "General Will." Theoretically, the epitome of dictatorship comes when the instinct to conform is so widespread that the police are no longer needed. In 1984, Syme tells Winston that convention means having no thoughts of your own, that it means not even wanting to awake to the possibilities of novelty and change. In fact, he says, "'Orthodoxy is unconsciousness.'"

Again in 1984, rebellion against convention is construed by the Party as a wrong expression on the face, or a wrong tone of voice. For Party members like Winston and Julia, the smallest "abnormality" is highly suspect; and in the language of "Newspeak," frowning at the wrong time could be a case of "facecrime" for which one could be punished as a "rebel." But the working class is free of the Party's intensive scrutiny. It is no cohesive body, and it is unconscious of the Party's political stranglehold. No threat to the Party, the proletariat are required to demonstrate only a "primitive patriotism" when they are pushed to produce more at no extra gain. Politically disorganized, they are permitted by the Party "to follow their ancestral code" of

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99 Ibid.
101 Ibid., p. 60.
103 Ibid., p. 60.
100 1984, p. 47.
102 Ibid., p. 54.
104 Ibid., p. 62.
morality. They are thus not subject to the rigid moral standards of the Party, being held "beneath suspicion," and, one might add, beneath contempt, since the possession of power for its own sake is the supreme value of the Party. The Party even has a slogan which says that "Proles and animals are free." The implication is clear, then: for Orwell, one cannot pursue political power, cannot strive to dominate others, and expect to remain free. Sheer domination is indecent, and no decent person would think of such a thing. But tyranny as civilization is hardly likely, he added, since "slavery is no . . . real basis for human society."

Orwell believed that decency and brotherhood must be the object of man's innate patriotism. If a society is truly to progress, it can only do so if its members are morally sound. Moral sensibility must include the attitude for necessary material and political changes, but it also must include a compassionate concern for the past which is left behind. The continuity of history and tradition is important, for without it man can never experience a greater community. Brotherhood was an eternal concept for Orwell, one which may live at all times. The past is as important as the future to which all progress aspires. Convention must constantly be improved, but

never discarded. Modern society requires industrial and technical achievement, Orwell maintained, but it also requires a deliberate moral standard which has been largely ignored in politics. Man and society must remember that there is no real difference between ends and means, that technology without morality may tend toward stronger concentration camps and more devastating bombs. Ultimately, it may even swindle its own maker. Social progress thus requires a double-faced creed: on the one side is material improvement, but on the other side must be the individual's moral sense of justice and brotherhood.

To adopt such a position requires only the desire to do so, Orwell maintained. Simple affirmation and subsequent action are the only requirements. One either will or will not be moral according to one's perversities. Decency and fairness may well be a difficult position at times, he allowed, but preservation demands patriotic dedication. One must be willing to fight for it when necessary. Orwell's ethical sensibility prevented his battles against tyranny from degenerating into lasting hatred. For more than eliminating the oppressor, he fought to instill decency. He struggled more for affirmation than for negation. In mankind, he kept good faith.
CHAPTER V

THE AESTHETICS OF SOCIAL PROGRESS

Orwell believed that the economic basis of modern society has blinded man's awareness of natural processes, narrowing his organic consciousness to one of mechanized efficiency. With such efficiency, man's moral and aesthetic relationships have suffered: men have become mindless units in a monolithic industrial system that knows no individual compassion, and no sense of life as art. Orwell condemned this notion of progress, maintaining that while social progress requires technology to replace the excesses of agrarian toil, it must also require a certain decency which involves aesthetic sensibility. Mechanization must be designed along aesthetic lines so as to allow man an expressive dignity. But planning and design remain the larger issue.

