appropriate.

TRADITIONAL

average man, common man

man or mankind

manhood

man-in-the-street

manmade

primitive man

workingman

ALTERNATIVE

average person

humanity, humans, the

human race

adulthood

average citizen, ordinary

voter

synthetic, manufactured

primitive people

worker, work force

[b]. Do not use gender-qualifiers with an occupational title unless the person's sex is pertinent. (Make it *lawyer*, not *woman lawyer* and *nurse*, not *male nurse*).

[c]. Avoid feminine variants (poetess) unless they are in such common use as to be part of the language. (A woman is an alumnus, aviator, executor, Jew, poet, and sculptor - but an actress, countess, masseuse. Rockette, suffragette and waitress.)²⁴

It will be remembered that in a North American publication of the year 1989 aiming to establish theoretical approaches and guidelines for nonsexist usage, actor is considered a neutral locution while actress is deemed dysphemistic. Moreover, in 1995 in both North and South California I heard the term waitperson used on various occasions. Perhaps this indicates that nowadays one of the surest ways to be rapidly considered outdated is to write a stylebook.²⁵

While The Washington Post, a prestigious representative of conservative

views is no doubt an influential organ of opinion, neither the content, nor much less its style can be taken to represent any general trend in North American newspapers. There are, in fact, many publications which are much more sensational, and as Neilson points out, though the mass media may be moderated by concepts of decorum and journalistic responsibility, there is nevertheless a marked tendency towards the sensational. In order to reach a large audience, the mass media are forced to drastically simplify the terms of a debate, presenting a simple model and thereby eschewing complexity. With the PC debate, there is no doubt that this has been the case, although the attack on political correctness has also been coupled with an anti-intellectual bias which characterized much of the climate of the eighties under Presidents Reagan and Bush. Neilson believes that this anti-intellectualism "results from the media's commercial interests, which require reduction and simplification, hence distortion."

Since the media are largely owned and controlled by conservative corporate interests it comes as no surprise to learn that the general bias in them is towards conservative policies including "unexamined explanations from 'official' sources", although apparently there is a common belief that the media represents liberal concerns. Goodheart notes that the intolerance associated with PC can be found on the right in certain sections of the media and in the highest government circles, although the natural home of political correctness is the academy. A complementary, though not identical opinion, is that of Dickstein, who declares himself struck by the fact that political correctness "belongs to the secondary curture of academic and journalistic opinion, rarely

to the primary culture of new novels, stories, and poems." In Dickstein's view, "secondary cultures, whether cultures of publicity or of professionalism, feed on the creativity of others. Immensely trendy and conformist, they ebb and flow with the conventional wisdom of the moment." The mass media, of course, are largely instrumental in shaping the opinions that make up this conventional wisdom of the moment.

The first articles on political correctness in the New York Times appeared at the end of the eighties. John Wilson notes that an article by Richard Bernstein in 1988 "compared a conference on liberal education at Duke University to the tyrannical 'minute of hatred' [sic] described in George Orwell's 1984."31 The mass media use of the term "PC" is generally attributed to this article, but Lorna Weir, in a word search on the database Infomart of six "regionally representative Canadian metropolitan newspapers", found no less than 153 articles in which the terms "politically correct" or "political correctness" appeared between 1 January 1987 and 27 October 1990.³² The 24 December 1990 issue of Newsweek appeared with the words "Thought Police" on the cover as a foretaste of the content of a lengthy inside article by Jerry Adler under the title "Taking Offense: Is This the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism?" This article is often cited as the starting point for the use of "PC" as a derogatory adjective, as it is used twenty-nine times to condemn various manifestations of political correctness, although as Weir has demonstrated, its use had been current in the media for at least three years.

Neilson believes that the Newsweek cover story was symptomatic of

countless other similarly exaggerated journalistic accounts and that moreover the opposition to this exaggeration was slight, even among liberal editorialists who were prepared to accept the existence of a threat posed by PC.33 Neilson explicitly states that he is not suggesting that the mass media universally defined PC as "a few goosesteps shy of Nazism". As he says, even the most radical journalistic accounts of PC were qualified and somewhat contextualized. For example, although William A. Henry III, in Time, referred to "a new intolerance", describing the university as an "upside down world", he nonetheless admitted that "this new thinking is not found everywhere" and that "most students at most colleges continue to take courses bearing at least some resemblance to what their predecessors studied". Similarly, Newsweek asserted that "if women, gays and racial minorities are seeking special protections, it is because they have been the objects of special attacks." However, despite such alleviations of the opprobium heaped upon PC, Neilson believes that they "did little to mitigate the main thrust of these articles or to counter the equation of PC with totalitarianism."34

This last parallel, drawn between totalitarianism and PC, is an indirect invocation of George Orwell in the context of political correctness, where he is overtly alluded to many times. His many condemnations of the use of sloppy language and his repeated reference to its misuse was coupled with his fears that language could be an instrument in the maintenance of a totalitarian system.

The twinning of the attack upon PC and intellectualism is remarked upon by Friedman, with particular reference to feminism. She finds especially

with the fact that "much of the war is being waged in mass media where a flair for glib wisecracks and an eccentric personality can score more points than thoughtful analysis." She believes that because the consumers of mass media are busy with their own lives, "they do not have the time, energy, or inclination to check out the relevant sources." This appears to be an increasing trend in our society, when fewer books are read and many people rely on the facts provided by newspaper supplements for their most "intellectual" form of information. Yet one suspects that they would not necessarily consider themselves uninformed or even uneducated for they have recourse to what might be termed "fast information" through which journalism supplies easily-digested information which becomes the equivalent of the hamburger or the fast-food chain pizza.

Friedman further notes, however, that even the prominent academic critics of feminism "often rely on a popular style of rhetoric that avoids genuine scholarly dialogue and invokes anti-feminist attitudes through the use of media stereotypes and buzz words." Moreover, she notes that the mass media promote stereotypes which make it easy to ridicule feminists: "The media caricature of a feminist hates the family, hates men, and hates sex. She is a belligerent shrew or a whining victim (depending on what the audience most detests), yet she has clawed her way to the apex of professional power."

The media stereotypes with regard to women are discussed by Keith Waterhouse in Waterhouse on Newspaper Style, published in 1989.

Waterhouse was long associated with the *Daily Mirror*, one of the British tabloids with the largest circulation, and his terms of reference would no doubt horrify Dr Friedman. His assertion that the sex barrier in Fleet Street is very clearly defined becomes incontrovertible when one reads the examples he provides: "Barbara Smith is Miss Smith or Barbara Smith in *The Times*, the *Independent* and the *Daily Telegraph*, Smith in the *Guardian*, Babs in the *Daily Mirror*, and busty Babs in the *Sun* and *Daily Star*. As for Barbara Smith's mother, Mrs Bessie Smith, she is Mrs in all the text papers and Mum Bess or Babs' Mum Bess in the tabloids." Waterhouse is doubtful whether the great difference in the treatment of the sexes which separates the "text" papers from the tabloids will ever be overcome since he considers that "an excessive chumminess is the hallmark of the tabloids, while the text papers are on first-name terms with their subjects only in the occasional feature interview." "39

An interesting reflection on the nostalgia and class orientation of the different types of newspapers is contained in Waterhouse's observation that the tabloids, and to a certain extent the other popular papers, "still live in a world of housewives (or mums) and career girls." The reason for this is that women professionals are women first and professionals after: "Dr Barbara Smith, however senior, is Dr Babs or at best Dr Barbara." Furthermore, her name will generally be prefixed by "some vague complimentary description - attractive, brunette, vivacious."40

In Hodge's view, analysis of newspapers must consider the three kinds of community involved, since a newspaper "contains a version of the social world". However, the significance of this world can only be understood "if we

can relate it to the world it claims to refer to, and if we know whose this version of the world is, and whom it is for."41 He makes an initial distinction between the quality newspapers and the popular press among mass-circulation newspapers in England. The author puts forward an interesting hypothesis by pointing out that although both kinds of paper are owned by members of the same class, and the journalists who work for both sectors tend to be middle class, since the quality papers are aimed at readers higher up on the social scale than the popular press, "the world offered in the qualities is internal to a class, while the world of the popular press is sold to members of one class by members of another."42 This may perhaps account for a certain feeling of a patronising quality reflected in the tabloids.

Yet a disturbing aspect of the PC debate, is that a similar variety of language to that commonly employed by the tabloids is deployed by the quality press in its coverage of PC issues. That a tabloid could have the single word "Gotcha!" as a front page headline above a photograph of the sinking of the Belgrano during the Falklands war, may strike one as shocking for many different reasons. In current practice such a headline would be intolerable beyond the confines of the tabloids, but the difference in the terms employed between tabloids and quality press is less clear-cut when it comes to political correctness. A case in point in Britain is the Times, traditionally perhaps the epitome of the restrained newspaper, which now forms a newspaper group together with the Sunday Times under the ownership of the magnate Richard Murdoch. The PC debate has given rise in these papers to headlines such as, "Feminist firebrand bent on reversing the evil of PC"43; "Politics is damned

by the creeping curse of brainless busybodies"44; "Progressive dogma imperils democracy";45 or "Flames of Racial Rage".46

The traditional concept of the polarity between the serious, thoughtful publication and the trivial, unreliable one was underlined by Orwell in an article written in 1946. He draws a distinction between "intelligence" by which he means "a readiness to present news objectively, to give prominence to the things that really matter, to discuss serious questions even when they are dull, and to advocate policies which are at least coherent and intelligible," and popularity, measured by circulation figures. Orwell provides a striking table which is reproduced as follows:

INTELLIGENCE	POPULARITY
1Manchester Guardian	1Express
2The Times	2Herald
3News Chronicle	3Mirror
4Telegraph	4News Chronicle
5Herald	5Mail
6Mail	6Graphic
7Mirror	7Telegraph
8Express	8The Times
9Graphic	9Manchester Guardian*

This list is Orwell's own, and as he points out, allowing for imprecisions, popularity is almost diametrically opposed to seriousness: the paper with "the best reputation for truthfulness, the *Manchester Guardian*, is the one that is not read even by those who admire it. People complain that it is 'so dull'." On the other hand "countless people read the *Daily* - while saying frankly that they

'don't believe a word of it'."48

Simon Hoggart explains that journalists resort to hyperbole because they are usually "under pressure to raise the temperature, to make ordinary quotidian political discourse sound more exciting than it really is." Consequently, "a routine disagreement is known by the dysphemism 'major row' or 'massive split'. 'Criticized' becomes 'slammed', 'lashed out at' or 'launched a vicious attack on'." In the light of such hyperbole one might well ask what the "translations" would be of, for example, "[t]he aggressors, having been trounced in the real-world politics of the larger society, are attempting to make campuses into ministates that do what the Western tradition inhibits real states from doing: imposing orthodoxies." 50

In the world of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, newspapers are apparently widely read. They are useful to the regime for the manipulation both of history and reality, and thereby bridge the gap between fact and fiction. The language of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is, to some extent, the language of most of the press, which first "creates" an ideological reality, based on the needs and requirements of the interests they serve, and then creates a representational discourse in which more or less overt lies are disguised as truths.

Some critics such as Fowler extend this ideological bias to any "representational discourse": "In fact, what is being claimed about news can equally be claimed about *any* representational discourse. Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position: language is not a clear window but a refracting, structuring medium."⁵¹

The truth is that language is not -indeed cannot be- a clear window,

because both the universal linguistic principles and those of the grammar and semantics that govern a particular language are contingent, and thus cannot fully express the immense complexity of reality or of the human mind.

NOTES

- 1. Abel, Op. cit., p. 47.
- 2. Lauren Kessler and Duncan Mcdonald, Mastering the Message: Media Writing with Substance and Style, (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth, 1989), p. 307.
- 3. Op. cit., p. 307.
- 4. Ibid., p. 307.
- 5. Ibid., p. 307.
- 6. Ibid., p. 307-308.
- 7. Tony Trew, "'What the papers say' linguistic variation and ideological difference", in Roger Fowler, Pub Hodge and Tony Trew, Op. cit., p. 156.
- 8. Abel, Op. cit., p. 54: "Although the American media, unlike the British, simulates neutrality, greed quickly slips away this mask."
- 9. Abel, Op. cit., p. 54.
- 10. Roger Fowler, Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 2.
- 11. Op. cit., p. 2.
- 12. Ibid., p. 2.
- 13. Bob Hodge, "Newspapers and communities", in Fowler, et al., Op. cit., p. 39.
- 14. Melanie Phillips, Op. cit., p. 39.
- 15. Robert A. Webb, (ed.) The Washington Post Deskbook on Style, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978).
- 16. Op. cit., p. 35.
- 17. Ibid., p. 35.

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- 18. Ibid., p. 35-36.
- 19. Ibid., p. 40-41.

- 20. See, for example, M. L. Stein, "An Attempt At Accuracy", Editor & Publisher, Dec 25, 1993, (Revision of the Los Angeles Times' 10-year-old stylebook): "It is not important for us to be politically correct. It is important for us to communicate with our readers fairly and accurately. [...] What we are trying to do is be fair, accurate and precise with regard to our readers. [...] Precision, according to the new guidelines, means that although 'black' and 'African American' can be used interchangeably in certain circumstances, 'keep in mind that a black person is not necessarily an African American and that an African American is not necessarily a black person. People of Caribbean origin, for example, may choose not to be termed African American'."
- 21. Ibid., p. 42.
- 22. Ibid., p. 43.
- 23. *Ibid.*, p. 44. This section contains a number of lists whose length goes beyond the scope of this study but which are nevertheless illuminating, including the following recommendation: "In referring to roles in general or groups of people, use a gender-free term unless it would be awkward or artificial to do so.

T	RA	DI	TIC	NA	\L
usir	ess	ma	n		

cameraman college boys or coeds congressman

councilman
fireman
foreman
ice cream man
mailman
newsman
policeman or policewoman
salesman
steward or stewardess

ALTERNATIVE

business executive, business manager photographer students member of Congress, representative, legislator

firefighter
supervisor
ice cream vendor
mail carrier, letter carrier
reporter, journalist
police officer
sales clerk
flight attendant"

council member

- 24. Ibid., p. 45.
- 25. My point here is supported by an article in the International Herald Tribune of 6 April, 1994 by Stephen Pinker, in which he refers to the then new Los Angeles Times manual "Guidelines on Racial and Ethnic Identification", in which Pinker notes the politically correct evolution of Negro to black and then African-American, Spanish-American to Hispanic and then Latino, and slum to ghetto and then inner city, only to come brak to slum again, in all cases, of course, according to the

Los Angeles Times.

- 26. Neilson, Op. cit., p. 64.
- 27. Op. cit., p. 65.
- 28. See Jeffrey Williams, Op. cit., p. 4.
- 29. Goodheart, Op. cit., p. 550-551.
- 30. Dickstein, Op. cit., p. 549.
- 31. John K. Wilson, The Myth of Political Correctness: The Conservative Attack on Higher Education, (London: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 13, citing Richard Bernstein, "A 'Minute of Hatred' in Chapel Hill: Academia's Liberals Defend Their Carnival of Canons against Bloom's 'Killer B's'", New York Times, 25 September, 1988.
- 32. Lorna Weir, "PC Then and Now: Resignifying Political Correctness", in Richer and Weir, Op. cit., p. 60.
- 33. Neilson, Op. cit., p. 61. The article continues as follows: "thereby giving a journalistic imprimateur to the fantasies of Will, et al.; and [...] never in the mass media was there a framework that offered an alternative view of the politicizing of the academy; invariably discussion of the university was filtered through the frame of political correctness. Such was the normalization of PC and the equation of it with fascism that George Bush could warn of "political extremists [who] roam the land" and receive no criticism; he was merely echoing what had already become the consensus view, Newsweek having six months earlier alerted the nation to 'the march of PC across American campuses'. " (Citing Jerry Adler, et al., "Taking Offense: Is This the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism?" Newsweek, 24 December, 1990, and William A. Henry III, "Upside Down in the Groves of Academe", Time, 1 April 1991.
- 34. Op. cit., p. 61.
- 35. Friedman, Op. cit., p. 26.
- 36. Op. cit., p. 26.
- 37. Ibid., p. 21.
- 38. Keith Waterhouse, Waterhouse on Newspaper Style, (London: Viking, 1989), p. 215. Waterhouse's classification of newspapers into the three categories of tabloid, popular and text papers is interesting since these last are commonly referred to as "quality" newspapers. No doubt his long association with the Mirror, if the category of "quality" were

maintained, would logically consign him to the opposite of quality.

- 39. Op. cit., p. 215.
- 40. *Ibid.*, p. 216. Waterhouse relates the following revealing anecdote: "both the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mail* contrived to carry an item on the misadventures of a career girl without ever mentioning what her career was." He notes that "Page 3 girls are at least sometimes balanced with page 5 or page 7 'fellas'," rather drily concluding that "[a] sense of balance between the sexes elsewhere in the paper would not go amiss."
- 41. Hodge, Op. cit., p. 157.
- 42. Op. cit., p. 157-158.
- 43. Sunday Times, 19 July 1992.
- 44. Sunday Times, 23 February, 1992.
- 45. Sunday Times, 8 May, 1994.
- 46. The Times, leading article, 1 May, 1992.
- 47. CEJL, IV, p. 280.
- 48. Op. cit., p. 281.
- 49. Simon Hoggart, "Politics", in D.J. Enright, (ed.) Op. cit., p. 182. Revealing that politicians in Britain are as much in need of the media's attention as their American counterparts, Hoggart writes, p. 183: "But the pressure on journalists to dramatize events is no worse than the pressure on politicians -especially those in opposition. For one thing, opposition politicians inevitably attract less attention than ministers in Government. Most of them soon discover an identity of interest with the press: the more colourful their criticism, the more willing the newspapers are to print it."

Hoggart's observations, and particularly his "translations" of the real meaning behind common press jargon give a clue to the extent which a phenomenon such as the "PC war" can and has been distorted and exaggerated by the press, with considerable success, it must be added: "'Byzantine' is now a catch-all word for anything at all complicated or even different from the status quo; such a system inevitably results in 'total chaos', which generally indicates 'some misunderstandings.' 'Bankrupt', as in 'this bankrupt government', generally means 'run out of new ideas for the time being'; 'morally bankrupt' means the same plus 'and we disagree with what has been done already'. 'Hijack' has come in over the past few years, and usually implies making changes

which the speaker does not favour to some institution or other: 'this Government has hijacked the Health Service/education system/North Sea Oil []

A 'scandal' is generally nothing of the sort, being merely a policy the speaker doesn't like, as in 'the monstrous scandal of agricultural support prices'. 'Appalled' means 'displeased', 'shocked' equals 'mildly surprised', 'nauseated' much the same. Compromises are invariably 'shabby', deals always 'sordid', and often 'little' as well. Allies and acquaintances are 'cronies', as in 'The Chancellor's cronies in the City will be celebrating this Budget [...]' A decision is never a mere mistake but a 'bizarre folly' or a 'grotesque misjudgement'."