One particular problem which modern society faces, Orwell observed, is that technology has made too many conveniences available. Its excesses have weakened our moral and aesthetic sensibility.1 A person may indeed have greater leisure when a machine does the tedious work, but there are disadvantages when its services are abused. Consider our processed foods which somehow do not taste quite right. In *Coming Up for Air*,

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George Bowling recalls that he had read in the paper somewhere about these food-factories in Germany where everything's made out of something else. Ersatz, they call it. I remembered reading that the Germans . . . were making sausages out of fish, and fish, no doubt, out of something different. It gave me the feeling that I'd bitten into the modern world and discovered what it was really made of. That's the way we're going nowadays. Everything slick and streamlined, everything made out of something else. Celluloid, rubber, chromium-steel everywhere, arc-lamps blazing all night, glass roofs over your head, radios all playing the same tune, no vegetation left, everything cemented over, mock-turtles grazing under the neutral fruit-trees. But when you come down to brass tacks and get your teeth into something solid, a sausage for instance, that's what you get. Rotten fish in a rubber skin. Bombs of filth bursting inside your mouth.

Orwell also objected to the blare of flashing juke-boxes and radios where, on the other end, some unknown voice dictates what music is "your" music and what will make "you" happy.

Orwell suggested that the "communications" industry has served only to destroy the quiet environment necessary for private thought and feeling as a regular way of life. Technical means, once intended to reflect man's unquestionable progress, have only come to bully and monopolize the life of the individual. The constant clatter of the radio and phonograph has gripped the greater part of the public's mind, destroying the aesthetic consciousness of what had once been natural, yet still superior.

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sounds and sights like rustling leaves or the flight of a startled woodcock. No longer, it seemed, can people still imagine Nature's music in the glens:

The lights must never go out
The music must always play
Lest we should see where we are;
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of dark
Who have never been happy or good. 4

World-wide travel, moreover, has tended to make us pretentious snobs. Orwell condemned "the bastards" who sail merely from one harbour to another on the biggest steamship, able to talk only about how unseasonable it was in Cannes last week. 5 Though he had certainly traveled widely himself, he refused to support the tourist snobbery of "I've been there." For travel in itself is not necessarily enlightening: learning and experience require personal involvement, a necessary effort on one's part which he thought most tourists had come to resent. 6 The fare-paying traveler might start out trying to "get to know the natives," but any sustained involvement is ordinarily a sham since most tourists are interested in "seeing the sights." The sham, however, may work both ways: the therapeutic value of health-preserving climates may indeed be false advertising, "a racket" perpetrated by local promotional groups

4Ibid.
6Ibid.
and medical associations for increased business.7

A further disadvantage to industrial abuse which Orwell suggested is the pollution of our environment. In Coming Up for Air, Bowling remembers how the Thames river used to look:

... luminous green that you could see deep into, and the shoals of dace cruising around the reeds. You couldn't see three inches into the water now. It's all brown and dirty, with a film of oil on it from the motorboats, not to mention the fag-ends and the paper bags.8

He wondered if there were anybody who still got out the tackle box and headed for the nearest stream. It would be quite a surprise if there were, for

within a hundred miles of London there are no fish left to catch. A few dismal fishing-clubs plant themselves in rows along the banks of canals, and millionaires go trout-fishing in private waters round Scotch hotels, a sort of snobbish game of catching hand-reared fish with artificial flies. But who fishes in mill-streams or moats or cow-ponds any longer? Where are the English coarse fish now? When I was a kid every pond and stream had fish in it. Now all the ponds are drained, and when the streams aren't poisoned with chemicals from factories they're full of rusty tins and motor-bike tyres.9

Noting the tepid quality of technical culture in the twentieth century, Orwell complained in 1940 that people were generally unaware that the aesthetic world was falling apart.10

A love affair with one's own self no longer seemed to count:

7 "Letter to Cyril Connolly (December 14, 1938)," Journalism and Letters, I, 362.
8 Coming Up for Air, p. 239.
9 Ibid., p. 87.
most people seemed to have given up the romance with the private life for the welfare of some political super-cause. The individual generally seemed to have surrendered the life of personal aesthetics to monstrous and sweeping political ideas like Fascism, Communism, or Commercialism, thus denying his independent reason and perception, and favoring absurd political schemes. The normal sensual man is out of fashion. The passive non-political attitude is out of fashion. Preoccupation with sex and truthfulness about the inner life are out of fashion. American Paris is out of fashion.\textsuperscript{11}

In \textit{Coming Up for Air}, Bowling finally declares that he is sick of nostalgia, that he will cling no longer to revered memories of how life used to be as a child. Nobody else cares or even remembers. The days of freedom, of joy and innocence, are evidently gone forever, and so what good could possibly develop in trying to keep a dead era alive? But it had been a good idea in the beginning, to try to blow out the dust; to recall those mindless and beautifully young days in the country; to try to rise above the black cess-pools of moral indifference in politics and modern life; to rise above the flat and petty ideologies of Capitalism, Catholicism, Marxism, and Fascism. Fresh air had indeed seemed like a delightful idea. "But there isn't any air. The dustbin that we're in reaches up to the stratosphere."\textsuperscript{12}

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\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Coming Up for Air}, p. 257.
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In 1933, Orwell said that he hated political propaganda, since it negated the aesthetic experience. But the irony of the twentieth century has been that political intrigue has inevitably tied in with personal experience. Inescapably, politics and ideology have formed the sum and substance of the subjective life. The conspicuous absence of the positive inner life barred any open frankness and candid honesty, Orwell felt. No constructive outlook has publicly succeeded:

Creeds, parties, programmes of every description have simply flopped, one after another. The only "ism" that has justified itself is pessimism.

The common man has grown tired of ideological confusion, and he has found the routine of technical life generally dreary. Orwell wryly proposed three escapes from all of this: religious preoccupation, busy work, and staying "in bed till four in the afternoon, drinking Pernod. . . ." The only real escape from the perversities of the age, however, must lie in the aesthetic satisfaction of family life. But even that institution has been steadily dissolved by the impact of technology and intruding politics. The "very concept of homesickness"

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16 Ibid.

has been attacked while reliable working-class men have stub-
bornly held onto "such fragments . . . as the whitened doorstep
and the open fireplace."  

The real antidote for such preoccupation is personal in-
volvement with Nature; therefore, the sun which burns hot
without thermostatic control onto a wide-open field where
flowers scream their colors and Cicadas buzz without commercial
interruptions. Throw a rock, Orwell suggested, climb a tree,
rattle the bushes, scratch yourself, and know that you are
alive. Restore your mental life to a consciousness of the
art of Nature. Build a house or dig a hole: whether it be
work or play is only a difference of attitude. It can all be
art. From such experience, a person is creative and an
actor, not a mere reactor. He is alive, he is sane, and he
is more of a human being with dirt under his nails and mud
up to his knees.

Orwell insisted that people can never be happy when they
make a project of it. Indiscriminate consumption of nar-
cotics, cigarettes, and liquor; the mad pursuits of power,
position, and conspicuous wealth--these are only euphoric

18Review of "Zest for Life by Johann Woller, translated
from the Danish by Claude Napier," Journalism and Letters, I,
235. Also in Time and Tide, October 17, 1936.

19Review of "The Reilly Plan by Lawrence Wolfe," Journalism
and Letters, IV, 91.

20The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 229.

21"Arthur Koestler," Collected Essays, p. 248. Also in
As I Please, 1943-1945, Vol. III of Journalism and Letters, p. 244.
illusions since aesthetic sensibility may be lost in a life that has been made too easy.Indeed, the easy life is a swindle. For happiness involves some moderation, some frugality and toughness of body and mind which industrial excess fails to offer. Real happiness is an involuntary product of right living, of healthy attitudes which include a sense of social justice and natural beauty. It is an indirect manifestation hardly attainable through life without art. Orwell believed that some kind of manual activity, some sort of concrete and constructive encounter, is essential for a healthy mind: "Cease to use your hands, and you have lopped off a huge chunk of your consciousness." Clearly, there are limits to the benefits of technology, for man needs to encounter Nature in all of her starkness and beauty. A preoccupation with technology to the exclusion of Nature is no basis for a meaningful and happy life.

Sometime before the current age of machinery and rampant technology, an age of better aesthetic sensibility existed, Orwell suggested, but it is now a bygone dream. A coldly analytical age has dominated a pastoral milieu, and people have traded the romantic warmth of subjective color and texture for bigotry, efficiency, and synthetic products:

A happy vicar I might have been
Two hundred years ago,
To preach upon eternal doom
And watch my walnuts grow;

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\(^{22}\)The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 226.
\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 229.
But born, alas, in an evil time,
I missed that pleasant haven,
For the hair has grown on my upper lip
And the clergy are all clean-shaven.