- 50. George F. Will, "Curdled Politics on Campus", Newsweek, 6 May, 1991, p. 72.
- 51. Fowler, Op. cit., p. 10.

3. GEORGE ORWELL AS JOURNALIST AND ESSAYIST

In their introduction to a book of essays entitled *The Orwellian Moment*, the editors, Savage *et al.*, posit four main themes as characterizing Orwell's essays; these are: "the role and meaning of totalitarianism in the modern world, the dystopic vision as a twentieth century metaphysic, the prospects for social control through manipulative communication, and the maintenance of political integrity through clear and systematic analysis of political language and beliefs."

These four categories prove to be valid for the purposes of the present study, and will serve as a basis to demonstrate how through the writings of George Orwell we can see fears and prophesies expressed by him that portend many issues which have achieved prominence forty years and more after the author's death, thanks to the political correctness debate. Since the implications involved with Utopia/Dystopia will be studied with particular reference to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the examination of Orwell's essays and journalistic output will concentrate more on the remaining three aspects.

It should be stressed that Orwell's importance as a commentator and observer of his times is due in no small part to the fact that he was active in

both the principal media of his age. He contributed to various journals and reviews on both sides of the Atlantic, and during a crucial period of the second World War he worked at the B.B.C. where he had considerable say, within the limits of the censorship dictated by the War, both in the content of the programmes he directed, and in the choice of the people he selected to express their views.

At the beginning of this dissertation a caveat was introduced with respect to the interpretation of Orwell's writing and Muggeridge was cited as declaring his friend's opinions to be often nothing short of paradoxical. Muggeridge also raises a question which must be borne in mind in relation to whether Orwell's non-fiction can be considered as strictly non-fiction:

There was the [..] difficulty of the validity to be attached to Orwell's own testimony. Is, for instance, the account of his prep-school days in "Such, Such Were the Joys" to be taken at its face value? Avril [Orwell's sister] considers that, like Orwell's account of their home life, it is grotesquely distorted. She remembers him as a cheerful, eager schoolboy, and their home as a happy and contented one. Even Connolly suggests in the politest possible way that Orwell laid it on a bit thick. Art is a lie and facts are true; but art is a way for truth, whereas facts lead only down the plastic path of fantasy. Orwell is an artist, and as such lived and wrote his own biography. I think, as he wished, his will prove the definitive work.²

However, it should be noted that Muggeridge's final appreciation here may not be unconnected to the fact that Sonia Orwell originally commissioned him to be her late husband's official biographer; it has been suggested that this was so, precisely because she knew he would never finish it. Or Muggeridge may be implying that Orwell's express wish that no biography of him be written was due to the fact that through his writing he had presented his life as he wished it to be interpreted.

Hugh Kenner takes one of Orwell's earliest essays, "A Hanging", to exemplify the questions that have to be asked: are we to suppose that Orwell is recounting an episode that he once witnessed, or are we, on the contrary, confronting a piece of creative, and therefore, fictional, writing?

It's because Orwell wrote down six words that Mr. Crick can complicate his discussion of "A Hanging" by adducing something from *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 'I watched a man hanged once.' To be sure, that doesn't prove that Orwell watched a man hang once; it proves only that he wrote that sentence, which in turn proves only that the author of "A Hanging" (1931) still had such an idea on his mind when he was writing something else six years later.³

Bernard Crick suggests that this and other essays such as "Such, Such Were the Joys", and "Shooting an Elephant", "are a compound of fact and fiction, honest in intent, true to experience, but not necessarily truthful in detail."

W. F. Bolton, on his part, believes that one reason for Orwell's apparent inconsistencies lies in the fact that although he was essentially a most careful and painstaking writer who took great trouble with the revision of his writing, his journalistic work was often undertaken in conditions which did not allow for careful revision, and in consequence Orwell expressed opinions which he probably would not have maintained afterwards:

For much of his writing career Orwell kept to his early habit of revising everything, often three or four times; but during the years when he tried to make a living as a journalist ('columnist' would be closer to the facts) he found, as he ruefully admitted, that he was publishing unrevised pieces. [...] The scattered remarks about language from this time, even when they balloon into paragraphs, are sometimes heedlessly expressed. In many of them he said things he probably would not have cared to defend after further reflection.⁵

Yet the longer essays, as Bolton makes clear, were much more carefully crafted and can be taken as more truly representative of Orwell's opinions. These essays will provide the backbone for the forthcoming discussion of Orwell's journalistic treatment of totalitarianism, propaganda, language and politics. But first we will consider the background to his awareness of language as reflected in his essays and then explore some of the criticisms his views have engendered.

3.i. Orwell's Linguistic Awareness: The Intellectual Biography of a Writer

Orwell's concern for language - and this concern is exclusively for the English language - spans almost the whole of his lifetime, as has already been

However, all his major essays in which an important theme is stated. language, belong to the last decade of his life, the forties. At this point it will be of use to chart the ideological development of the author through his own words in the essay entitled "Why I Write". This essay was written in 1946, near the end of his lifetime, although the editors of the Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters have wisely placed it at the beginning of the first volume, as it gives a good flavour of Orwell's best essay-writing. Moreover, with its autobiographical setting, the reader can understand some of the circumstances which Orwell considered to be important in his own life. The inclusion of a few necessary biographical details about the author in the present study are justified in Orwell's words in this very essay: "I do not think one can assess a writer's motives without knowing something of his early development."6 While accepting Orwell's description of his feelings and motives, we must, however, exercise caution in remaining aware that he is presenting an image of himself which is undoubtedly distorted. "Viewpoint neutrality" is not an acceptable stance and when applied to oneself, even less so. Orwell's views about the existence of viewpoint neutrality, or "intellectual detachment", as he more elegantly terms it, are expressed in "The Frontiers of Art and Propaganda":

Almost every European between 1890 and 1930 lived in the tacit belief that civilization would last for ever. You might be individually fortunate or unfortunate, but you had inside you the feeling that nothing would ever fundamentally change. And in that kind of atmosphere intellectual detachment, and also dilettantism, are possible. It is that feeling of continuity, of

security, that could make it possible for a critic like Saintsbury, a real old crusted Tory and High Churchman, to be scrupulously fair to books written by men whose political and moral outlook he detested.⁷

At the beginning of the essay he marks his childhood inclination for making up stories as the habit of a lonely child and also as a symptom of an inferiority complex: "I think from the very start my literary ambitions were mixed up with the feeling of being isolated and undervalued."8 Is this strictly true, or is this a device Orwell is using to disarm the reader with an unusual demonstration of frankness about his childhood? As was seen earlier, Orwell's sister Avril considered that the picture he presented of his childhood and home life was fundamentally a misrepresentation. The next sentence in the essay, however, offers a plausible picture of a child who recognises certain abilities within himself, although Orwell tempers this with a disparaging explanation of his own inner reaction to these abilities. "I knew that I had a facility with words and a power of facing unpleasant facts, and I felt that this created a sort of private world in which I could get my own back for my failure in everyday life."9 Orwell's facility with words allied with his fearlessness in using words to express unpalatable ideas brought upon him admiration, but also many problems during his life.

He relates how the "joy of mere words" was suddenly revealed to him around the age of sixteen through some lines from *Paradise Lost*, and how a desire was formed in him to write long, tragic, naturalistic novels, full of purple passages, detailed descriptions and arresting similes.¹⁰ He alleges that

his first complete novel, Burmese Days, is an example of that sort of book. Orwell cites four great motives that may underline the prose writer's desire to write, apart from the need to earn one's living. These motives are: sheer egoism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse and political purpose. He declares that if he had lived in a different age, the first three motives, which represent his natural inclination, would have been paramount, and that in a peaceful age he might not have become aware of his political loyalties. However, the circumstances of his life and his time forced him to become "a sort of pamphleteer". 11 He dismisses his five years in the Indian Police as "an unsuitable profession" for him and believes that his phase of first-hand experience of poverty and a sense of failure increased his "natural hatred of authority". His job in Burma provided him with some understanding of imperialism and his time in Paris, in London, and on the road, made him aware for the first time "of the existence of the working classes". However, it was the advent of Hitler, and in particular, the Spanish Civil War which gave him "an accurate political orientation".12

Orwell forcefully states the political underpinning of his writing:

The Spanish war and other events in 1936-7 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic Socialism, as I understand it. It seems to me nonsense, in a period like our own, to think that one can avoid writing of such subjects. Everyone writes of them in one guise or another. It is simply a question of which side one takes and what approach one follows. And the more one is conscious of one's political bias,

the more chance one has of acting politically without sacrificing one's aesthetic and intellectual integrity.¹³

Orwell explains that his motives for writing invariably stem from a sense of injustice, and reveals that his guiding purpose for the preceding ten years has been "to make political writing into an art". Nonetheless, he is not prepared to sacrifice his aesthetic concerns to propaganda, because he is unwilling and unable to forgo his childhood world-view. He cannot suppress that part of himself, and so he has set himself the task of reconciling his ingrained prejudices with the public, non-individual activities which are a by-product of the age in which he lives:

When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art.' I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing. But I could not do the work of writing a book, or even a long magazine article, if it were not also an aesthetic experience.[...] So long as I remain alive and well I shall continue to feel strongly about prose style, to love the surface of the earth, and to take pleasure in solid scraps of useless information. ¹⁴

In explicit reference to language, Orwell declares that of late he has been attempting to write more exactly and thus less picturesquely, but that whenever he has perfected a particular style he finds that he has outgrown it. Although he does not explicitly say so, the reader assumes that he feels the need to go on to something else. *Animal Farm* is the first book in which he has tried to "fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole" with

complete consciousness of what he was doing.¹⁵ Orwell, as is characteristic in his writing, finds room for self-disparagement. Thus, he refers to a novel he hopes to write shortly (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) which is "bound to be a failure, every book is a failure", declaring that all writers are "vain, selfish and lazy", and that one only writes a book driven on by a demon which may, he concedes, be nothing more than "the same instinct that makes a baby squall for attention."

Self-disparagement is only one of the hallmarks of the Orwellian essay style. One of his most characteristic traits is provocativeness, the craft of which is persuasively revealed by Bernard Gensame in a lucid book on Orwell subtitled *Vie et Ecriture*. Gensame remarks that although Orwell claims to aim for language that is as exact as possible, he nevertheless has frequent recourse to extravagant words which impede debate. However, Gensame pinpoints Orwell's binary mode of presenting an idea, which he believes characterizes his style, achieved by "placing his front paws on his back paws". Gensame extracts the following examples from "Arthur Koestler", and it is true that they are instantly recognizable:

- (1) 1A It may be an exaggeration, / 1B but it cannot be a very great one,
- 11A //[..] English writers [...] have produced almost nothing of aesthetic value, / 11B and very little of historical value either
- (2) 1A To understand such a thing, / 1B one has to be able to imagine oneself as the victim, // 11A and for an Englishman to write *Darkness at Noon* / 11B would be as unlikely an accident 11Bb as for a slave-trader to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- (3) 1 They have wanted to be anti-Fascist / 11 without being anti-

totalitarian

- (4) 1 Arthur Koestler already knew this / 11 but did not feel free to say so
- (5) 1 He has abandoned Stalinism / 11 but he is not a Trotskyist either.¹⁷

Roger Fowler in a book published in 1995 entitled The Language of George Orwell, analyses Orwell's output following the stylistics approach and he believes that his best work is "as individually recognizable and as original in style as that of any of the modernists". Fowler understands that Orwell's goal was truth before stylistic impact, but shows how, in order to accomplish his artistic ambitions, he deployed various different ways of writing.18 Fowler lists foregrounded modality as a marked feature of Orwell's personal voice, and negativism and hyperbole as major characteristics of his 'naturalistic' styles. The recourse to hyperbole in journalism was discussed in the previous section. These two devices, Fowler believes, are also features of "Orwell's 'over-the-top' journalism". 19 According to Fowler, this 'over-thetop' quality, the result of the "tendentious and emotional potential in Orwell", is manifested in generalisations, modality, vocabulary, and "overwhelming negativity and exaggeration". 20 Orwell called for prose to be 'like a window pane' and Fowler's study shows that although Orwell's style is praised for possessing this quality, it is a contrivance rather than a natural occurrence. As he says, Orwell worked hard and effectively at the illusion: "In view of the controversial nature of the content of his writings, it is imperative to try to take a balanced view of Orwell's style, particularly in thinking about the 'personal voice' and the ideal of prose like a 'window pane'. Orwell's style in fact bears

little resemblance to a window pane, certainly not a clean one."21

It is fair to say that "Politics and the English Language" is generally considered to be emblematic, both of Orwell's essay-writing style, and of his views about the problems besetting language. Yet the ideas expressed in this essay, also written in 1946, are ideas which, for the most part, have already been voiced in other essays written throughout the first half of the forties.

In "The English Language" Orwell inveighs against the debasement of English, which he sees as dangerously susceptible because, being easy to use, it is easy to use *badly*. Good writing in English is an art and not a science because, as there are no reliable rules, mere correctness can in no way be guaranteed to produce good writing. The absence of reliable rules is only somewhat mitigated by the "general principle that concrete words are better than abstract ones, and that the shortest way of saying anything is always the best." Orwell portrays the writer of English as involved in a permanent struggle that allows no respite, "struggling against vagueness, against obscurity, against the lure of the decorative adjective, against the encroachment of Latin and Greek, and, above all, against the worn-out phrases and dead metaphors with which the language is cluttered up." In "Politics and the English Language", in turn, Orwell contends that:

A newly invented metapher assists thought by evoking a visual image, while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically 'dead' (e.g. *iron resolution*) has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative

power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves.²⁴

Another weakness of the English language, according to Orwell, is that it lends itself to the use of jargons. He mentions doctors, scientists, businessmen, officials, sportsmen, economists, and political theorists, who "all have their characteristic perversion of the language". These may be examined in their respective magazines such as the *Lancet* for medicine, or the *Labour Monthly* for political theory. But Orwell launches his fiercest attack on jargon at 'Standard English'. His alarm springs from the way he sees that "this dreary dialect" is no longer confined to certain echelons of society but is spreading down the social scale and out into the spoken language. Orwell's principal objection is that there is a reliance on ready-made-plurases, for example, take the earliest opportunity, or explore every avenue, which have a two-fold disadvantage. In the first place, they lack freshness and vividness, and consequently their use is mechanical and therefore blocks creativity of thought, for they have "the same relation to living English as a crutch has to a leg". The paragraph concludes:

Anyone preparing a broadcast or writing to *The Times* adopts this kind of language almost instinctively, and it infects the spoken tongue as well. So much has our language weakened that the imbecile chatter in Swift's essay on police conversation (a satire on the upper-class talk of Swift's own day) would actually be rather a good conversation by modern standards.²⁶

Orwell looks at the borrowings from American in "The English

Language", noting that there is a one-way traffic across the Atlantic from West to East. He remarks that Americans dislike usage which they consider to be British because anti-British feeling is quite strong in the United States. The reasons for the infiltration of American borrowings are the lesser anti-American feelings in England, the "vivid, almost poetic quality" of American slang, the fact that certain American usages save time, but especially because for an English person, American words are devoid of class content. Orwell sums up his opinion of American borrowings as follows: "We ought to be ready to borrow its best words, but we ought not to let it modify the actual structure of our language."²⁷

Orwell considers Americanisms to be largely a negative influence upon the language, noting a tendency to tack on content-free prepositions, and taking particular exception to euphemisms: "American has broken more completely than English with the past and with literary traditions. It not only produces words like beautician, moronic, and sexualize, but often replaces strong primary words by feeble euphemisms. For instance, many Americans seem to regard the word death and various words that go with it (corpse, coffin, shroud) as almost unmentionable." In the section devoted to euphemism and political correctness, it was seen how PC terms are often considered purely euphemistic. The recent report of an American hospital which issued a communiqué in which a death was referred to as negative patient care outcome, amply bears out Orwell's claim. He would no doubt have been able to make a suitable comment on this euphemistic PC usage.

Orwell's "As I Please" column of the March 17th 1944 edition of

Tribune is devoted to an attack on Marxist jargon, or Pamphletese. He starts the column by enumerating certain words and expression to which he takes singular exception: "Achilles' heel, jackboot, hydra-headed, ride roughshod over, stab in the back, petty-bourgeois, stinking corpse, liquidate, iron heel, blood-stained oppressor, cynical betrayal, lackey, flunkey, mad dog, jackal, hyena, blood-bath." In passing he alludes to other "perversions" of the English language, which include jargon, in particular the instinctive preference that scientists and economists show for words such as 'contraindicate' and 'deregionalization', and "official English or Stripe-trouser". He also points to the translation of phrases principally from German and Russian as a characteristic of Marxist jargon:

Many of the expressions used in political literature are simply euphemisms or rhetorical tricks. 'Liquidate' for instance (or 'eliminate') is a polite word for 'to kill', while 'realism' normally means 'dishonesty'. But Marxist phraseology is peculiar in that it consists largely of translations. Its characteristic vocabulary comes ultimately from German or Russian phrases which have been adopted in one country after another with no attempt to find suitable equivalents.³¹

Bolton demonstrates how Orwell's concern about the evils of jargon and euphemism was a constant in all his writing.³² The number of essays which Orwell devoted to the subject of language during the forties, however, bears witness to the fact that he became increasingly distressed at the direction in which he perceived his language to be going. He believed that words were being used inappropriately in two ways. In the first place, not enough thought

was going into choosing the best words available for the expression of ideas. The strategy which was consequently employed, that of the lazy person, was to resort to the stock words and phrases (upon which Orwell pronounced the death sentence) without stopping to see if any other alternatives were preferable. Orwell equates the use of language in this way to a person doing a jigsaw puzzle, but comments that to claim to be using language properly when employing this strategy is like claiming that doing a jigsaw is the same as painting a picture. It is an apt simile, and it must have been particularly aggravating for one who took so much trouble to choose the best words, and for whom the act of writing was such a laborious process.

In "Propaganda and Demotic Speech", written in the Spring of 1944, Orwell reflects upon the difficulty of putting genuine spoken English on to paper. This is the variety of English which he places in direct contrast to the "bloodless dialect of government spokesmen". Orwell believes that both this dialect and the inflated bombastic style which tends to employ archaic words, fail to get their message across adequately, because they are so divorced from normal language. His advice is to be continually aware of the need to simplify what one is writing and to ask oneself if what one is writing could possibly be made more like speech. If this advice is followed there will be less likelihood of producing turgid prose, or "to say 'eliminate' when you mean kill, or 'static water' when you mean 'fire tank'."

Once again Orwell is denouncing the use of euphemisms which cover up the real meaning of what is said. The section of the present study devoted to euphemism and political correctness provided numerous examples both of euphemisms and PC terms whose purpose is to achieve exactly what Orwell so much deplored. It is arguable that the adoption of gender-neutral terms of address reflects more adequately the interchangeable roles that are a feature of contemporary society. Indeed, to the modern reader, the fact that Orwell invariably refers to "man" or "he" when making generalizations which pertain to both the sexes, certainly appears anachronistic. However, to deduce from this that Orwell was a misogynist is to disregard entirely the society in which he lived. To be sure, that society did not take into account women's right to equality, but the only serious way to judge Orwell's attitudes is to view them within the context in which they were developed and exercised.³⁴

In the context of PC, euphemisms play a large part in the regulation of Speech Codes at American universities. These constitute an attempt to control both oral utterances and ultimately other forms of discourse with a view to controlling thought, which must be politically correct. Orwell attacked the control of language and thought and equally was concerned with the thoughtless use of language, which he believed led ultimately to slack thinking. One of the dangers of sloppy thinking, of course, is that if one is not accustomed to questioning and not accepting propositions at face value, one is more easily duped and taken in by false propositions, and this is one of the main themes of "Politics and the English Language". However, before looking at such themes more closely, some of the adverse criticism of the views expressed in this essay will be considered.

3.ii. Some Critical Views on Orwell's Ideas on Language

Fowler, as we have seen, considers Orwell to be over-emotional, and makes reference to "his most strident essay" on the topic of language.³⁵ Yet Fowler corrects a view which is fairly widespread and which posits Orwell as suggesting that "language might mould reality in some specific way (the nominalist position)."³⁶ Fowler clarifies Orwell's true position:

The metaphor of the window pane with which we started, and the frequent mentions of clarity, vividness, precision, concreteness as desirable properties of prose, indicate that Orwell had a fundamentally realist view. Things exist, and English has perfectly good names for them: one of his repeated complaints is that we borrow unnecessarily from French, or Greek, to name objects that are already named. Orwell does not complain that the renaming *changes* the nature of a thing, but that it can obscure our knowledge of that thing.³⁷

Roy Harris writes of Orwell's "erroneous diagnosis" of what was wrong with the language of his day which revealed the shallowness of his thinking about language. By attacking the negative influence of American usage and employing epithets such as 'slovenliness' 'ugliness' 'lack of precision' 'meaninglessness' and 'pretentious diction' Orwell is reflecting "the same

prescriptivist attitudes towards language as can be found in most published guides to 'correct' usage, or any representative selection of complaints to the BBC about the decline of contemporary 'standards' of English." Harris points out that calling a spade a spade is not something that is achieved by a language, but by language-users who will invent another word if they do not like the word spade. Orwell was misguided when he supposed: "(1) that something called 'the English language' lays down the true meaning of a word like spade; (2) that words like spade mean what they say; and (3) that anything which needs to be said can be said using words like spade." In a similar line of criticism, Fowler observes that, in contrast with mainstream linguistics in the wake of Saussure, Orwell's belief was that language could be controlled by its users, and he explicitly states this position in "Politics and the English Language" in urging his readers to regard language as "an instrument which we shape for our own purposes". 40

Harris's remarks on Orwell's views about language are not only adversely critical, for he regards parts of "Politics and the English Language" as examples of Orwell's "most vigorous writing", taking the following sentence to demonstrate this: "Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets; this is called *pacification*." (original italics) Harris comments that Orwell had already expressed what the Vietnam generation was later to say. Orwell himself gives this very sentence as an example of how "political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness" He believes that "political

speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible", since acts such as the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan and the Russian purges and deportations can only be defended by arguments which are too brutal for the majority of the population to bear. The only acceptable way to express these and similar acts is through the use of euphemistic words. As was seen in section 2.i. the more recent Gulf War provided a prodigious store of euphemistic terms to mitigate the horrors of the war, and the war in Bosnia Herzegovina has transferred that same phenomenon to the confines of Europe. Orwell continues his examples of this kind of language as follows:

Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. Consider some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism. He cannot say outright, 'I believe in killing off your opponents when you get good results by doing so'. Probably, therefore, he will say something like this:

While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment to the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigours which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.⁴³

In the section on Multiculturalism it was seen how Hughes parodied a plausible explanation of the Iranian mullahs' farwa against Salman Rushdie, supposedly issued from North American academe. We may compare his words with Orwell's and conclude that his arguments could equally have come out of the mouth of Orwell's "comfortable English professor". Clearly, Orwell's message holds true today. Although, as has been shown, many of the thoughts expressed in "Politics and the English Language" are repetitions or reformulations of ideas he had previously voiced, Orwell's twinning of politics with language lays particular emphasis on the same ideas underlying the ethos of political correctness.

In the course of the discussion of jargon Orwell examines the abuse of political words, and notes the debasement of the word Fascism which "has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable' "44 This appreciation written in 1946 is entirely valid fifty years later in 1996. In the language of politics the word "fascist" is an epithet all-too-often applied to adversaries, having become, as Orwell noted, totally degraded and devoid of its original meaning. In Spain the word fascista is commonly employed in reference to the declarations and actions of terrorist groups such as ETA, GRAPO, or GAL, and has become a convenient way of referring to the members of these groups. Similarly democracia and demócrata are invoked and flagrantly abused in a sense roughly equivalent to the opposite of Orwell's parsing of "fascist", and so have come to be used to convey "a desirable society/person". As Orwell states, with a word like democracy there is no agreed definition and if an attempt is made to define it, it is resisted from all

sides. A like phenomenon may be observed with the word "fascism".

Nobody wants their democratic credentials challenged, and in a similar way,
to be called bourgeois is to understand that one is the object of some kind of
disapproval. As Orwell himself puts it:

It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of régime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning. [...] Other words used in variable meanings, in most cases more or less dishonestly, are: class, totalitarian, science, progressive, reactionary, bourgeois, equality.⁴⁵

During the recent February campaign for the General Elections in Spain, there was ample evidence of the contemporariness of Orwell's fears. They contain, in fact, prophetic qualities, for it seems not a little far-fetched to conjure up the spectre of totalitarianism in a member country of the European Union, which requires all its members to be free societies. Totalitarianism was, however, alleged on numerous occasions and notably in reference to the video produced for the Socialist Party's campaign in which the leader of the Right was depicted in terms which many commentators in the media compared to Goebbels's treatment of propaganda. One wonders how many people, fifty to sixty years after the height of Nazi propaganda, have actually seen samples of it. Probably it too is now debased coinage.

Orwell writes of the above words being used dishonestly, and Fowler takes this affirmation one step further, suggesting that Orwell suspects a conspiratorial misuse of language, implied in the phrasing "swindles and

perversions". However, Fowler believes that the main charge Orwell is making is that of laziness and complicity: "politicians write and speak in this dishonest way because it is easier: it saves thought." Notwithstanding this, a sentence such as "all issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia", from "Politics and the English Language" clearly comes from an angry man. That Orwell could so obviously show his anger about the misuse of the English language no doubt contributes to professional linguists' disapproval of him.

Bob Hodge and Roger Fowler examine "Orwellian Linguistics", which they hasten to clarify is something that does not exist, since Orwell was not a linguist, from the point of view of the academic. The authors are broadly in favour of many of Orwell's tenets and understand Orwell's chief virtue as "a thinker about language" to be that of "a stimulus and a challenge." "He was not a systematic theorist", as they rightly claim, "and there are inconsistencies, confusions and gaps in any theory that can be drawn from his various works. He had no method of analysis beyond the application of common sense, the common sense of an observant, intelligent but idiosyncratic individual."

Yet, either despite or because of these characteristics, no one doubts that Orwell's views have been immensely influential. At an academic level his views on language have been challenged and contested whereas the popular conception of "good language" owes much to Orwell's views expressed through his journalism.

Hodge and Fowler end their essay by recording that academic linguistics has not taken account of Orwellian insights into language, although the authors

see no reason why a systematic study of the linguistic relations in which Orwell was interested should not be undertaken. Accordingly, "social structure and linguistic form, function and process, using linguistic analysis as a way of uncovering ideological processes and complex states of mind" would be investigated. At present, however, it is helpful to explore Orwell's output as both journalist and essayist in order to see exactly what impact his awareness of language had on the views on truth and control he expressed in his own writings.

3.iii. Totalitarianism and Propaganda

George Orwell lived through what, for the Western world, is undisputedly the most troubled and turbulent part of the twentieth century. As a boy and an adolescent he lived in the England of the First World War. This "war to end all wars" proved not to be so, but undoubtedly marked the end of an era, an age in which the middle and upper classes believed that their way of life would continue virtually unchanged for ever. Orwell was fourteen when the October Revolution took place in Russia, and the following decade, the so-called "happy twenties", saw the General Strike in England, towards the end of Orwell's five-year stint in Burma as a police officer with the Indian Imperial

Police. The thirties were plagued by mass unemployment in the aftermath of the Stock Market crashes at the end of the previous decade in England, the United States and elsewhere, and saw Hitler's rise to power in Germany. In 1936 Orwell enlisted voluntarily as a soldier in the Spanish Civil War, and finally, having been declared unfit for active service, spent most of the Second World War employed in the Indian Section of the B.B.C., transmitting to the Indian sub-continent.

It was undoubtedly his experience of the Spanish Civil War, recounted in *Homage to Catalonia*, and in particular, how the war was reported in the press, as George Woodcock points out, which sealed his overwhelming disapproval of totalitarianism, and the propaganda which seems to inevitably accompany it:

It was the scandalous distortion of news from Spain in favour of the Stalinists by the liberal English press, including organs of the intelligentsia like the *New Statesman*, that gave Orwell a reason for his characteristically exaggerated view that intellectuals in general were being seduced by totalitarian ideas and models. The same experience led him to consider the rewriting of history that was being perpetrated by totalitarian regimes and their followers, and this in turn led him to denounce the degeneration of the language that was already taking place through its distortion both by commercial advertisers and by politicians of all kinds.⁴⁹

In the autumn of 1942 Orwell wrote an essay under the title "Looking Back on the Spanish War", in which, with the benefit of hindsight, he evaluates certain aspects of the war and of the atmosphere he encountered in Spain. Two

lasting impressions that stayed with him were of the in-fighting carried on among the supporters of the Republican side, and the atmosphere in Barcelona, first of optimism and liberation when he arrived at the very end of December 1936, in contrast with the events of May 1937 when he witnessed the bloody rise to power of the hard-line Stalinist Communist party.

In "Looking Back on the Spanish War" Orwell was presumably able to exercise the equanimity which a time lapse of five years since his own personal involvement with those tragic events can confer. He describes how his youthful perception of the inaccuracies of the press were magnified out of all proportion by the treatment of propaganda in the Spain of the war. "Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper," he wrote, "but in Spain, for the first time, I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts, not even the relationship which is implied in an ordinary lie."50 With characteristic forthrightness, Orwell berates propaganda, and it should be remembered that he was writing in and for a nation engaged in a war of survival, and working for an organisation dedicated to "informing" over the air. In his war-time diaries, after six months at the B.B.C., he described the atmosphere there as "something halfway between a girls' school and a lunatic asylum", conceding nonetheless that "one rapidly becomes propaganda-minded and develops a cunning one did not previously have."51 Orwell was too honest with himself and with others and too aware of the dangers of propaganda to allow himself to be duped and thus unthinkingly partake in the overt dissemination of propaganda. Besides, he believed that its crassest examples provoked an effect contrary to the one desired: "official war propaganda, with its disgusting hypocrisy and self-righteousness, always tends to make thinking people sympathize with the enemy. [...] The truth, it is felt, becomes untruth when your enemy utters it."52

The titles of two programmes broadcast by the B.B.C. and published by the Listener in May and June of 1941, reflect Orwell's concern at this period of the war - "The Frontiers of Art and Propaganda" and "Literature and Totalitarianism". In the first programme Orwell looks at literary criticism and the English literature of the preceding ten years. He observes that it was a period which was neither peaceful nor critical. Indeed, he asserts, in the Europe of that time, what he considers to be judicious criticism, "scrupulous, fair-minded, treating a work of art as a thing of value in itself" had been virtually impossible. In view of Orwell's opinion about the inevitability of the writer adopting a political stance in everything written, it is interesting to note his evaluation of how criticism should proceed and contrast it with current politically correct positions.⁵³ As has already been seen, these positions view literary criticism as fundamentally furthering specific concepts of politics and society, aesthetic considerations being subordinate to the purpose of the text. However, Orwell, while acknowledging these social and political considerations, lamented the constraints they imposed upon writers.

The most striking quality of the prevailing literary attitude of the thirties, Orwell believes, is "that it has almost ceased to be aesthetic." ⁵⁴ Propaganda has inundated literature and he cites writers like Auden, Spender and MacNeice who have given prominence to subject-matter over technique, and have in consequence been didactic and political in their writing. However,

Orwell believes that this period has rendered a great service to literary criticism as it has destroyed "the illusion of pure aestheticism."55

Orwell derives an important consequence from this period in which literature was inextricably mixed up with what he refers to as "pamphleteering", and it is one which harks back to the preceding discussion of the literary canon in the present study. In his view, "propaganda in some form or other lurks in every book, [...] every work of art has a meaning and a purpose -a political, social and religious purpose-[...] our aesthetic judgements are always coloured by our prejudices and beliefs."56 (Emphasis added.) It will be remembered that a pivotal point in the debate over the Canon centred on the discussion of the possibility of the existence of a neutral view-point, and Orwell is here unequivocally committed to the opinion that neutrality is not a tenable position. However, the commitment to a political ideology in the thirties, as Orwell sees it, caused many young writers to "try to tie their hands to a political discipline", and if they had remained in this position their mental honesty would have been compromised and made impossible. For these writers official Marxism was their only political option, entailing what Orwell terms a "nationalistic loyalty towards Russia", thereby forcing the writer who considered himself to be a Marxist to become embroiled in "the dishonesties of power Politics."57

The Russo-German Pact was their watershed, for those writers who had found it impossible in the early thirties to remain indifferent to the tide of contemporary events, in 1939 discovered that they they were required to sacrifice their intellectual integrity to their political beliefs. Orwell declares

this to be incompatible with being a writer. The writer thus is placed in an invidious position, neither aesthetic scrupulousness alone being enough, nor political righteousness. Orwell's view of the artist's position with respect to propaganda was expressed earlier in a discussion with Desmond Hawkins published under the title "The Proletarian Writer" in the *Listener* on 19 December, 1940, in which he stated the following:

I have always maintained that every artist is a propagandist. I don't mean a political propagandist. If he has any honesty or talent at all he cannot be that. Most political propaganda is a matter of telling lies, not only about the facts but about your own feelings. But every artist is a propagandist in the sense that he is trying, directly or indirectly, to impose a vision of life that seems to him desirable.⁵⁸

In "Literature and Totalitarianism" Orwell declares his age to be that of the totalitarian state, characterized by the complete lack of individual freedom. He admits that the prime candidates for totalitarian status are Germany, Russia and Italy but does not believe that with these states the whole story of totalitarianism has been told. He fears that it is a phenomenon which will become world-wide. In his discussion of totalitarianism Orwell describes a system which he will later describe in fictional form in Nineteen Eighty-Four, where freedom of thought has been abolished to an extent unheard of in any previous age. Moreover, the control of thought is both negative and positive, since not only is one forbidden to express, and even to think certain thoughts, "but it dictates what you shall think." Orwell continues his argument by examining the aims and the methods employed by the totalitarian state to

achieve control both of hearts and minds:

it creates an ideology for you, it tries to govern your emotic. '
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. The totalitarian state tries, at any rate, to control
the thoughts and emotions of its subjects at least as completely
as it controls their actions. 60 (Emphasis added.)

The setting up of codes of conduct has been seen in the discussion of the different PC debates. Of particular relevance here are the attempts to regulate speech codes. By eliminating undesirable terms, two possible outcomes may ensue: either the non-PC terms will be adopted because of an outside imposition, i.e. force of some kind will prevail, or else their adoption will induce more acceptable thoughts. Orwell was critical of both these positions. In an essay entitled "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool", published in *Polemic* in early 1947, he exposes two faces of tyranny in an allegory of the family. The father threatens his child with corporal punishment for some misdemeanour while the mother enfolds the child in her arms and "murmur[s] lovingly, 'Now, darling, is it kind to Mummy to do that?'" Orwell contends that both methods are equally tyrannous, and that the important distinction is not between violence and non-violence, "but between having and not having the appetite for power". This would seem to be a case of over-simplification of the issue and points perhaps to a certain naïvety on Orwell's part.

He cites people who firmly believe in the evil of armies and of police forces, but whose attitudes are, however, far more intolerant and inquisitorial than what he considers the normal person, who believes it is necessary to use violence in certain circumstances. The former will not resort to outright threats of punishment for wrong-doing, but prefer to try to infiltrate their ideas into the brains of others and consequently dictate their thoughts down to the last detail. Paradoxically this occurs with beliefs such as pacifism and anarchism, which in appearance imply a total renunciation of power. The logic works thus: if you believe in a set of ideals which to all intents and purposes stands aloof from the common shenanigans of politics, and which does not offer you any material advantage either, then your beliefs must be the right ones. "And the more you are in the right, the more natural that everyone else should be bullied into thinking likewise."

For Orwell, the characteristic of the totalitarian state is this bullying strain that controls thought, but does not fix it. The cardinal example for him was the *volte-face* that Communists were forced to perform over Stalin's change of allegiance, first opposing Hitler, then entering into a pact with him, and finally again, reversing their reversal with Hitler's invasion of Russia. Orwell writes of totalitarianism setting up unquestionable dogmas and altering them day by day, changes which occur because, while requiring absolute obedience on the part of its subjects, the totalitarian state cannot avoid the changes dictated by the needs of power politics: "It declares itself infallible, and at the same time it attacks the very concept of objective truth." Orwell is concerned in this essay with the effects of totalitarianism on intellectual liberty, and literature in particular. He deems its effects to be catasirophic, for he believes that writing of any consequence can only be accomplished by a

writer who feels the truth of what he writes; otherwise, the creative impulse will not be there. A writer may pay lip-service to the current orthodoxy, but that is not the same thing.

For the Orwell of "The Prevention of Literature", which was published in January 1946, intellectual liberty in his age is the object of a two-pronged attack, coming from its theoretical enemies on one side, who are the apologists of totalitarianism, while on the other, the attack issues from its practical and immediate enemies, namely monopoly and bureaucracy. In the world of his time, writers and journalists are not persecuted actively, but if they desire to maintain their integrity they find themselves "thwarted by the general drift of society."64 Orwell equates Communists with Catholics in that they both assume that an opponent cannot at the same time be both honest and intelligent. "Each of them tacitly claims that 'the truth' has already been revealed, and that the heretic, if he is not simply a fool, is secretly aware of 'the truth' and merely resists it out of selfish motives."65 Catholics and Catholicism were frequently the butt of Orwell's disapproval, and in this case he looks back on the previous fifteen years during which he believes that the defenders of intellectual freedom in England had to contend with Conservatives, Catholics, and to a much lesser extent, with Fascists. In the mid-forties, it is Communists and 'fellow-travellers' who pose the greatest threat to freedom of the intellect. While Orwell believes that the direct influence of the small English Communnist Party should not be exaggerated, he nonetheless warns against the unquestionable "poisonous effect of the Russian mythos on English intellectual life. Because of it, known facts are suppressed and distorted to such an extent as to make it doubtful whether a true history of our times can ever be written."66

The preoccupation with a correct rendering of history is a constant in Orwell's writing. In "Looking Back on the Spanish War" he wonders how the history of the Spanish war will be written. He questions the kind of documents which would be found after the hypothetical fall of Franco, but has no more confidence in a truthful account of the war written by anti-Fascists.⁶⁷ In "The Prevention of Literature" he declares that lying, contrary to the view of some, is not a temporary phenomenon to which totalitarian regimes have recourse in times of need, but rather an integral component of totalitarianism, which, as he says, would continue to be used even if concentration camps and secret police forces were no longer being used.⁶⁸ The course of politics since Orwell's time has disturbingly revealed that lying is also a feature of certain self-styled "democracies".