And later still the times were good,
We were so easy to please,
We rocked our troubled thoughts to sleep
On the bosoms of the trees.

All ignorant we dared to own
The joys we now dissemble;
The greenfinch on the apple bough
Could make my enemies tremble.

But girls' bellies and apricots,
Roach in a shaded stream,
Horses, ducks in flight at dawn,
All these are a dream.

It is forbidden to dream again;
We maim our joys or hide them;
Horses are made of chromium steel
And little fat men shall ride them.

I am the worm who never turned,
The eunuch without a harem;
Between the priest and the commissar
I walk like Eugene Aram;

And the commissar is telling my fortune
While the radio plays,
But the priest has promised an Austin Seven,
For Duggie always pays.

I dreamed I dwelt in marble halls,
And woke to find it true;
I wasn't born for an age like this;
Was Smith? Was Jones? Were you?24

Whether or not any such absolute time has existed was not as important to Orwell as much as the usefulness of its idea in more sharply defining the abuses of modern industrial life. He does seem to have ached from having missed some previous

24 "Why I Write," Journalism and Letters, I, 4-5. Also in Adelphi, December, 1935.
era of rustic poetry and culture, even an extended childhood, but what annoyed him most about his own times was its excessive clatter, its general lack of privacy, moral concern, and aesthetic sensibility. Orwell was not entirely negative toward the twentieth-century version of progress, only its excesses. Notice his admitted ambivalence toward an age of technical exploitation:

As I stand at the lichened gate
With warring worlds on either hand--
To left the black and budless trees,
The empty sties, the barns that stand

Like tumbling skeletons--and to right
The factory-towers, white and clear
Like distant, glittering cities seen
From a ship's rail--as I stand here,

I feel, and with a sharper pang,
My mortal sickness; how I give
My heart to weak and stuffless ghosts,
And with the living cannot live.

The acid smoke has soured the fields,
And browned the few and windworn flowers;
But there, where steel and concrete soar
In dizzy, geometric towers--

There, where the tapering cranes sweep round,
And great wheels turn, and trains roar by
Like strong, low-headed brutes of steel--
There is my world, my home; yet why

So alien still? For I can neither
Dwell in that world, nor turn again
To scythe and spade, but only loiter
Among the trees the smoke has slain.

Yet when the trees were young, men still
Could choose their path--the winged soul,
Not curses with double doubts, could fly
Arrow-like to a foreseen goal;

And they who planned those soaring towers,
They too have set their spirit free;
To them their glittering world can bring
Faith, and accepted destiny;
But none to me as I stand here
Between two countries, both-ways torn,
And moveless still, like Buridan’s donkey
Between the water and the corn.25

Orwell faced a dilemma. For as he looked onto forests
and fields, lamenting the destruction of their beauty by the
bulldozer and carbon monoxide, he would yet have admitted that
human dignity “cannot be realised except at a high level of
mechanical civilisation.”26 As he confessed, industry can
never be completely despised until all men are freed from the
misery of poverty and excessive physical hardship.27 Technol-
gy must be welcomed, but with the utmost reservations: for
though it has created insidious cultural disadvantages, the
machine must be developed in a moral context to relieve the
back-breaking burdens which men have carried for centuries.28
Orwell feared that without aesthetic development, man’s wor-
ship of “steel and concrete” might pervert his instinctive
love for Nature.29 Given the collectivist politics which
Orwell found implied in a strictly industrialized culture,

25“Theon a Ruined Farm near the His Master’s Voice Gramophone
Factory,” Journalism and Letters, I, 134-135. Also in Adelphi,
April, 1934.

26Review of “The Martyrdom of Man by Winwood Reade,”

27W. B. Yeats,” Collected Essays, p. 201. Also in Journalism
and Letters, II, 276.

28The Road to Wigan Pier, p. 235.