Orwell scathingly refers to intelligent Communists who circulate a legend which holds that the Russian government, though at the time obliged to hold "frame-up" trials and distribute lying propaganda, is at the same time zealously preserving and recording the truth in order to publish it at some future time. As he says: "We can, I believe, be quite certain that this is not the case, because the mentality implied by such an action is that of a liberal historian who believes that the past cannot be altered and that a correct knowledge of history is valuable as a matter of course. From the totalitarian point of view history is something to be *created* rather than learned." (Emphasis added.)

The whole question of the rewriting of history is, of course, one of the main themes of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Orwell believes that all the evidence points to the sudden emotional changes which totalitarianism demands of its followers as being psychologically impossible. No doubt this is one of the reasons why in *Nineteen Eighty- Four*, the Two Minutes Hate and the Hate Week appear so monstrous to the reader. Nevertheless, it is clear that their purpose is to build up a pattern of behaviour which eliminates logical thinking, and hence the inhabitants of Oceania can accept their country's change of ally and consequent change of foe without dwelling upon the paradox incurred.

In *The Larger Evils: Nineteen Eighty- Four, The Truth Behind the Satire*, W. J. West underlines the hypocrisy which Orwell experienced at first hand during his time at the B.B.C. when he had knowledge of the censorship of the British press, which went to the lengths of suppressing some newspapers. As West observes, the authorities never felt able to reveal to the British public the methods they were resorting to, and the British public had absolute faith in their press which was in fact used to circulate false rumours in order to take in the Germans. Orwell's wife, Eileen, worked for the Censorship Department in Whitehall, and part of her job consisted in checking which papers could or could not go out, and indeed she issued the censors' stops in Britain which controlled the material allowed through from the correspondents of neutral countries. The irony of the situation was that in its fight for "freedom" against the tyranny of the Axis powers, Britain was using some of the same totalitarian methods which were publicly so denounced. As West observes, "the fact that the establishment at the B.B.C. could genuinely believe

that they were fighting for freedom of speech, whilst censoring every word that was uttered over the air and all the while denying (and continuing to deny after the war was over) what they had been doing is one of the finest examples of 'doublethink'."⁷³

Yet even before the war Orwell had direct problems with censorship.

As early as 1937 his review of *The Spanish Cockpit* was rejected by Kingsley Martin, the editor of the *New Statesman*, who explained in his letter of rejection that he believed that certain facts in Orwell's review would do harm to the Popular Front, although he did not deny that the facts were true. Another example of the many difficulties he experienced is with the publication of *Animal Farm*, which was rejected by publisher after publisher on grounds similar to those offered him by T.S. Eliot, at that time a director of Faber & Faber, which in modern terms could be summed up by saying that his views were not politically correct. Crick quotes part of a letter from Eliot in which he writes:

[W]e have no conviction (and I am sure none of the other directors would have) that this is the right point of view from which to criticise the political situation at the present time.[...] I am very sorry because whoever publishes this will naturally have the opportunity of publishing your future work: and I have regard for your work, because it is good writing of fundamental integrity.⁷⁵

Orwell was often considered a kind of amiable eccentric, a sentiment expressed by Alex Comfort, (well-known at the time amongst other things as

a foremost member of the Pacifist movement) in the course of a rather acrimonious debate published in America in the *Partisan Review* in 1942 under the title of "Pacifism and the War". ⁷⁶ Comfort's tone is deliberately patronising, but there is no doubt that it reflects more than just his personal opinion.

The trouble is that some of your American readers may not realize Mr Orwell's status in this country and take his commentary seriously. We all like him here, though the standard of his pamphleteering is going down of late, and we know him as a preacher of a doctrine of physical Courage as an Asset to the Left-wing Intellectual, and so forth. I think we all agree that he is pretty thoroughly out of touch with any writing under thirty years of age, and his last two public performances - a reproof in sorrow to my book *No Such Liberty*, and this 'London Letter' of his- suggest that he still has not grasped why most of the post-thirties poets are pacifists, or what their pacifism would entail if Hitler arrived here.⁷⁷

As Orwell's opinions became better and better known through his considerable journalistic output, principally during the war, many who did not share his views came to regard him as slightly paranoiac, considering himself the object of witch-hunting. However, as West demonstrates, amongst his colleagues at the B.B.C. was Guy Burgess who was to defect to Russia during the fifties after Orwell's death, and was one of the most notorious spies to infiltrate the very heart of the British counter-espionage service. West persuasively notes that at the time of Orwell's death if it had been suggested that Burgess was a Soviet agent, the mere insinuation would have been

dismissed as a piece of sheer malice or evidence of what was then called a "mania," just as talking about censorship would have been regarded as evidence of a "persecution complex." These doubtful qualities were attributed to Orwell. "But the facts were that Burgess and his colleagues, known as Stalin's Englishmen, were spies and Orwell was the victim of censorship on a large scale."

In a long essay entitled "The English People", written by May 1944, although not published until 1947, Orwell declares that "the much boasted freedom" of the press in Britain is essentially a theoretical construct, and he contrasts it with freedom of speech which he sees as a reality. While the English are for the most part unafraid of uttering their political views in public, the press, because it is owned by only a few, does not print unpopular opinions. 79 Orwell also contrasts the situation in England with that of "the Continent", whose "ruthless ideologies", which he details as "not merely Communism and Fascism, but Anarchism, Trotskyism, and even ultramontane Catholicism", are only accepted in their orthodox form by the intelligentsia, "a sort of island of bigotry among the general vagueness."80 Orwell believes that a truly totalitarian atmosphere with the State controlling people's thoughts and words is "hardly imaginable."81 In "Arthur Koestler", also written in 1944, Orwell alludes to "concentration camp literature", which he states only appears in England in the form of translation from a foreign language. This kind of literature reflects the world in which secret-police forces, censorship of opinion, and torture abound. With regard to the Soviet Union two diametrically opposed attitudes exist, with virtually nothing between "ignorant

disapproval" and "uncritical admiration." Neither the Moscow sabotage trials nor the Nazi outrages made much emotional impact on the English. Orwell concludes that such things are only understood if one imagines oneself as the victim, "and for an Englishman to write Darkness at Noon would be as unlikely an accident as for a slave-trader to write Uncle Tom's Cabin." With the publication of Nineteen Eighty-Four, Orwell was to fill precisely that gap in English literature.

The foregoing discussion of Orwell's attitude to propaganda and totalitarianism has shown how he returned again and again to evils which he saw as pervasive in societies officially considered totalitarian. However, as Orwell well knew, in part from his experience at the B.B.C., these evils also spilled over to the "democratic" and "free" society of Britain. It was the public acknowledgement that England was not completely divorced from the ills of totalitarianism, that incurred much of the opprobrium that gave rise to his numerous difficulties in finding publishers for his work. To put it in modern terms: Orwell's thoughts were not politically correct, particularly for a country at war with an avowedly totalitarian Germany, but which at the same time had as a vitally important ally, the no less totalitarian Russia. As has been seen throughout the discussion of PC, what is not tolerated is the voicing of politically incorrect thoughts. Orwell, in writing what he honestly believed, was uttering the unutterable.

3.iv. Language and Politics in Orwell's Thought

One of the chief methods for achieving control over society, Orwell believed, was through control of language, another favourite theme running through his work as a journalist, essayist and novelist. His opinions about language and his alarm for what he increasingly perceived as its debasement were and are extremely influential among people whose primary occupation is not directly concerned with language. Ian Slater considers that Orwell has made a major contribution to our understanding of politics, in his analysis of "the extent to which language, as part of the process of power hunger denying equality, may be willfully corrupted as a tactic in an ever-expanding policy of deception."⁸⁴

As Savage et al. note, Orwell, in keeping with traditional political philosophy, acknowledges that "the state's ultimate distinction lies in its supreme capacity for coercion." This coercion may be motivated by fear for one's physical integrity, as experienced by victims and potential victims of the activities of the Gestapo in Germany or Stalin's purges in the Soviet Union, for example. Yet Orwell, as Savage et al. point out, is more concerned with the control of the mind as the ultimate exercise of power. This type of control, because it is less obviously apparent, is therefore, all the more insidious.

Consequently, it is observed, "his concern with language and mediated communication follows rather naturally." 85

In contrast to the general reception of Orwell's views on totalitarianism, his views on language proved, and continue to prove today, extremely popular. Although Stephen Ingle believes that Orwell is chiefly remembered for his politics, 86 the evidence points in the opposite direction. Curiously, in the light of Orwell's literary reputation since his death in early 1950, Mark Connelly's view is that during his lifetime Orwell was chiefly regarded as a political journalist through his "articulate essays [which] prompted praise and condemnation", his novels being generally regarded as secondary, the literary efforts of an essentially political columnist.87 Although Orwell's views of language are a constant in all of his writing, according to W. F. Bolton just two works, Nineteen Eighty- Four, and "Politics and the English Language" characterize his opinions on language for most people. Bolton believes that Orwell's literary reputation, compounded perhaps with his untimely death, contributed towards the favour in which his linguistic views are held.88 He is only one of the many critics who point out the enormous use that is made of "Politics and the English Language" in College courses on writing and style, particularly, it may be said, in North America.89

Nevertheless, it would be an error to believe that Orwell's opinions about language are met with universal appprobation, and it is chiefly among linguists and professionals of language that his views are most contested. Richard Bailey considers that Orwell's influence remains particularly strong in his manner of regarding language, but that in his considerations on the future

of spoken English varieties, Orwell neither thought profoundly nor reached any very persuasive conclusions. Carl Freedman observes that Orwell was "a congenital empiricist". He was, in consequence, "willing to trust his senses and the more obvious inferences that can be drawn from sense data", but all the time retained a deep suspicion of "general, totalizing theory. Bolton, writes of Orwell's "sweeping generalizations", few of which he considers "matched his remarks on language because rarely in a question of language did he feel the need to pause, to analyze, to qualify. Bolton also points to the fact that although Orwell's interest in language lasted all his life, his opinion on language, hardly changed at all from his Eton days onwards.

Fowler reminds us that in Orwell's day the academic discipline of sociolinguistics did not exist, and surmises that if it had existed, Orwell in all probability would have professed scant respect for it anyway. Fowler emphasizes how the tradition of complaint about usages which militate against Plain English, such as jargon, Americanisms, dead metaphors and obscure grammar, is a tradition which continues to have a very large following today. According to Fowler, "Orwell's sentiments put him squarely within that tradition. But his thoughts on the implications of such practices take him far beyond the average guardian of good English who writes indignantly to the newspapers." Fowler feels that Orwell's opinions regarding usage "are part of a complex and deeply felt intellectual and moral argument, which we find most passionately voiced in 'Politics and the English Language'". 95

Harris diagnoses Orwell's linguistic worries as symptoms of logophobia

-*one of the most characteristic maladies of our time."

Harris believes that

Orwell suffered from acute fits of the ailment, manifesting distrust of words which sometimes "bordered on the pathological". As a professional writer he was aware of how much he owed to his own "skills of verbal manipulation", but as a committed socialist "he instinctively disliked verbal skills as skills preeminently inculcated, valued and practised by a class-based educational system of which he disapproved." Harris writes of Orwell's "private nightmare", an unspoken fear "that to practise verbal persuasion, to engage in verbal polemic even in the cause of socialism[...] might be to legitimize a trust in words which could ultimately be betrayed by words themselves."97 In pointing to the inconsistencies in Orwell's personality, Harris offers as an example the contrast between Orwell's unmoving views on language, and his progressive and radical political views. He warns against exonerating Orwell from the ideas on usage of what has been called in the present study, the 'Disgusted, Tunbridge Wells' school, who epitomize a conservative and reactionary approach. Harris roundly asserts: "The plain fact is that Orwell's attitude was no more enlightened than theirs."98

A further illustration of the critics' widespread opinion that Orwell was indeed paradoxical is cited by Mark Connelly:

The essential feature of George Orwell's work is contradiction and conflict. It is not easy to discover a constant pattern or orthodoxy in his writings. At times he seems to promote the conventional Socialist belief that the quality of human life can only be made better by political and economic reform. At other times, he asserts that only a moral 'change of heart' can really affect man's life. Orwell praises Dickens' moralist stance, but

ridicules Gandhi. He denounces nationalism as a barrier to universal brotherhood and a capitalist device, then laments the Americanization of Britain and the loss of King and Country values. Orwell's rigid self-analysis and fair-mindedness make him an attractive figure but obscure his final beliefs.⁹⁹

Orwell's essential dichotomy is also recorded by Bolton, who notes how the author, while pressing for social change, "felt a keen nostalgia for the age he saw vanishing". Orwell regarded this change as being particularly marked in language. 100 Nevertheless, while the contradiction in Orwell's attitudes is undoubtedly present, it should not preclude recognition of the veracity of many of his insights and predictions about language.

3.v. Language, Understanding and Interpretation: Orwell's Anticipatory Insights about Language

Linguistics, in common with other disciplines in the humanities such as psychology or sociology, is not automatically understood to be a science. In order to be validated as a science, a discipline has to introduce parameters which enable the measurement of certain variables, and the establishment of correlations between them. This is easily accomplished in physics and mathematics, but is considerably more difficult to achieve in linguistics. The

difficulties which ensue are compellingly discussed by Edward Said, in a chapter entitled "Knowledge and Interpretation" of a book which investigates how the media influence Western conceptions of Islam. 101 Said establishes two categories of knowledge, knowledge about human society and knowledge about the natural world. The former, he adduces, is historical knowledge, and as such depends on judgement and interpretation. Facts and data exist, of course, but their importance derives from what is made of them in interpretation. Interpretations depend crucially on who the interpreter is and who is being addressed, the purpose in the interpreting, and at what historical moment the interpretation is taking place. "In this sense, all interpretations are what might be called situational: they always occur in a situation whose bearing on the interpretation is affiliative. "102 According to this contention, therefore, all interpretation has precedents and is connected to other interpretations. A problem occurs with what Said refers to as "unscientific nuisances", namely feelings, habits, conventions, associations and values which are "an intrinsic part of every interpretation." As he points out, each interpreter is a reader, and value-free or neutral readers do not exist. "Every reader, in other words, is both a private ego and a member of a society, with affiliations of every sort linking him or her to that society." 103

Extending his line of thought, Said affirms that "there is never interpretation, understanding, and then knowledge where there is no interest." He illustrates his argument by contrasting the engagement of an American scholar trying to decode a contemporary Arabic or Japanese text with that of a chemist decoding a chemical formula. Said asserts that because

chemical elements are not intrinsically affective they "do not engage one's human feelings." This is not to say that they may not inspire emotional associations in the scientist, but these emotional associations would be for "wholly extrinsic reasons" in this case. "The opposite is true in what might be called humanistic interpretation, which according to many theorists actually begins in awareness of the interpreter's prejudices, sense of alienation from the test to be interpreted and so on." 105

With Orwell there is never any doubt about his private ego, his affiliations, or his engagement. In his essays he makes constant reference to his personal circumstances, or exemplifies his opinions with anecdotes or irony. Perhaps a major factor behind his detractors' reservations lies, paradoxical though it might seem, in Orwell's honesty. In the first place, Orwell does not have a hidden agenda, and since he is not a professional linguist, and therefore does not aspire to present his opinions in the guise of a scientific theory, he does not hide his passion for his views, and indeed, he accentuates his vehemence to give more weight to his arguments. This the linguist cannot and does not wish to do. Consequently, therefore, Flammia's interpretation of "Politics and the English Language" -"in the light of structuralism and poststructuralism"-106 as an attack on Marxism, is, I believe, incorrect. 107 When Orwell disagrees with dialectical materialism, he does so in an overt way, as has been seen in various other essays. Orwell is generally circumspect about his private life, but not about his opinions, nor does he cloak them in a mantle under another name. This would constitute a betrayal of an attitude towards life and truth which he spent a major part of his life promoting. Flammia's interpretation is based on a hidden agenda which is not at all Orwell's style. As he himself put it in "Politics and the English Language": "[t]he great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like cuttlefish squirting out ink." 108

A wartime friend who knew Orwell well, T. R. Fyvel, writes of the "pared-down style without nuances in which the full meaning appears immediately" of the longer essays, and considers this a contributing factor to why these essays seem to have "withstood the erosion of time" so well. 109

That his ideas are still relevant today is borne out by the continued popularity of his essays. Fyvel also remarks that Orwell had an "anticipatory ear for jargon." Orwell's concerns about language can also be considered anticipatory, and in particular, as has been seen, his views on the misuse of words, and the dishonest recourse to euphemism.

Cameron observes from a linguist's point of view which shrinks from the application of words such as "attack", "abuse", "perversion" or "destruction" of language. With regard to the PC debate, Cameron notes how 'euphemism' has been a crucial word, and how it takes its force from "Politics and the English Language". She observes how critics of political correctness deploy the word *euphemism* "in a way St George Orwell would deplore: as a kind of generalized sneer at words they deem somehow inappropriate - too long, too trendy, too new, too 'political'. When they use *euphemism*, apparently it means whatever they choose it to mean." There is an evident parallel established between this interpretation of the word

euphemism and Orwell's remarks about words such as "fascist".

Orwell's anticipatory powers about language do not end here, however. The prestigious Reith lectures of 1996 were delivered by Professor Jean Aitchison, the first holder of the Rupert Murdoch chair of language at Oxford University under the title of Language Web during February and March 1996. The first lecture examined her belief that British English, far from changing for the worse, as is the popular conception, is in excellent health, and that the changes being effected should not be confused with decay. During the third lecture she elaborated upon the trivial worries about language, the "web of worries", which so concern some speakers of English worried about the modern loosening of "artificial rules". 112 Aitchison holds that language is also a tool with which differences in generation are expressed. As an example of the trivial worries, Aitchison points out how parents often want their children to use "so-called Standard English", and thereby abandon their local dialects in order to be able to "get on" in life. Fifty years earlier Standard English, generally considered a necessary passport with which to "get on", had provocatively been dubbed "this dreary dialect", and declared "probably the deadliest enemy of good English." George Orwell, who was not a professional linguist, lamented that Standard English, which like the upper-class accent, he believed was a symbol of privilege and power, was no longer confined to official communications but was descending the social scale and spreading into the spoken langua His insight has proved right, and modern linguistics echoes his rejection of a standard dialect as the repository of "good" English.

George Orwell's views on totalitarianism and language also found an

important voice in his two post-war fictional works, Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. In his last novel the themes are more fully intertwined, and as will be seen, the importance of the interpretation of the role of history plays a crucial part.

NOTES

- 1. Robert L. Savage, James Combs and Dan Nimmo, *The Orwellian Moment: Hindsight and Foresight in the Post-1984 World, (Fayetteville AK: University of Arkansas Press, 1989)*, p. 6.
- 2. Muggeridge, Op. cit., p. 175.
- 3. Hugh Kenner in Robert Mulvihill, Reflections on America, 1984: An Orwell Symposium, (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 60-61.
- 4. Bernard Crick, George Orwell: A Life, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1980), p. 211.
- 5. W. F. (Whitney French) Bolton, The Language of 1984: Orwell's English and Ours, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 18.
- 6. CEJL, I, p. 25.
- 7. CEJL, III, p. 151-152.
- 8. CEJL, I, p. 23.
- 9. Op. cit., p. 23.
- 10. Ibid., p. 24-25.
- 11. Ibid., p. 26.
- 12. Ibid., p. 26.
- 13. Ibid., p. 28.
- 14. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

 See *CEJL*, IV, p. 345, in "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool", for another example of this vitalist attitude to life: "Shakespeare was not a philosopher or a scientist, but he did have curiosity: he loved the surface of the earth and the process of life."
- 15. CEJL, I, p. 29.
- 16. Op. cit., p. 29.
- 17. Bernard Gensane, George Orwell: Vie et Ecriture, (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1994), p. 165-166: "Mais ce qui me semble le mieux charactériser la phrase orwellienne quand l'auteur polémique,

ce qui la fait reconnaître au premier coup d'oeil, c'est son mode binaire. Mille fois chez Orwell la période peut être scindé en deux car la pensée pose ses deux pattes de devant sur ses deux pattes de derrière. Cette construction convenait parfaitement à une pensée analogique ou contrastive, à un didactisme simplificateur et à une vision des choses parfois un peu manichéenne. Relisons "Arthur Koestler"... Nous ne donnerons ici que quelques exemples parmi une liste impressionante de phrases construites sur ce mode." (Translation into English mine.)

- 18. Roger Fowler, *The Language of George Orwell*, (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 7. See also p. 41: ""Even within the essays and other non-fiction, Orwell practised a number of genres, for different types of publication with a variety of readerships, and involving the projection of different images of himself."
- 19. Op. cit., p. 49 and 53.
- 20. Ibid., p, 55.
- 21. Ibid., p. 55.

 See also Hugh Kenner in Robert Mulvihill, Reflections on America, 1984: An Orwell Symposium, (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 62: "I do not want to make him seem like a student of Macchiavelli's. The impulse to candor seems to have been a hallmark of his character. But what he needed was a written simulacrum of candor. That was his masterful 'plain style'." Similarly Bolton, Op. cit., p. 195: "as Howe pointed out, Orwell's 'casual' style is neither 'natural' nor especially 'simple': its manner masks a complexity that makes him a poor model for 'plain' writing."
- 22. CEJL, III, p. 42.
- 23. Op. cit., p. 42.
- 24. Ibid., p. 159
- 25. Ibid., p. 43: "This dreary dialect, the language of leading articles, White Papers, political speeches, and B.B.C. news bulletins." and "Anyone preparing a broadcast or writing to The Times adopts this kind of language almost instinctively, and it infects the spoken tongue as well."
- 26. Ibid., p. 43.
- 27. Ibid., p. 44 46.
- 28. Ibid., p. 45.

- 29. Ibid., p. 132-133. The article begins as follows: "With no power to put my decrees into operation, but with as much authority as most of the exile 'governments' now sheltering in various parts of the world, I pronounce sentence of death on the following words and expressions: [...] No doubt this list will have to be added to from time to time, but it will do to go on with. It contains a fair selection of the dead metaphors and ill-translated foreign phrases which have been current in Marxist literature for years past."
- 30. Ibid., p. 132.
- 31. Ibid., p. 133.
- 32. Bolton, Op. cit., p. 189: "His preoccupation with euphemism and jargon grew more intense after the War, but its roots were in his earliest writing."
- 33. CEJL, III, p. 165. Orwell takes an example of the type of prose he advocates should be avoided from some writing by Professor Harold Laski, Op. cit., p. 164: "As a whole, our system was a compromise between democracy in the political realm -itself a very recent development in our history- and an economic power oligarchically organized which was in its turn related to a certain aristocratic vestigia still able to influence profoundly the habits of our society."
- 34. An opinion of Orwell's shortcomings that fails to take account of this context can be found in the feminist analysis of his work and reception by Daphne Patai, *The Orwell Mystique: A Study in Male Ideology*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), in which the author postulates Orwell's commitment to androcentrism, p. 16: "Where are the women readers of his works who heard and took seriously the misogyny of his texts, who felt excluded from the concerns of 'mankind' he professed?"
- 35. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 33.
- 36. Op. cit., p. 33.
- 37. *Ibid.*, p. 31. For further clarification by Fowler of Orwell's position with respect to nominalism and realism, see Chapter 2.ii., Note 3.
- 38. Roy Harris, "The Misunderstanding of Newspeak", in Harold Bloom, (ed.) *George Orwell's 1984*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), p. 90.
- 39. Op. cit., p. 92-93.

 However, Flammia, Op. cit., p. 28 contends that Orwell "makes the error of believing that thought predates language and fails to see that people are enmeshed in their language system."

- 40. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 34.
- 41. Harris, Op. cit., p. 90.
- 42. CEJL, IV, p. 166.
- 43. Op. cit., p. 166.
- 44. CEJL, IV, p. 162.
- 45. Op. cit., p. 162.

 See also The Economist, 24 February, 1996, p. 34, which referred to a campaign video "which crudely depicts the PP as fascist-style oppressors."
- 46. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 34.
- 47. Bob Hodge and Roger Fowler, "Orwellian Linguistics", in Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge and Tony Trew, Language and Control, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 24.
- 48. Op. cit., p. 25.
- 49. George Woodcock, The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell, (London: Fourth Estate, 1984), p. xii.
- 50. CEJL, II, p. 294.
- 51. Op. cit., p. 465. Orwell elaborates upon this comment as follows: "I am regularly alleging in all my newsletters [broadcasts to India] that the Japanese are plotting to attack Russia. I don't believe this to be so, but the calculation is:

If the Japanese do attack Russia, we can say 'I told you so.'

If the Russians attack first, we can, having built up the picture of a Japanese plot beforehand, pretend that it was the Japanese who started it.

If no war breaks out after all, we can claim that it is because the Japanese are too frightened of Russia." [sic]

- 52. Ibid., p. 290.
- 53. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

 Elsewhere he wrote the following, *CEJL*, IV, p. 335: "Ultimately there is no test of literary merit except survival, which is itself merely an index to majority opinion," which would place him firmly on the side of the upholders of the Canon today.
- 54. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- 55. Ibid., p. 152.

- 56. Ibid., p. 152.
- 57. Ibid., p. 152-153.
- 58. CEJL, II, p. 57.
- 59. Ibid., p. 162.
- 60. Ibid., p. 162.
- 61. CEJL, IV, p. 347.
- 62. Orwell expresses this idea as follows: "They will not say to somebody else, 'Do this, that and the other or you will go to prison,' but they will, if they can, get inside his brain and dictate his thoughts for him in the minutest particulars. Creeds like pacifism and anarchism, which seem on the surface to imply a complete renunciation of power, rather encourage this habit of mind. For if you have embraced a creed which appears to be free from the ordinary dirtiness of politics -a creed from which you yourself cannot expect to draw any material advantage-surely that proves that you are in the right? And the more you are in the right, the more natural that everyone else should be bullied into thinking likewise." Op. cit., p. 347.
- 63. CEJL, II, p. 164.
- 64. CEJL, IV, p. 83.
- 65. Op. cit., p. 84.
- 66. Ibid., p. 84.
- 67. CEJL, II, p. 297: "What kind of records will Franco have left behind him? Suppose even that the records kept on the government side are recoverable even so, how is a true history of the war to be written? For, as I have pointed out already, the Government also dealt extensively in lies. From the anti-Fascist angle one could write a broadly truthful history of the war, but it would be a partisan history, unreliable on every minor point. Yet, after all, some kind of history will be written, and after those who actually remember the war are dead, it will be universally accepted. So for all practical purposes, the lie will have become truth."
- 68. CEJL, IV, p. 85.
- 69. Op. cit., p. 86.
- 70. Ibid., p. 164.

- 71. W. J. West, The Larger Evils: Nineteen Eighty-Four, The Truth Behind the Satire, (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1992), p. 16.
- 72. Op. cit., p. 16.
- West makes a very convincing case for the joint war work of Orwell and his wife as one of the most powerful antecedents to Nineteen Eighty-Four. "Between them, Orwell and his wife must have come to a very clear understanding of the quasi-totalitarian systems in operation in wartime Britain. What they knew provides the basic world in which Winston Smith, an employee of the Ministry of Truth engaged in censoring the past as well as the present, had his being. Orwell made his hero one of the faceless censors in the inner recesses of the MOI, on the receiving end of all the pneumatic tubes carrying messages from the front desks, because he epitomised the kind of person who would have to revolt. People from his own world such as Burgess or Empson with their enthusiasms for Basic English or their secret political loyalties would be the betrayers." Ibid., p. 187.
- 74. Crick, Op. cit., p. 228.
- 75. Op. cit. p. 315.
- 76. Orwell wrote fifteen 'London Letters' for the *Partisan Review* between 1941 and 1946, in which he described conditions in England and generally expressed his opinion on current events.
- 77. CEJL, II, p. 259-260. Further on in the same article, Orwell writes the following: "I have used a lot of ink and done myself a lot of harm by attacking the successive literary cliques which have infested this country, not because they were intellectuals but precisely because they were not what I mean by true intellectuals. The life of a clique is about five years and I have been writing long enough to see three of them come and two go the Catholic gang, the Stalinist gang, and the present pacifist or, as they are sometimes nicknamed, Fascifist gang. My case against all of them, is that they write mentally dishonest propaganda and degrade literary criticism to mutual arse-licking." p. 264-265.

See also, for example, J. R. Hammond, "The Essays" in Bernard Oldsey and Joseph Browne, (eds.) Critical Essays on George Orwell, (Boston Mass.: G. K. Hall & Co., 1986), p. 225: "The column [As I Please, which appeared in Tribune every week between December 1943 and February 1945] gained him a wider readership than any of his books with the exception of Animal Farm and stimulated a lively correspondence. His readers were alternately amused, irritated, exasperated and enlightened by his wide-ranging comments; many were annoyed by his quirkiness, his refusal to respect the wartime convention

that the Soviet Union was not to be criticised, and his frequent forays into apparently minor topics."

- 78. West, Op. cit., p. 106-107.
- 79. CEJL, III, p. 27. Orwell's actual words include this sentence: "To begin with the centralized ownership of the press means in practice that unpopular opinions can only be printed in books or in newspapers with small circulations."
- 80. Op. cit., p. 31.
- 81. Ibid., p. 27.
- 82. Ibid., p. 272.
- 83. Ibid., p. 272.
- 84. Ian Slater, Orwell: The Road to Airstrip One, (New York: N. W. Norton & Company, 1985, p. 204.
- 85. Savage et al., Op. cit., p. 7.
- 86. Stephen Ingle, George Orwell: A Political Life, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. viii.
- 87. Mark Connelly, The Diminished Self: Orwell and the Loss of Freedom, (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1987), p. 2.
- 88. W. F. Bolton, Op. cit., p. 15.
- 89. See also, for example, Madelyn Flammia, "Beyond Orwell: Clarity and the English Language", in Courtney T. Wemyss and Alexej Ugrinsky, (ed.) George Orwell, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 27: "["Politics and the English Language"] is quite likely the most frequently encountered text in freshman readers!"
- 90. Richard W. Bailey, "George Orwell and the English Language", in Ejner Jensen, (ed.) *The Future of Nineteen Eighty-Four*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1984), p. 24 and 27.
- 91. Carl Freedman, "Antimonies of Nineteen Eighty-Four", in Bernard Oldsey and Joseph Browne, (eds.) Critical Essays on George Orwell, (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall & Co., 1986), p. 101.
- 92. Bolton, Op. cit., p. 39.
- 93. Op. cit., p. 40: "Orwell changed his political and social views but left his language views untouched from Eton and before.[...] He did not check the linguistic hearsay of his time and social class against the

rigour of any theory or even any systematic observation. In language, at least, he seems to have thought, things are what they seem, and that is what we were always told they were."

- 94. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 20.
- 95. Ibid., p. 20.
- 96. Harris, Op. cit., p. 89.
- 97. Ibid., p. 89.
- 98. Ibid., p. 90.
- 99. Connelly, Op. cit., p. 8.
- 100. Bolton, Op. cit., p. 15.

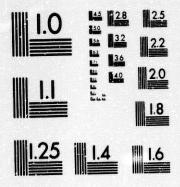
 See also Bob Hodge and Roger Fowler, Op. cit., p. 8: "But his real affiliation is with a line of sceptical, critical thinking about the misuses of language which overlaps confusingly with the reactionary, conservationist line in that both share a similar list of alleged abuses. For the conservationist, the threat is that the cultural values impregnated in English will be superseded, weakened or obscured by misuse or tainting of the language. For the critical thinker, the danger is that slovenly language will inhibit thought and turn us into helpless victims of the manipulators who currently hold power."
- 101. Edward Said, Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World, (London: Routledge, 1981).
- 102. Op. cit., p. 154.
- 103. Ibid., p. 156.
- 104. Ibid., p. 157.
- 105. Ibid., p. 157.
- 106. Flammia, Op. cit., p. 27.
- 107. Ibid., p. 30. "Orwell wishes to attack Marxism; his 'disagreement' is with dialectical materialism that can be said to attack or disprove certain of his own cherished notions about language. He attempts to discredit Marxist political language by showing it to be and to do what political language is and does by definition."
- 108. CEJL, IV, p. 166-167.

- T. R. Fyvel, George Orwell: A Personal Memoir, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1992), p. 188.
- 110. Cameron, Verbal Hygiene, Op. cit., p. 143.
- 111. Op. cit., p. 145.
- 112. The Times, 14 February 1996.
- 113. CEJL, III, p. 43.

4. LANGUAGE AND TOTALITARIANISM IN GEORGE ORWELL'S NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

Nineteen Eighty-Four can be considered the culmination of Orwell's career as a novelist, not because it is his last work, nor even because it is his most "perfect" creation, but because the different themes in this work had been with him for such a protracted period of time that the work created and conveyed an atmosphere that even today continues to capture its readers' imagination with its power. This feeling is no doubt the product of the intensity which Orwell put into the process of writing his novel, and its reception and impact were to prove influential to a degree not achieved by any other of his books. He in fact began to write the novel in 1946, but said himself that he had been planning the work since at least 1943, and an existing manuscript outline entitled "The Last Man in Europe", is believed to date from that same year.¹

The common theme of totalitarianism links Orwell's last two works of fiction, but the predicament of Winston Smith, the protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, displays great similarities with the situation of the protagonists of



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The common theme of totalitarianism links Orwell's last two works of fiction, but the predicament of Winston Smith, the protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, displays great similarities with the situation of the protagonists of

all Orwell's other novels. Many of Orwell's opinions and fears about totalitarianism were voiced in early 1946 in "The Prevention of Literature", where he expresses his definition of totalitarianism and speculates about how a totalitarian regime might be preserved:

a totalitarian state is in effect a theocracy, and its ruling caste, in order to keep its position, has to be thought of as infallible.

[...] A totalitarian society which succeeded in perpetuating itself would probably set up a schizophrenic system of thought, in which the laws of common sense held good in everyday life and in certain exact sciences, but could be disregarded by the politician, the historian, and the sociologist.²

A significant parallel may be drawn at this stage with Orwell's vision of the imposition of "a schizophrenic system of thought", and it is recalled how discussion of issues connected with political correctness is confined to the humanities and does not infringe on the disciplines which Orwell terms "the exact sciences." Similarly, echoing Orwell's arguments, many critics of PC believe that in its more extreme forms political correctness requires in essence an abdication of common sense.

Nineteen Eighty-Four and doublethink express the forebodings Orwell had conveyed through his journalistic work, but in fictional form. Hodge and Fowler comment upon the fact that what they consider to be Orwell's major work on language is a work of fiction and not an essay or treatise. Being a novel, special difficulties of interpretation arise, since a "novel's content is refracted through its form." As the authors state, it is an "elementary kind of misreading to regard every opinion in a novel as the author's, yet the majority

of commentators on 1984 have done just that." They believe that as a result the effect has been "to make him seem more definite and more simple-minded than he was." This appreciation is certainly true of many interpretations of Orwell's purpose with regard to the theme of language in Nineteen Eighty-Four. An obvious example is that of Newspeak, and Harris notes that the word Newspeak, "the most famous figment of Orwellian linguistics", [..] has undergone emasculation." Harris cites a recently published dictionary purporting to be of Newspeak which includes "newfangled professional jargon of any and every kind", and he notes that this does not comply with Orwell's purpose. "Newspeak is not Newspeak in virtue of being just new speak. [...] a deliberately distorted language [...] the political enslavement of its speakers. Its aim [is to show that] thoughts not approved by the party 'should be literally unthinkable'."

It has been seen from the preceding discussion of Orwell's essays that he was very aware of the potential importance of language for the furtherance of totalitarian aims. During the thirties in both Germany and Russia, the infallibility of the State became inextricably confused with the infallibility of the leader, and this same confusion occurs with Big Brother in Oceania. Goldstein's Book illustrates how the problem of the spurious infallibility of the dictator in Oceania is resolved: "Oceanic society rests ultimately on the belief that Big Brother is omnipotent and that the Party is infallible. But since in reality Big Brother is not omnipotent and the Party is not infallible, there is need for an unwearying, moment-to-moment flexibility in the treatment of facts." Slater observes how it is necessary, both in *Animal Farm* and in

Nineteen Eighty-Four, for a language to serve Comrade Napoleon or Big Brother with equal efficiency in order to sustain the general belief in the infallibility of the State.⁶

Fowler comments on how official discourse is characterised by duplicity and writes of Orwell's "critique of the perversion of language which is a condition of totalitarianism." The duplicity to which Fowler alludes was examined earlier and particular reference made to the Vietnam and Gulf wars. Similarly, Hodge and Fowler allude to the central asymmetry of society, "organized upon a principle of unequal power", sustained by means of a "vast repertoire of behavioural convictions which relate role to role, status to status, institution to individual." They contend that for Orwell this principle is achieved by means of public communication: "Newspapers, governments, bureaucracies and intellectuals cannot risk telling the truth because doing so might give others access to their own power-basis."

Since to tell the truth, therefore, is unpalatable, it becomes imperative to find an alternative. The means the State employs to avoid the truth is a major theme in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where we see Orwell's obsession with lying, particularly with the hypocritical recourse to euphemism surfacing principally in two manifestations: Newspeak and the alteration of the past, precisely the activity in which Winston is engaged at the Ministry of Truth.