29“Some Thoughts on the Common Toad,” Journalism and
Letters, IV, 144. Also in Tribune, April 12, 1946, and in
the New Republic, May 20, 1946.
men could only grow competitive with each other, living on hate and human destruction.\textsuperscript{30}

It is tempting to equate hygienic and efficient conditions with progress, Orwell said, but such a notion is mistaken in the case of industrialism since the evils of industrialism are quite inherent and "quite ineradicable."\textsuperscript{31} In 1984, the Party's ideal is "something huge, terrible, and glittering—a world of steel and concrete" where all opinions are necessarily uniform and fanatic, "three hundred million people all with the same face."\textsuperscript{32} Flatness and monotony are the Party's aesthetic ideal. Indeed, the real side of this life-style is poverty and starvation, rotting cities, and ancient houses which always smell like stopped-up sewers and boiled cabbage, an indication to Orwell of no aesthetic sensibility.\textsuperscript{33} In presenting such a picture of the future, Orwell was attempting to illustrate the possible moral, political, and aesthetic consequences of industrial excess. He was certain that industrialism must lead to oligarchy, and he knew that the mere concentration of power is irrelevant to moral and social obligation. Power is a thing in itself with no necessary obligations to anybody or anything, except to preserve itself. In 1984, the holders of power desire only to crush their opposition. Nations who arm

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{The Road to Wigan Pier}, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{32}George Orwell, \textit{1984} (New York, 1961), pp. 63-64.

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 64.
themselves beyond the limits of moral and aesthetic reason may indeed have no decent toilets or educational systems for their people. They may have no humane sensibility in the slightest.

Orwell felt that it was inappropriate to blame professional politicians alone for the moral and aesthetic levels of the twentieth century, for scientists have been just as guilty. Indeed, never mistake modern scientists for civilized men, he argued, for "modern Germany is far more scientific than England, and far more barbarous." Orwell recognized no special wisdom in the conventionally trained scientist, and he doubted whether the average scientist could deal with problems concerning social values any better than, or even as well as, the intellectual or artist. He observed in 1945 that scientists all over the world during World War II had demonstrated spectacular chauvinism, much more than the intelligentsia generally had. German scientists especially had made no serious effort to resist the schemes of Hitler. For Orwell, this was sufficient to refute the idea that "Science is international" and inherently free of selfish and destructive partisanship.

But there is more. Since World War I, technology, that glorious and traditional panacea for businessmen and politicians, has increasingly established the scientist in political circles.

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35 "What is Science?" Journalism and Letters, IV, 11. Also in the Tribune, October 26, 1945.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.
In partnership with the politician, the scientist as technician has helped to intensify international problems of community and peace.\(^3\)\(^8\) Airplanes have not made world travel more available: loaded with bullets and bombs, they had become guardians of borders, adding to the "national security" by keeping out the "foreigners."\(^3\)\(^9\) And radios, "once expected to promote international understanding and co-operation," had mainly chilled international rapport with broadcasts of malicious propaganda.\(^4\)\(^0\) Modern science had actually helped to stimulate fanatical nationalism, and opportunities for beneficial world relationships had in fact become inversely proportional to technical advances. Ironically, improved techniques in the physical sciences had only worsened relations among nations.\(^4\)\(^1\) To the point, Orwell evaluated twentieth-century science: "the order, the planning, the State encouragement of science, the steel, the concrete, the aeroplanes, are . . . all in the service of ideas appropriate to the Stone Age."\(^4\)\(^2\) Modern science was indeed fighting against the progress of man.

According to Orwell, modern science has been barbaric, uncritical of the moral consequences of its own conduct, and

\(^3\)\(^8\)"As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 145. Also in the Tribune, May 12, 1944.


\(^4\)\(^0\)Ibid.

\(^4\)\(^1\)"As I Please," Journalism and Letters, III, 145.

destructive in its ultra-nationalism. Most scientists were well-scrubbed flag wavers during World War II. But to be truly scientific, Orwell maintained, one needs more than mere rote instruction in chemistry, biology, or physics: in none of these fields can a person learn about social problems and moral issues. Indeed, one must resort to more than "simply piling up a lot of facts."43 Rather, real scientific training means to develop "a rational, sceptical, experimental habit of mind. It ought to mean acquiring a method ... that can be used on any problem one meets," a critical method which requires aesthetic and moral intelligence.44 Real science must be grounded in humane interests, and its proper object must always remain the general welfare of mankind. Bigotry and tawdriness must be eliminated to favor the principles of decency and beauty.

Religious and political biases always color aesthetic judgments, Orwell admitted.45 These are limiting factors for everyone, he offered, but factors which do allow special insights into life and culture.46 One must therefore be prepared for, and not balk from, the condescension of the all-knowing younger generation: it too will have its genius for setting

43"What Is Science?" Journalism and Letters, IV, 11.
44Ibid.
45"Poetry and Prejudice," The Times Literary Supplement (Saturday, March 6, 1943), p. 115.
aesthetic standards. But one must hold on to the feelings one has, "even at the price of seeming old-fashioned, for that world-view springs out of experiences that the younger generation has not had, and to abandon [them] ... is to kill one's intellectual roots." If the moral and aesthetic problems of society are ever solved, Orwell said,

life will become simpler instead of more complex, and . . . the sort of pleasure one gets from finding the first primrose will loom larger than the sort of pleasure one gets from eating an ice to the tune of a Wurlitzer. I think that by retaining one's childhood love of such things as trees, fishes, butterflies and . . . toads, one makes a peaceful and decent future a little more probable, and that by preaching the doctrine that nothing is to be admired except steel and concrete, one merely makes it a little surer that human beings will have no outlet for their surplus energy except in hatred and leader worship.48

But for the present, he could not understand why, precisely when the private and social needs of people could be scientifically accommodated better than at any other time in history, practically all of their energies were being spent grabbing "territories, markets and raw materials" from each other.49 Just when the world's riches could best be distributed, and when all barbed-wire fences could be ripped down, "political liberty is declared to be impossible and half the

47 Ibid.
48 "Some Thoughts on the Common Toad," Journalism and Letters, IV, 144.
49 "As I Please," Journalism and Letters, IV, 249. Also in the Tribune, November 29, 1946.
world is ruled by secret police forces."\textsuperscript{50} Especially when "a rational attitude towards the universe" had become the most feasible, when superstition would have had the best chance for dying out, freedom of thought was being "denied as never before."\textsuperscript{51} Without question, people had only seriously begun fighting each other when all reasons for doing so had perished.\textsuperscript{52} Undoubtedly, the world was mad.

Aesthetics and morality were intimately connected in Orwell's mind. The distinction of human life was equivalent to the destruction of the land since both were equally significant parts of the overall environment. Indeed, Orwell felt that Nature possesses an inherent dignity, a beauty which could remedy the moral ills of society and the individual. Orwell argued for an increased moral sensibility which invariably must be rooted in an aesthetic awareness of Nature. Decency is more than proper behavior: it is a whole frame of mind involving qualitative relationships with the self, with others, and with the wider environment. For how is it one feels when one is alone? To joyfully sense the universe is to act humanely toward other people. And to act decently toward others is to act in the progressive behalf of society. In this sense, aesthetics and morality are intimately related.

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{51}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{52}Ibid.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

With the decline of most nineteenth century abstract metaphysics has come the disjointed "realism" of the twentieth century. The rise of scientific analysis and democratic skepticism has helped to effect the decline of traditional metaphysics in the modern world, excluding Catholicism and Marxism. Nietzsche's assertion that "God is dead" proclaimed the existential problem of "good faith." As a consequence, man has been left with strands of faith from the past, and no coherent ethical world view. Indeed, the problem for contemporary man has been the difficulty of affirming any metaphysical faith.

George Orwell's humanism recognized man's dilemma, the fact that spiritually man has been cut loose from absolutes, yet must cope with an innate "patriotism" which must believe in something eternal. The problem has been to satisfy this urge, to reassert an appropriate range of spiritual values. Orwell realized this perplexity and unconsciously offered a solution: the Organic Metaphor. In doing so, he became a myth maker for the modern world.