4.i. Newspeak, euphemism and control

The phenomenon of Newspeak reflects many of Orwell's concerns about language and includes considerations which are connected with certain aspects of political correctness. That the role of euphemism is a moot point in the political correctness debate was seen in the initial discussion of PC, and it is therefore interesting to note that euphemism, through which words are used that mean almost the exact opposite of what they appear to mean, is the most important trait of Newspeak. Bailey sees as the purpose of euphemism and Newspeak "to shift connotations and associations in a direction that serves the Party's ends, toward passivity and acceptance of lies, misery, warfare, and hatred." As he points out, euphemism together with euphony and telescoped words facilitate the constraint of "free expression by purging language of associations that do not serve the aims of the Party."

On the third page of Nineteen Eighty-Four the reader is offered a striking example of the use of euphemism combined with Newspeak, when the names and functions of the four Ministries which form the backbone of the State apparatus are provided, together with their Newspeak names. Through the description of the titles and functions of each of these Ministries, the euphemistic nature of official discourse in Oceania is established. The Ministry

and the fine arts. Stated in this way it seems an unexceptional role. However, in the next sentence we learn that the Ministry of Peace is concerned with war. Upon understanding that a flagrantly euphemismistic nomenclature is being presented, the reader correspondingly applies a similar euphemistic intention to the former title, and can thus surmise that Truth means Non-Truth or "Propaganda". When further learning that the Ministry of Love maintains law and order, and the Ministry of Plenty is responsible for economic affairs, the reader can logically assume that Oceania is a Police State where widespread scarcity prevails.

The paragraph, which is headed by the enunciation of the three slogans of the Party: War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength, ends with the Newspeak names of the Ministries: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty. In this way Orwell presents the obvious contradictions of the message of the Party, and hence the reader's imagination and curiosity are fired, for how can such seemingly evident absurdities be believed by the inhabitants of Oceania? The reader soon learns, however, that much of the State's energy is employed in devising elaborate and sophisticated techniques to prevent any thought which might potentially undermine the totalitarian State.

The importance to the State of Newspeak can be fully appreciated when it is affirmed that the basis of power in Oceania as defined in the "sacred principles of Ingsoc", is "Newspeak, doublethink, the mutability of the past."

(1984: 25) Goldstein's Book asserts that the contradictory names of the Ministries, far from being accidental or deriving from ordinary hypocrisy, are

deliberate exercises in *doublethink*. "For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely. In no other way could the ancient cycle be broken. If human equality is to be for ever averted -if the High, as we have called them, are to keep their places permanently- then the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity." (1984: 172)

Fowler observes that Newspeak words are a form of jargon. He makes the link with Orwell's comments on jargon in "The English People" where jargon is seen as symbolising privilege because of its assumption of specialized knowledge, and is also considered as conducive to prefabrication, the readymade phrases of which are an enemy of thought. As Fowler notes, in a similar way "jargon can lead to euphemism and lying; and to doublethink." Examples of the euphemistic nature of the jargon employed for the purposes of Winston Smith's job may be seen in the following examples of orders given to him:

"times 17.3.84 bb speech malreported africa rectify

times 19.12.83 forecasts 3yp 4th quarter 83 misprints verify current issue

times 14.2.84 miniplenty malquoted chocolate rectify" (1984: 34, emphasis added)

From these examples, the reader understands "rectify" to mean "alter", "misprints" to refer to inconvenient or non-PC information, and "verify" to mean "change in order to comply with the current official version of the facts."

However, in line with what is known of the use of euphemistic terminology by totalitarian systems, Winston's written instructions never

explicitly or implicitly state that what he has to do is to commit an act of forgery: "always the reference was to slips, errors, inisprints, or misquotations which it was necessary to put right in the interests of accuracy."

Nevertheless, as Winston is lucid enough to comprehend, forgery would imply substituting something spurious for the truth, but since the original piece of news can in no way be guaranteed to have been true either, he muses that his work consists of "merely the substitution of one piece of nonsense for another."

(1984: 36) Winston's final order is the only one written entirely in Newspeak, for, as is made clear in the novel, nobody actually speaks the language, and its use is limited to the editorials of the *Times*. Winston, who has an interest in Newspeak because he can see its potential for destroying the past which he so much cherishes, notes with surprise, for example, that Julia "never used Newspeak words except the ones that had passed into everyday use" (1984: 108).

Oldspeak, in the opinion of Syme, the linguist and enthusiastic compiler of the Eleventh Newspeak Dictionary, is full of "vagueness" and "useless shades of meaning." Syme, who Winston correctly prophesies will fall foul of the system because he understands too clearly the aims of the Party, explains the intentionality of Newspeak. Its aim is to narrow the range of thought and ultimately to "make thoughtcrime literally impossible" through progressively lessening the range of consciousness. "The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak." (1984: 45) The target is to have eliminated all trace of Oldspeak by the year 2050, when it is confidently assumed that Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton and Byron

will exist only in their Newspeak versions which will have transformed them into "something contradictory of what they used to be." It does not escape our attention that the writers cited are nowadays those very authors whose worth is contested because they belong to the camp of DWEMs, (Dead White European Males).

The transfomation effected by Newspeak, however, will be even more radical than this, for the literature and the slogans of the Party itself will change. Its use in the year 1984 is to mask the truth, but ultimately it will completely condition what can be expressed, and consequently what can be thought. Syme explains that when the concept of freedom has been abolished, there will be no room for the slogan "freedom is slavery": "The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact there will be no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking - not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness." (1984: 46) Accordingly, it can be seen that Newspeak is an element in the search for control of the minds of the inhabitants of Oceania.

For Fowler, Orwell puts into the minds of the regime an extreme version of linguistic determinism, and in the form in which it is presented in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* it is unachievable. Nonetheless, Fowler believes that it "is quite closely related to the more plausible claim that language *encourages* a certain view of the world; closely enough to produce a bit of a chill even in readers who see through Newspeak." Fowler's evaluation of the impact that the phenomenon of Newspeak causes on the reader, echoes the positive aspects of Bloom's guarded and grudging admiration for Orwell's novel, which he evidently regards as a "bit over the top":

1984 is neither superb nor unreadable. If it resembles the work of a precursor figure, that figure is surely H. G. Wells, as Wyndham Lewis shrewdly realized. Wells surpasses Orwell in storytelling vigor, in pungency of characterization, and in imaginative invention, yet Wells now seems remote and Orwell remains very close. We are driven back to what makes 1984 a good bad book: relevance. The book substitutes for a real and universal fear: that in the political and economic area, the dreadful is still about to happen. Yet the book again lacks a defense against its own blunderings into the ridiculous.¹⁴

Slater sees a political parallel with Orwell's England, regarding the establishment of Newspeak, designed 'to diminish the range of thought,' as the artifice which allows 'doublethink' to be the most effective tool in the protection of the ideological purity of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. As Slater says: "Doublethink successfully hides the fact that Ingsoc is precisely the opposite of what the original English Socialism stood for. As Doublethink would deal with present contradictions, Newspeak, together with the constant alteration of historical records, will thwart the possibility of contradiction in the future."

Newspeak's large scale elimination of words and consequent reduction of the range of thought and consciousness and of shades of meaning, results in a world "seen in terms of black and white, 'good' and 'ungood'."

Slater considers that it would be perfectly feasible that the inhabitants of Oceania, in using such a language could have a polarised vision of the world, which would consist of capitalists or socialists and nothing in-between:

Thus, the population could easily be encouraged to assume that socialism, and not anything like oligarchical collectivism, must

follow the expropriation of capitalists. In encouraging this black-white vision of the world, Newspeak, with its deletion of adjective and adverb, not only expels shades of meaning, but also does away with whole concepts like political equality. The result is that a Newspeak slogan that stated, 'All men are equal' would signify nothing more than all men are physically the same.¹⁶

Paul Chilton brings the political analogy more up-to-date. He recalls Hodge and Fowler's likening of Newspeak to certain aspects of Basil Bernstein's 'restricted code', including reduced complexity, few abstractions, and "no self-reference which could create the conditions for self-criticism." Yet Chilton believes that the singularity in Orwell's Newspeak is that it is a restricted code "that is peculiar to the ruling class; the proles do not speak it." Its possible equivalent in real-time 1984 could be found "in the rhetoric of party politics, the bureaucratic prose of the agents of the state, and the arcane incantations of those who are cast in the role of 'experts'." As Chilton states, nobody can be forced to either speak or write it, but because it is so widely printed and broadcast, in practice one is left with no choice, unless one is prepared not to read or listen at all, and must read and listen to it for certain purposes. Furthermore, "there is a degree of pressure to use it yourself, in order to communicate economically in the idiom of the day with others who have been exposed to it." 19

As Chilton points out, the Ingsoc language planners in Orwell's novel conceive of Newspeak as a system in which there is a term by term correspondence with a certain political reality. By only admitting ideologically

"true" inferences, "it is supposed to render inaccessible other realities and to make criticism of itself impossible." Chilton does not subscribe to the theory that Newspeak, or its real-life 1984 version, has the power to control thought absolutely and inevitably, but he does believe that language is employed in political discourse "to define and redefine reality to the advantage of a dominant ideology." As a result a great number of people might well be induced to accept some or all of the messages conveyed. Nevertheless, he does not hold that it is a *necessary* consequence: "Thought and language are not necessarily identical. What is more, language has the peculiar property of being able to refer to itself, potentially to the nth degree, so that any linguistically realised version of reality is capable of turning on itself." 21

Hodge and Fowler regard Orwell's account of language as "based firmly on his understanding of forms of consciousness which he saw as growing directly out of prevailing modes of social and political organization." His terms of reference were principally Stalinist Russia and post-Empire Britain. In both these societies Orwell considered that the rulers needed to deceive their respective populaces about the relationship of their society to material reality. Furthermore, for lying to be really plausible and systematic, it has to be accompanied by self-deception—in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* terms, by doublethink.

It is certainly not fortuitous that the highest incidence of Newspeak words to be found in actual use in the society of Oceania, occurs in the phenomenon known as "duckspeak", which consecrates the abdication of the mind when talking. The intellectual, Syme, explains how it has two contradictory meanings: "[a]pplied to an opponent, it is abuse; applied to

early on in the novel to this "rapid poly-syllabic speech which was a sort of parody of the habitual style of the orators of the Party, and even contained Newspeak words: more Newspeak words indeed than any Party member would normally use in real life." (1984: 14) It is referred to as "duckspeak" because of its resemblance to the quacking of a duck, but its insidiousness lies not in the sounds that issue from the speakers but in the fact that what is produced is "not speech in the true sense: it [is] a noise uttered in *unconsciousness*, like the quacking of a duck" (1984: 47, emphasis added). Thus the speaker merely emits sounds which bear no reference either to any thought on his or her part, nor indeed to the truth. "Duckspeak" consists simply in the relaying of the orthodox version of the stereotyped political issues that are allowed to be aired in Oceania.

Throughout the novel there are references to the kind of person the Party wants to form in order to maintain total control. Yet orthodoxy alone is not enough, as Winston realizes about his colleague Syme, who believes in the principles of Ingsoc, venerates Big Brother, rejoices over victories and hates heretics "not merely with sincerity but with a sort of restless zeal, an up-to-dateness of information, which the ordinary Party member did not approach." What Symes lacks, according to Winston's diagnosis is "discretion, aloofness, a sort of saving stupidity" (1984: 47). This stupidity is the salient characteristic of Winston's wife, who had "not a thought in her head that was not a slogan" and for whom no imbecility was too great for her to swallow, provided it came wrapped in the trappings of the Party. Winston nicknamed

her "the human sound-track" in his own mind. (1984: 57) Her orthodoxy was most unpalatable for Winston in its sexual manifestation, for she was completely frigid as the norms require, but at the same time wished to do her duty for the Party and reproduce. Typically, she had to resort to the absurd euphemisms "making a baby" and "our duty to the Party" to avoid naming the sexual act which she found so distasteful. Yet her ingrained sense of duty forced her to remind Winston that they had to do their bit towards producing a child for the system.

When Julia inquires about his wife, Winston sums her up appropriately in the Newspeak word goodthinkful, "meaning naturally orthodox, incapable of thinking a bad thought" (1984: 108). This is the ideal of the Party, a puppet or a dummy which will carry out its functions without thinking. An example of exactly this is provided in the scene in the canteen when Winston overhears the conversation -monologue would be more exact- between Julia and the man sitting with her:

What was slightly horrible, was that from the stream of sound that poured out of his mouth it was almost impossible to distinguish a single word. Just once Winston caught a phrase - 'complete and final elimination of Goldsteinism'- jerked out very rapidly and, as it seemed, all of one piece, like a line of type cast solid. For the rest it was just a noise, a quack-quack-quacking (1984: 46).

Winston cannot hear what the man is actually saying, but that is in fact immaterial because whatever the content may be, denouncing Goldstein, demanding more stringent punishment for thought-criminals and saboteurs,

fulminating against the atrocities of the enemy, or praising Big Brother or the recent exploits on the Malabar front, it is bound to be the pure orthodoxy of the doctrines of Ingsoc.²³

The mindlessness of official propaganda is alluded to later on in Nineteen Eighty-Four when, in recalling a propaganda speech during Hate Week, Winston reflects upon the circumstances during which it was officially announced that Oceania was not at war with Eurasia after all: Eastasia was the enemy and Eurasia an ally. This news is delivered to the orator on a scrap of paper which he reads out with no break in what he is saying: "The thing that impressed Winston in looking back was that the speaker had switched from one line to the other actually in mid-sentence, not only without a pause, but without even breaking the syntax" (1984: 148).

In contrast to the prototypes of the good Party members, Winston remembers a dim idealized mother, who symbolises for him all that was good about the past. She was taken away quite early on, and so presumably was not considered malleable by the Party. As Winston recalls, in some way which he no longer remembers, "she had sacrificed herself to a conception of loyalty that was private and unalterable. Such things, he saw, could not happen to-day. To-day there were fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows" (1984: 27-28).

The absence of emotions and feelings is noted on several occasions by Winston who observes that "you did not have friends nowadays, you had comrades" (1984: 42). In contrast, the Proles are permitted to indulge in private feelings and emotions and their sex life is not regulated like that of

Party members. Winston's nostalgia for the past leads him to ponder that tragedy no longer has any place in society, for it belongs to the ancient time "when there was still privacy, love and friendship", a time when family ties still meant something important (1984 26). In a moment of intense love for Julia, Winston says to her that only feelings matter, and that real betrayal would consist in making him stop loving her. At that time both he and Julia are confident that that fate can be avoided since the Party cannot get into their minds.

Once again it is O'Brien who disabuses Winston of these fallacious notions in a terrible ranting speech that is a eulogy of power. Winston has been brought to the realization that in Oceania the way to exert power over others is to make them suffer, but O'Brien demonstrates that mere obedience does not suffice. Only if someone is suffering can the Party be sure that that person is obeying its will and not his or her own: "Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing" (1984: 214). O'Brien extols the new world they are creating, diametrically opposed to "the stupid hedonistic Utopias" of the imaginations of the old reformers; this he describes as "[a] world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself." In the new world progress is equated with progress towards further pain, and in contrast to former civilizations which claimed to be founded on love or justice, the new order is founded upon hatred: "In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement.

Everything else we shall destroy - everything" (1984: 214).

O'Brien triumphantly relates how they are already breaking down the habits of thought which survived since before the Revolution, and how they have severed the links between children and their parents and between man and man and woman. The consequence of this is that no one trusts anybody else. For the future he promises that even wives and friends will be eliminated and children will be removed from their mothers at birth. (1984: 214)

At first sight these claims may seem absurd or melodramatic as some believe, but reflection gives rise to several interesting points. In the first place, O'Brien's conception of terror enshrines a truth which, as Slater points out, was understood by Hitler, Stalin, and Churchill: "[t]hat quite apart from nationalist appeals to the fatherland, Mother Russia, or whatever, human beings, in addition to comfort and pleasure, 'at least intermittently, want struggle and self-sacrifice, not to mention drums, flags, and loyalty parades'." The rulers of Oceania understand that there is room in the human psyche for much more than the hedonistic search for pleasure, and exploit the suffering of their populace. Nonetheless, Slater also observes that people eventually tire of Hitler's 'Better an end with horror than a horror without end' or Churchill's 'Blood, sweat and tears'. It is because they are aware of this that the Inner Party constantly predicts that final 'victory' is at hand. 25

In considering the denunciation of parents by their own children, which is the fate of Winston's pathetic neighbour Parsons, it must be acknowledged that this has unfortunately been commonplace in totalitarian regimes. It has

already been mentioned that Orwell was prophetic in realizing the power of brainwashing techniques. Another reflection of the state's controlling intrusiveness into the child-parent relationship can be seen in the hard-line *kibbutzim* in Israel, where even very small children were, and perhaps still are, brought up by professionals, and were visited by their mothers and fathers according to a strict timetable. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, therefore, reflects ingredients which have been used and continue to be used by countless administrations as methods of control. Orwell's vision is a fictional creation, however. He is concerned with a satirical representation of certain fears and presages, and it is this aspect which will be explored in the next chapter.

The narrative of the novel ends with a scene at the Chestnut Café where Winston, a broken man, sodden in gin, passes most of the time vacantly awaiting the fateful day when he will be killed. O'Brien, towards the end of his interrogation, had spelled out the aims of the Party and foretold Winston's end:

Did I not tell you just now that we are different from the persecutors of the past? We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. We do not destroy the heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him. We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him. We burn all evil and all illusion out of him; we bring him over to our side, not in appearance, but genuinely, heart and soul. We make him one of ourselves before we kill him. It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be. Even in the instant of death we

cannot permit any deviation. (1984: 204-205)

While Winston is at the café, news comes through from an excited voice "gabbling from the telescreen" of yet another monumental victory. There is a tremendous stir as everyone inside the café and out in the streets begins to shout and cheer in celebration of the news, but Winston, whose capacity for reaction has been fatally destroyed, can only dimly register fragments of the triumphant lies of propaganda, the ready-made phrases which Orwell believed impeded clear thought, and whose use made man an easy prey to control for unscrupulous ends.

4.iv. Control of truth and the past

The division of Orwell's writing effected in the present study into essays and journalism on the one hand, and his fiction embodied in his last and greatest novel on the other, does not reflect any separation of the two genres with respect to their content. On the contrary, Orwell's thoughts and opinions which are concerned with our topic receive parallel treatment in his non-fiction and in his novels. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* carried through Orwell's ideas on the practice of totalitarianism which he links with a topic of primary interest to him: the manipulation of language. A further theme of cardinal importance to the development of his ideas in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is that of the rewriting

of history.