The virtue of Orwell lies in his protests against the excesses of modern life. As a myth maker in the twentieth century, propaganda was his medium. He recognized a decline
of meaningful faith in contemporary society, a general emotional flatness among people in an industrialized economy, who knew only artificialities and isolation from Nature. He attempted to balance—not replace—this aesthetic deprivation with a pastoral image of golden fields and fluffy clouds. Indeed, he attempted to present a picture of aesthetic harmony in the image of Nature to offset the sterile and impersonal facades of massive concrete and stainless steel. The point is that, in the face of excessive industrial progress, Orwell sought an organic image of existence and progress, much as the English Romantics of a hundred years before had done. Orwell's task was complicated since he desired a sensible blend of mechanical progress with his sense of "decency." He desired both features, and was unwilling to accept one to the total rejection of the other. To view the world as a harmonious blend meant to behave as a part of a living whole. The past and the future were intimately tied by the present, and the real evil was hatred and oppression since both may destroy the spiritual community.

Orwell's crusade for individual liberty, equality, and justice belonged to a vitalist. Indeed, any revolution which he might have endorsed could only have been the kind that revitalized man's moral and aesthetic sensibilities. Orwell wanted a revolution in values to occur without destroying the degree of civilization which already exists. He fought against dishonesty and immorality, and also for a state of mind. He
advocated an attitude which is balanced: tolerant and respectful of individual eccentricities, yet insistent on justice, brotherhood, and universal integrity.

In one sense, the conflict between Orwell and his fellow intellectuals was a political conflict between the philosophical traditions of English empiricism and Continental metaphysics, between the skepticism of Hume and the rationalism of Descartes. Orwell criticized the structural statements of Marxist and Catholic metaphysics. Both camps could only deduce reasons for the condition of the world, and could only advocate oppressive orthodoxies for society and the individual. Both systems shackled individual liberty with necessary relationships derived from unverifiable premises. Orwell ridiculed those intellectuals who endorsed metaphysical schemes, and who never personally realized what the political implications of those schemes might be. Indeed, Orwell believed that the general intelligentsia, be they far-left or far-right, failed to realize that men were being persecuted in the name of ideologies which they espoused. Behind the facade of industrial progress, the Communists in Russia had maintained active concentration camps for "reactionaries." The conservative excesses of Catholicism in Spain had allied with Franco against the common man. The Nazis in Germany had exterminated millions of Jews to create a "pure race." To Orwell, tyranny was only being rationalized.

But in the philosophical sense, Orwell's conflict with
intellectuals concerned the nature of truth. Reality was objective and concrete for Orwell, and it was alive. Vital facts independent of the knower could be empirically ascertained. Orwell felt that during the 1930's and 1940's common sense had unquestionably belonged to the common man, which excluded most intellectuals since they knew only abstruse methods and systems. There was hope for the proletarian since he lived more directly in the concrete world, perhaps more than for the intellectual who deals with abstractions. For the right kind of social progress to prevail, Orwell thought that the intellectual must make the Organic Metaphor an ultimate category. The intellectual must realize on a grander scale what the working man has always known by direct experience: that without justice, decency, and common sense, there can be no real society, no civilized society. The Organic Metaphor must become the essential metaphysic for intellectuals, the first and final political consideration.

Orwell felt ambivalent toward the heritage of Christian politics. It had provided some basis for universal brotherhood, but it had also supported ruthless tyrannies of orthodoxy and persecution. As a practical man, Orwell rejected the metaphysics of Christianity, yet retained the spirit of its ethics. He might properly be labelled a radical Christian, for it was with Christian ethics that Orwell sought to infiltrate politics. Coupled with the Organic Metaphor, Christian ethics were the basis of Orwell's "decency." Indeed, "socialism"
was Orwell's political expression of the Organic Metaphor. Socialism meant the concept of eternal brotherhood, justice, and, in some contradiction, liberty. If Orwell was no genius, then he was a man of admirable human integrity. Indeed, it was the humanism of George Orwell which recognized an aesthetic foundation for individual faith and social progress.
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**Articles**