In 1942 in "Looking Back on the Spanish War" Orwell had written the following: "I know it is the fashion to say that most of recorded history is lies anyway. I am willing to believe that history is for the most part inaccurate and biased, but what is peculiar to our own age is the abandonment of the idea that history could be truthfully written." He goes on to observe that while a British or a German historian would disagree profoundly on many matters, there would, nevertheless still remain what he calls a body of "neutral fact" which would hold for both sides of an argument. In his words: "It is just this common basis of agreement, with its implication that human beings are all one species of animal, that totalitarianism destroys." Orwell illustrates what he means by taking the example of Nazi Germany which denies the existence of any such thing as 'the truth', or any such a thing as 'science'; there is only 'German science' or 'Jewish science'. "The implied objective of this line of thought," writes Orwell, "is a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future but the past. If the Leader says of such and such an event, 'It never happened' - well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five - well, two and two are five." Orwell declares this to be a prospect which truly frightens him.²⁶

Four years later, when the second World War was over, Orwell developed his ideas about the essence of totalitarianism, in the course of which he wrote that totalitarianism demands "the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run probably demands a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth."²⁷ A year later, and just before he began writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*,

he published his account of his childhood and adolescence, 'Such Were the Joys'. Slater believes this essay to be important because it reflects "the schoolboy's passive acceptance of his lot" as well as the psychological background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The experiences recounted "testify to the fact that without a developed sense of history, one is particularly vulnerable to a reign of terror, if for no other reason than that one has no *knowledge* of anything else."²⁸

An examination of Nineteen Eighty-Four, provides fictional examples of Orwell's beliefs about the role of real versus recorded history in the shaping of man, and how the totalitarian State must work to subvert such influence. The importance of this theme is surely witnessed by the fact that Winston Smith, about whom the omniscient author knows everything, works in a department of the Ministry of Truth where his job is to falsify records of the past. The version of the action of the novel the reader is offered is Winston's, and it is through his perceptions and thoughts that we see the events unfold and contemplate his experience of Oceania. There is irony and undoubted paradox in the fact that someone who so desires to know about the past and who clings to his memory of it, spends his working day destroying records of that past. Carter observes how through the action of the novel Winston's life is characterized by a strange conflict: "for the purpose of his work in the Records Department of Minitrue is the elimination of the means by which the truth of the past may be known. He is a professional liar, and yet he risks his life to tell the truth."29

Winston is tormented by his realization of the effects of the loss of

historical memory which his fellow Party members and also the Proles apparently accept without regret:

When there were no external records that you could refer to, even the outline of your own life lost its sharpness. You remembered the huge events which had quite probably not happened, you remembered the details of incidents without being able to recapture their atmosphere, and there were long blank periods to which you could assign nothing (1984: 29).

Winston's observation reveals how the deletion of real history works towards the loss of individual identity, to which he obstinately clings. There is mention in the book of the Newspeak word *ownlife*, which means "individualism and eccentricity" (1984: 69), attitudes which the totalitarian State cannot tolerate. All the protagonists of Orwell's novels have in common this feeling of isolation, which Orwell himself, a déclassé from an ordinary background whose secondary schooling took place in that most elite of schools, Eton, had felt keenly since childhood. Ever since his time on the road he had shown signs of wanting to be like the working-classes, seen in childish gestures like his habit of drinking his tea out of the saucer, but he evidently was not one of them.³⁰ As Freedman states, Orwell's firm individualism was never fully transcended except during his experiences in Spain,³¹ and for most of his life Orwell was a political loner.³²

The characteristics of the typical Party member have already been mentioned, but Winston has no desire to emulate them, in part because this would entail forfeiting his past. At the same time, however, his very isolation

ensures that the lies which everyone else accepts are not challenged, and hence they pass from being lies to being the truth (1984: 31). Winston cannot accept the Party slogan 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' because he understands that the past has never been altered, although everything in the society that surrounds him conspires to deny this. Significantly, in the scene in O'Brien's flat when the pact of the "conspirators" is sealed and Winston is invited to propose a toast, he does not drink to the confusion of the Thought Police or to the death of Big Brother or to humanity or to the future as O'Brien ironically suggests, but to the past. O'Brien then truthfully concedes that the past is, indeed, more important. (1984: 144)

Mason Harris comments on a characteristic of the members of the Outer Party to which Winston belongs: they are generally devoid of the capacity for abstract thought.³³ Winston, in contrast, thinks too much, and this fundamental difference fuels his sense of isolation. In refusing to give in to the prevailing blindness and stupidity, and right up until his interrogation in Room 101, he secretly preserves his inner rebelliousness. The quality of Winston's condition as a rebel is characterised by Gottlieb as a fight throughout the book for "self-awareness, for an ability to detect and act upon the truth."³⁴ Gottlieb argues that when Winston loses his battle it is not because he lacks political judgement, nor because he is neurotic or personally flawed. Bergonzi, for his part, sees Winston as engaged in a desperate and problematical attempt to recover the past, attributing major importance to this attempt which "provides the essential action of the novel."³⁵

The only part of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where the situation is not either viewed from Winston's perspective or we are presented with O'Brien's ideology is in the excerpts from Goldstein's Book. In the Book we have access to the rationale for the whole regime in the form of the political theory underlining the State. From Goldstein's Book we learn that the "mutability of the past is a central tenet of Ingsoc", and the Book furthermore asserts that the continuous rewriting of history is "as necessary to the stability of the regime as the work of repression and espionage carried out by the Ministry of Love." (1984: 170)

It is important to establish that this idea of the rewriting of history should not be explained away as merely one of Orwell's obsessions to which he gives fictional form as a theme in his novel. This is not a melodramatic contrivance, but a notion based on totalitarian practice. Totalitarian regimes, or to be more exact perhaps, totalitarian leaders, consistently have recourse to this technique. Bullock notes how Stalin "promoted to a heroic role in his vision of Russian history" the sixteenth-century tsar Ivan IV (known as Ivan the Terrible), describing his "liquidation of the hereditary nobles, the boyars, who sought to limit his autocratic power as 'progressive'." Hitler, that other great tyrant of the thirties and forties, had an insane vision of the superiority of the German "race", based upon biological differences, and these views were adorned with scientific "respectability" and taught as part of the curriculum in German schools and universities as from 1933, the year of his accession to power.³⁷

In an article entitled "Orwell and Mao's Cultural Revolution", F. Quei

Quo draws numerous parallels between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the Communist China of Mao, describing examples of doublethink and of the creation of new jargon reminiscent of Newspeak. These practices were particularly prevalent in the late sixties, the period of the Cultural Revolution. During this time, Quo notes that in Shanghai and Beijing:

there were two 'Writing Teams' manufacturing new historical stories everyday. [sic] 'Lian Hsiao' and 'Ro Suding' were the pennames of Jian Qing's literary gangs who rewrote a great portion of Chinese history. Good guys were transformed into bad guys and vice-versa. Competent Imperial ministers became anti-revolutionaries and the cruel Empresses were converted to great rulers of the dynasties. All this was the work of what Orwell would have readily recognised as the Ministry of Truth!³⁸

The destruction of books, one of the most notorious hallmarks of Mao's suppression of the past, had similarly occurred in Oceania. Winston notes that the "hunting down and destruction of books" had been carried out with equal zeal both among the Proles and in the confines of the members of the Party, with the result that it was "very unlikely that there existed anywhere in Oceania a copy of a book printed earlier than 1960" (1984: 81). Orwell's insights into the machinery and the working of the totalitarian state are without doubt eerily correct. This is borne out by Quo, who at the beginning of his article cites Pierre Ryckmans, the author of *Chinese Shadows*, as writing: "[w]ithout even dreaming of Mao's China, Orwell succeeded in describing it, down to concrete details of daily life, with more truth and accuracy than most researchers who

came back from Peking to tell us 'the real truth'."39

In "The Prevention of Literature" Orwell noted that the supporters of totalitarianism in the Britain of the forties had a tendency to argue that, absolute truth being unattainable, it is no worse to circulate a big lie than a small one:

It is pointed out that all historical records are biassed and inaccurate, or, on the other hand, that modern physics had proved that what seems to us the real world is an illusion, so that to believe in the evidence of one's senses is simply vulgar philistinism.[...] Already there are countless people who think it scandalous to falsify a scientific text-book, but would see nothing wrong in falsifying a historical fact.⁴⁰

The relevance of Orwell's perceptions about the reappraisal of the truth through the rewriting of history has evident connections with the PC debate; indeed Hughes asserts that PC has scored its largest successes in the area of history. An example taken from the Spain that celebrated the fifth centenary of the discovery of America, may serve to illustrate this point. Previously the event being celebrated had been known as the "Conquest" of America. This description came to be seen as hurtful, for it implied the domination of one culture by another, something shameful, in other words. It was henceforth known as the "Discovery" of America, only to end up in 1992 as "the Meeting of two Cultures", the current politically correct term. The constant need for revision in nomenclature is probably little more than mildly irritating for those who do not follow the logic of the changes suggested, and it is in no way suggested here that there is a totalitarian streak lurking behind such moves for

change. What is of significance, however, is that the reality of past ages and their perceptions are presently being obscured in order to favour an altered perspective and set of sensibilities in the present.

In the PC debate in the United States, feminist claims to the need for a rewriting of history books to include more women should be mentioned. At a talk in the TESOL Convention in Long Beach California in March 1995, entitled "Unintentional Messages: The ethical implications of our teaching practices" which I had the opportunity of attending, there were calls for an updating of American history texts in which apparently only twelve percent of the figures named are women. There was, however, no discussion of the possible reasons for this imbalance, which was simply seen as evidence of a longstanding negative bias against women. Similarly, the more radical elements of the African American movement now have a totally different version of the origins of our culture from the one that has been accepted up to the present; in their wiew, both Christ and the Egyptians of the times of the Pharoahs were black.

Hughes, a historian by training, explains the situation in this way: "the need for absolute goodies and baddies runs deep in us, but it drags history into propaganda, and denies the humanity of the dead: their sins, their virtues, their efforts, their failures." As has been seen from the preceding discussion, totalitarianism deliberately confuses history with propaganda, history being regarded as something to be *created* rather than learned. An observation Winston makes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* provides an apt appreciation of the nihilism and destruction associated with the totalitarian regime there. It strikes

Winston as "curious that you could create dead men but not living ones."

Oceania, set upon a path of terror and absolute power, is completely negative up to the point of creating dead heroes: "Comrade Ogilvy, who had never existed in the present, now existed in the past, and when once the act of forgery was forgotten, he would exist just as authentically, and upon the same evidence, as Charlemagne or Julius Caesar." (1984: 41-42) The essence of this society is seen as controlling dead people, dead to feelings and emotions, dummies whose past and whose truth are invented for them by the State. As Gottlieb remarks, it is solely in a "deadly, unnatural society that expressions of basic human instincts lead to death: in Oceania the wish to life is judged to be a death-wish."

Orwell expressed his views through the media and gave them literary form in his novels. An appreciation of Nineteen Eighty-Four which supports the foregoing discussion is expressed by Lynette Hunter in these terms: " As a utopia its naturalistic elements present a satire on the shifting truths of a totalitarian state, and it is in this sense that it is much criticized in a later age which is perhaps mistakenly more dismissive of the possibility of such a state" (emphasis added). The criticism of the novel which holds that Orwell's vision is unrealistic, is fueled by the despair of a dying man, or is melodramatic, is guilty of the complacency of an age and a society which is too comfortable and ensconced in security. Orwell, was, on the contrary, prophetic in many of his statements about totalitarianism and alarmingly prescient in terms of many of the more recent trends in thought and language in our own society today.

NOTES

- 1. Roger Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 160.
- 2. CEJL, IV, p. 86.
- 3. Hodge and Fowler, Op. cit., p. 9.
- 4. Harris, Op. cit., p. 87 and 88. See also Deborah Cameron, Verbal Hygiene, Op. cit., p. 151: "Orwell's critique was intended to apply to the language of totalitarian states in general, but after his death the concept of 'Newspeak' came to be associated in particular with the language of communist states, whose official outpourings were often held to have fulfilled the prophecies of Nineteen Eighty-Four almost to the letter. Rhetorical demonstrations of how Orwell's fiction had become reality were popular among conservatives and liberals alike, providing a dependable formula for anti-Soviet media commentary."
- 5. George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 170. Further references to this work in the text appear as 1984 followed by the page number.
- 6. Slater, Op. cit., p. 204.
- 7. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 206.
- 8. Hodge and Fowler, Op. cit., p. 24.
- 9. Bailey, Op. cit., p. 33.
- 10. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 217.
- 11. Alan Bullock, Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives, (London: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 840, offers an interesting example of how it was standard practice for the Nazis, even in secret documents to use coded euphemisms, in this case to disguise deportation and execution. The following is a directive issued by Göring as Chairman of the Reich Defence Council to Heydrich as Chief of the United Security Forces on July 31, 1939:

"To supplement the task that was assigned to you on 24 January 1939 which dealt with the solution of the Jewish problem by *emigration* and *evacuation* in the most suitable way, I hereby charge you with making all necessary preparations with regard to organizational, technical and material matters for bringing about a *total solution* of the Jewish

question within the German sphere of influence in Europe. Wherever other governmental agencies are involved, these are to co-operate with you" (emphasis added).

12. The text of the message is:

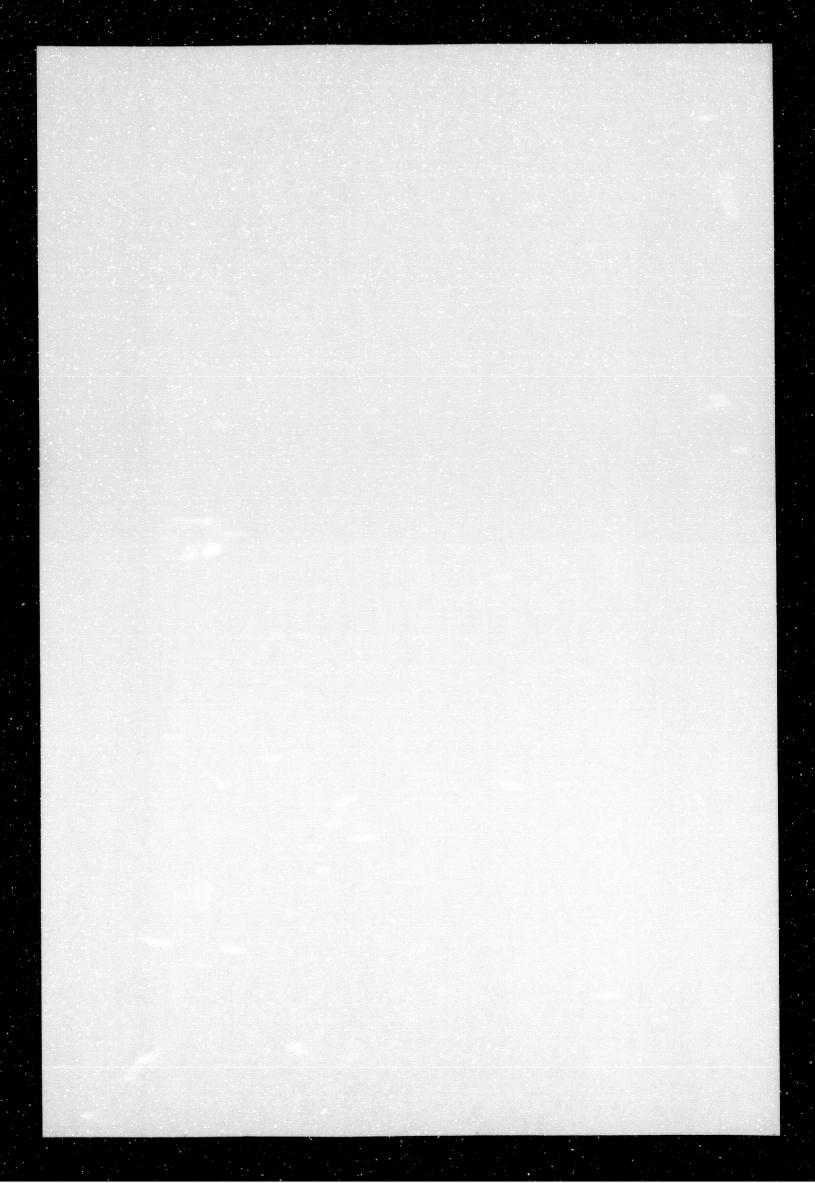
"times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungoood refs unpersons rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling".

The Oldspeak rendering is as follows:

"The reporting of Big Brother's Order for the Day in *The Times* of December 3rd 1983 is extremely unsatisfactory and makes references to non-existent persons. Rewrite it in full and submit your draft to higher authority before refiling." (1984: 39)

- 13. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 219.
- 14. Harold Bloom (ed.) George Orwell (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), p. 4.
- 15. Slater, Op. cit., p. 205.
- 16. Slater, Op. cit., p. 205.
- 17. Paul Chilton, Orwellian Language and the Media, (London: Pluto Press, 1988), p. 37.
- 18. Op. cit., p. 37.
- 19. Ibid., p. 37.
- 20. Ibid., p. 10.
- 21. Ibid., p. 42.
- 22. Hodge and Fowler, Op. cit., p. 11.
- 23. "As he watched the eyeless face with the jaw moving rapidly up and down, Winston had a curious feeling that this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy. It was not the man's brain that was speaking, it was his larynx" (1984: 47, emphasis added).
- 24. Slater, Op. cit., p. 216.
- 25. Op. cit., p. 216.
- 26. CEJL, II, p. 296-297.
 Crick, Op. cit., p. 222, writes of Orwell's time in Barcelona that he "saw before his own eyes not mcrely the distortion of evidence through differing perspectives but the sheer invention of history. One aspect of Nineteen Eighty-Four was already occurring."

- 27. CEJL, IV, p. 86.
- 28. Slater, Op. cit., p. 222.
- 29. Michael Carter, Op. cit., p. 26.
- 30. Fyvel, *Op. cit.*, p. 177, refers to Orwell as "leading his would-be-proletarian existence."
- 31. Freedman, Op. cit., p. 102.
- 32. Ibid., p. 104.
- 33. Mason Harris, "From History to Psychological Grotesque", in Peter Buitenhuis and Ira B. Nadel, (eds.) George Orwell: A Reassessment, (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 39.
- 34. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 66.
- 35. Bergonzi, Op. cit., p. 218.
- 36. Bullock, Op. cit., p. 701.
- 37. Ibid., p. 821.
- 38. F. Quei Quo, "Orwell and Mao's Cultural Revolution", in Buitenhuis and Nadel, Op. cit., p. 128.
- 39. Op. cit., p. 126.
- 40. CEJL, IV, p. 86.
- 41. Robert Hughes, Op. cit., p. 116.
- 42. Op. cit., p. 120.
- 43. Slater, Op. cit., p. 210.
- 44. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 66.
- 45. Lynette Hunter, George Orwell: The Search For A Voice, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1984), p. 160.



5. NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR, UTOPIA AND ANTI-UTOPIA

5.i. Genre: satire, utopia and anti-utopia. The problems of interpretation.

That Nineteen Eighty-Four is a work which, although it captured the popular imagination, has been the subject of great discussion and debate from the time of its publication cannot be denied. This debate has continued to the present day. The novel has its stalwart defenders and has provoked no less determined condemnation. Philip Rahv's review of the book when it was first published in America is still considered one of the most apt, acknowledging Orwell's intentions for his novel and recognizing the intensity and purpose he achieved:

1984 chiefly appeals to us as a work of the political imagination, and the appeal is exercised with gravity and power. It documents the crisis of socialism with greater finality than Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, to which it will be inevitably

compared, since it belongs, on one side of it, to the same genre, the melancholy mid-century genre of lost illusions and Utopia betrayed.¹

Rahv was right, for *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been repeatedly compared with Koestler's earlier work, but it did not take the acumen of a Rahv to understand that essentially the novel was concerned with totalitarianism and its situation and prospects in the world. Unfortunately, almost immediately this perception gave rise to its invocation in political frays and the novel became instrumental in the cold war, thereby confounding and blurring many of the fundamental statements the book had to make.

Laying aside political considerations, much of the attack on the novel is based on questions pertaining to genre and Orwell's success in accomplishing his intentions for his fictional enterprise. It has already been stated that some criticism sees the novel as flawed, essentially because the society depicted in the fictional Airstrip One of 1984 was highly unlike the reality of Mrs Thatcher's Britain of 1984. To put it mildly, this seems a naive and overliteral interpretation of both the intentions of the author and the genre in which he chose to express his insights, for as Samuel Hymes put it, "utopias do not predict the future; they judge the present." In line with this opinion, Krishan Kumar in his survey of utopian literature, *Utopia and Anti-utopia*, reviews some trends of Orwellian criticism as follows:

For those who admired the book primarily as a powerful achievement of the literary imagination, it became important not to allow the falsity or otherwise of Orwell's 'predictions' to

confuse the understanding and evaluation of the work. Hence, in recent years, the proliferation of interpretations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as allegory, satire, autobiography, religion and so forth. The old fashioned view, that it is fundamentally a vision of a future world shaped in the image of totalitarianism, is now likely to be treated with good-natured condescension by the tribe of symbol-hunting literary critics who have largely taken over 'Orwell studies'.³

Be that as it may, the contribution to the study of Orwell by literary critics cannot be dismissed out of hand, although it is important to establish that Orwell, in the first place, did not intend the novel to portray conditions of life as they would be thirty-six years after its publication. It seems clear that what he wished to convey to the post-war society of the late forties, when the cold war was already in progress, and when the British colonial empire was in the process of being dismantled, was that it could not afford to be complacent about the future, nor about the present. Orwell was concerned that there was not enough awareness to offset the dangers to the social fabric which he perceived at the time as springing from the unthinking acceptance of a totalitarian mentality. He also disapproved of the kind of mentality that believes that there is something inherent in the British character that renders the nation immune to the worst excesses into which other nations fall, what he referred to as the "bosh about our natural genius for 'muddling through' and the almost mystical conviction that 'a régime founded on slavery must collapse'."4 This was the kind of attitude that had been encouraged during the second World War by episodes such as the evacuation of Dunkirk. While there is no doubt that to evacuate three hundred and forty thousand troops in the extremely precarious conditions that prevailed was a masterpiece of an improvised operation, but Dunkirk became a symbol of just this and did not prove to be the turning point that Orwell had hoped it would be.⁵

Similarly, in 1941 in an article entitled "Wells, Hitler and the World State", he had pointed to the widespread error on the part of intellectuals who had failed to understand the danger that the advent of Hitler had posed, laughing him off as a nobody: "The people who say Hitler is Antichrist, or alternatively, the Holy Ghost, are nearer an understanding of the truth than the intellectuals who for ten dreadful years have kept it up that he is merely a figure out of comic opera, not worth taking seriously. All that this idea reflects is the sheltered conditions of English life." By setting his novel in England, a country proud of its tradition of democracy, Orwell was clearly offering the message that if totalitarianism could triumph here it could happen any and everywhere. By the same token, since totalitarianism is not confined either to the right or to the left, we must be aware of the danger that lurks within our very selves of ceding to the totalitarian lure to which he believed that intellectuals were particularly susceptible.

Kumar refers to the general 'revisionist' attitude towards Orwell, predominating in recent years, part of which contrives to distance the modern reader from the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This theory sees the novel solely through the perspective of the year 1948, and considers it a reflection upon the practice of the Nazi and Soviet regimes and in consequence divorced from the politics practised in our present-day world. Criticism in this vein

either of placing it firmly in its own times, the 1940s, at what seems a safe remove from ours, or taking it out of time and history altogether and giving it a metaphysical setting. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* then becomes either history or myth."

It appears clear, however, that neither of these two interpretations corresponds to Orwell's purpose. Moreover, the historical or mythical elements in the narrative are deliberately included in order to emphasize the central message: "*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is about us; it is about our own times. That, as Orwell points out is one reason for the English setting of the novel: to show that it *could* happen here."

Just how Orwell contrives to convey his message can be seen in examination of the literary techniques he employed; discussion now will centre around the question of genre and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Although Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four are crafted in different genres, the satirical target in both is totalitarianism, reflecting one of Orwell's principal concerns throughout the 1940s. In his last novel he satirised specific features of Stalin's Russia alongside more general characterizing features of totalitarian ideological thought processes. As Gottlieb notes, Orwell satirises the totalitarian state showing how it "functions like a theocracy, a primitive state religion that can exert its power over the faithful only because of their initial need to find a framework for human continuity in the face of death." Although the cult of Big Brother brings to mind the personality cult of Stalin, even to the point of the obvious physical resemblance of both of them, with their black hair and moustache, there are also clear indications of a parallel

with religion. When Winston comes to write "God is Power" he is in truth reflecting the reality of Oceania, for O'Brien, who might well be Big Brother, or his current emissary on earth, is dedicated to the pursuit and furtherance of Power. The God of Power is served by a priesthood comprised of the Inner Party.¹⁰

Examples of satire on the more specific level include the changes in the official Moscow version of Trotsky's status, epitomised in numerous rewritings during the Stalin era of his role in the Revolution as well as the numerous rewritings of history by the Comintern after each of the various policy changes in Moscow. This satire is realised in the novel through the rewritings of history to which Winston himself is party. It must not be forgotten that in this instance Orwell was also attacking, once again, the intellectuals of the Left who were willing to swallow whatever changes in policy were dictated from Moscow and who were accordingly, passive abetters of the rewriting of history.

In order that satire be perceived as such, there are a number of conditions which must be satisfied and clues must be provided so that the reader discerns the target of the satire, since this is not explicitly revealed. Thus, the readers of *Gulliver's Travels*, for instance, knew what particular aspects of eighteenth century English society were being attacked in this dystopian novel. A form of complicity is set up between writer and reader, the latter having to go through a decoding process in order to ascertain what aspect of the 'real' world of the satirist corresponds to his or her satirical creation. As West points out, satire only works well if the reader comes to see fully what is being satirised in the world about him. The "grain of truth

amongst the absurdities" may not be immediately discernible to the reader but when it is "it must strike hard." West demonstrates the success of Orwell's satire by its reception in Eastern Europe where readers understood only too well what it was all about. Orwell's satire in communist countries had great force, evidenced by the disapproval his books caused among the authorities, and the fact that they were circulated in clandestine editions.

Moreover, as Gottlieb explains, since great satire has a tendency to appear at periods of transition that challenge previously unquestioned ideals, the memory at least of these ideals must still be fresh, as otherwise they would not be comprehended as the target of satire. With *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, therefore, Orwell would not have satirised the concepts of equality, freedom and individuality if he had been unable to assume that these were concepts that continued to be of importance to his readers.¹⁴

Part of the problem of interpretation of genre we are dealing with is revealed by Kumar citing Northrop Frye, who noted that "what is a serious utopia to its author, and to many of the readers, could be read as a satire by a reader whose emotional attitudes were different." This observation, of course, partially accounts for the multiple different readings that are made of works of literature, and Nineteen Eighty-Four as an example, is no exception. Freedman's interpretation of the novel is a case in point, for he sees it as a major satire on Christianity in which Orwell seeks to "refute a whole Christian-influenced literary tradition, with products as diverse as Shakespearian comedy and Paradise Lost, in which it is assumed that the suppression of law by love must inevitably be liberating." Freedman sees as the most profound irony that

the name of the Ministry of Love is finally not ironic after all, when love is revealed as being the love of Big Brother. ¹⁶ The question still remains of how anyone can love Big Brother, who annihilates freedom and inflicts pain to maintain his dominance over an enslaved society.

Negative criticism of the satirical aspects of Nineteen Eighty-Four may be characterised by an excessively narrow view of what satire is, thereby artificially constraining the scope of the genre by regarding satire as necessarily including irony and humour. This appears to be the case with Mireia Aragay's article which she entitles "Satire Betrayed". Aragay contends that Orwell unsuccessfully attempts to blend two elements - satire and warning, consequently blurring the satirical intent. She also states that because Nineteen Eighty-Four does not contain verbal irony, it in a sense does not fulfill one of the necessary conditions that all satire must contain.¹⁷ Aragay claims to base her criteria for satire on Hodgart's definition, 18 but as Gottlieb points out, there are precedents in great works of satire where there exists "a serious, even tragic dimension, represented by a sense of the 'grotesque or absurd,' which is quite distinct from the more popular, comic, or light-hearted examples of 'wit and humour'." Gottlieb takes Donne's "metaphysical wit" as an illustration of this kind of dark satire, noting how in some works of Swift, Voltaire, Blake, and particularly Kafka, serious wit may turn "tragic and deeply prophetic," and thus "may rise above the bonds of the comic." The author understands it to be immaterial whether the effect produced on the reader is one of laughter or tears, believing rather, that "our most unmistakable sense of the satirical" is derived from a sense of irony, "the sense of reversal."19

Aragay does concede the force of Orwell's writing, but appears to consider that the lack of humour is a basic technical flaw: "Orwell's vision of the world transformed is no doubt coherent and convincing, but it lacks the dose of humour satire demands and it is far too grim, dark and oppressive for the reader to be able to laugh" (Emphasis added.)²⁰ To this appreciation one might perhaps comment that Orwell at this particular time was not interested in making his readers laugh and he no doubt would have been satisfied to convince them of the coherence of his vision of the world.

Nonetheless, opinions such as Aragay's, in line with traditional literary theory, remind us that however diverse interpretations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may be, although they may be effected from differing standpoints, what should not be lost from sight is the fact that it is a work of fiction, and as an artistic creation it should be interpreted. Mario Vargas Llosa illustrates the potential pitfall of overlooking this aspect in a manuscript of a working paper he prepared for the University of Cambridge in 1978, entitled "La Utopía Arcaica". Vargas Llosa is referring to the special situation of literature in South America, where, as he states, a writer is understood to have a social responsibility. That Orwell possessed this sense of social responsibility is evident, and it makes Vargas Llosa's comments particularly relevant.

La función de la literatura puede verse sustancialmente distorsionada si los textos de creación se leen sólo o principalmente como medios de conocimiento social o instrumentos de educación y agitación política. ¿Cuál sería entonces la frontera entre sociología, historia, periodismo, publicidad y la literatura? ¿Es la literatura nada más que una

versión envilecida (ya que sus datos son siempre dudosos por la intervención en ellos del factor imaginario) de las ciencias sociales y del ensayo político?²¹

Orwell was able to express his opinions in different journals, which he did in great profusion and with great eloquence. Consequently, interpretations of his novel which do not take into account the literary aspect would seem to be only partially scrutinizing the work, since in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he specifically chose a literary form to express certain ideas. This is the defect common to many "political" interpretations of the novel.²²

A complementary view of the genre of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to those previously alluded to, Lynette Hunter's, sees the novel as satire, irony and allegory while accepting Orwell's own words in describing his work as "Utopia in the form of a novel." It has already been mentioned in a previous section how Hunter views the naturalistic elements in the novel as a satire on the shifting truths of a totalitarian state, and how that led to severe criticism in an age which she believes underestimates the possibility of the rebirth of such a state. To echo Orwell once more, critics who consider his vision to be farfetched and hysterical no doubt reflect the views of those living in the sheltered conditions of English life. It is indeed a short-sighted, blinkered attitude, for in our present decade, fifty years after Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, we have to look no further than the former Yugoslavia to see some of the worst excesses of totalitarianism still being practised.

With Hunter's consideration of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and in Orwell's own words, we have now added the dimension of Utopia, which provides

further difficulties of interpretation in terms of genre. Nineteen Eighty-Four is generally considered to be an anti-utopian or dystopian novel, and as Irving Howe indicates, one of the main literary problems with respect to anti-utopian fiction is to "learn to read it according to its own premises and limits", which as he notes, entails ways "somewhat different from those by which we read ordinary novels." Just why this affirmation can be made will be better understood after a brief examination of modern utopian and anti-utopian fiction, bearing in mind Vita Fortunati's analysis of one of the major problems encountered with respect to the question of utopia and genze:

Both the strength and weakness of utopia rest in the basic underlying ambiguity of the genre. It is a strength in that a utopia represents a tension towards the elsewhere which reveals the ability to *think about the Other*, to go beyond the given facts and reality. It is a weakness because in utopia, in the model, there is the abstraction of the real and its *simplification*.²⁵

European, Christian thinkers, and (as Kumar argues) utopian fiction does not extend beyond the parameters of the Christian world, were confronted with two radically different utopian models from the ancient world: Athens, democratic, tolerant and boisterous, engaged in a cultivated hedonism, and Sparta, authoritarian, ascetic and communistic. These alternative possibilities were highly attractive to European utopian writers, and this disparity was further compounded by the confrontation between Augustinian and Pelagian traditions within western thought. As Kumar observes, utopians such as Bellamy or Wells are Pelagians. They deny original sin, believing that

man can perfect himself through the creation of the appropriate environment. On the other hand, anti-utopians in which category writers such as Huxley and Orwell can be placed, were inclined to be, are Augustinians. In their view, "weak human creatures [are] constantly succumbing to the sins of pride, avarice and ambition, however favourable the circumstances." Kumar establishes certain traits that identify anti-utopian thought, noting that the antiutopian does not necessarily believe in original sin, but it is the "pessimistic and determinist" conception of human nature that induces him to believe that any attempt to create the good society on earth is doomed since it is pointless. Paradoxically, aspirations and strivings for utopia will be rewarded with violence and tyranny. Kumar notes that "the anti-utopian takes a certain melancholy pleasure in the recital of failed and aborted reforms and revolutions. The record of history is plain. Augustinian determinism comes over pitilessly in Hegel's declaration: 'The History of the World is not the theatre of happiness. Periods of happiness are blank pages in it'."27 Augustine held a markedly negative view of nature and of human nature in particular.

The Renaissance and afterwards the Enlightenment, were periods which spawned optimism in the future of humanity; it was possible to consider man as essentially good, man could aspire to perfection. The nineteenth century gave rise to a period in which an extraordinary advance was made in terms of science and knowledge of the environment but by the end of the nineteenth century, man's confidence in his unique and natural ability to attain perfection became considerably strained. This was in fact a new and paradoxical situation

since in previous eras, man's increased knowledge of the natural world and of society had strengthened theories of perpetual rational and moral progress. Now, however, this very knowledge contributed towards weakening his confidence in his power to achieve perfection.²⁸ Man, through his increasing knowledge of science began to believe that he could control the world, but he subsequently came to understand that science did not answer all his problems, especially those he considered to be of paramount importance.

Until this time, as Kumar notes, anti-utopia which could generally be perceived as a distorted reflection of utopia, was inclined to take the form of satire: anti-utopia was frequently concealed in utopia. As he observes, satire holds together both negative and positive elements, and is in this case characterised respectively in anti-utopian and utopian manifestations. The criticism satire effects through ridicule and invective is criticism of its own times, while it also implicitly indicates, sometimes explicitly too, alternative and better ways of living. "Eventually the literary forms of utopia and antiutopia were to pull these two elements apart, assigning them to separate genres, or sub-genres. But the separation was never final or complete; and in the early period utopia and anti-utopia familiarly jostle each other within the same satirical form, often confusing the reader as to the author's true intent."29 Indeed, for a long time after More, the satire of utopian fiction presented the world of the writer negatively, and thus an anti-utopia, in opposition to utopia. Utopia existed as a fantasy, and it was when that fantasy began to be perceived as a possibly realisable vision, an actual prospect, that utopia could no longer be seen to contain anti-utopia. Anti-utopians in the latter part of the nineteenth century had come to believe that their society was condemned, whereas utopians still believed that although far off, by persevering, man could aspire to perfection. As Kumar points out, such thinking gave rise to the popular conception of utopians as woolly idealists and anti-utopians as hard-headed realists.³⁰

It is important not to equate utopian writers out of hand with optimism and anti-utopians with pessimism, since utopians may well be pessimistic about the world. Both the utopia and the anti-utopia may be an expression of condemnation of the present, and a warning to society that it is set upon a course which may lead to disaster. Yet, however deep the pessimism of the utopian may be, unlike the anti-utopian, he nevertheless maintains the confidence which the assumption of the existence of a transcendent ideal of human perfection confers. Man, as David Tarry observes, may aspire to this ideal by following certain rationally derived rules which reflect a fundamental truth about man's place in the natural order. "[T]he utopian contends that the belief in human perfectibilism is rooted in both reason and nature. It is the rejection of this contention which has found expression in the utopian satires, the 'anti-dreams' of this century."

Accordingly, in our time, visions of utopia more commonly reflect the fears of contemporary society, in contrast with previous centuries in which utopias generally reflected the hopes and aspirations of their writers, although they could indeed have been desolate hopes. For the anti-utopian writers of the twentieth century, since perfection cannot exist in nature, it is only through oppression that the perfectly regulated society can be imposed upon mankind.

Man lives in a world of contingency and choice, and attempts to render the life of men wholly predictable can only result in the deformation of humanity through the extinction of human morality and creativity. Moreover, the anti-utopians assert, there can be no final, incontrovertible definition of perfection. The truth of the rulers of the perfect state is no more than dogma. Utopian happiness consists merely in total submission to this dogma, in abandonment of autonomy and absorption into a corporate identity. The citizen of utopia lives in 'a perpetual childhood of prescription', and if he is happy, his happiness is the happiness of a child, who is spared the burden of uncertainty and choice and responsibility.³²

Anti-utopians believe that the nature of man, diverse in talents and temperament, renders it impossible for a society which aims to promote a single conception of perfection, to achieve the well-being of all. We live in a world in which good and evil inevitably co-exist. Because of the intrinsic diversity of man, it follows that the moral choices he makes will also be diverse, influenced by his different circumstances, and the result of personal deliberation. In any case, as has been seen, the moral choices made may contribute to making him 'better', but there is no hope of his being able to aspire to 'perfection'.

At first sight, this would seem to be a conservative position, but since anti-utopians did not simply reject modernity willy-nilly, this is an over-simplification of their position. On the contrary, as can be seen in the early anti-utopian phase of Wells as well as in Huxley and Orwell, they cherished a profound belief in equality, science and reason.³³ It was not progress itself

which they attacked, but the use and practice that men made of it, flouting principles which should never be abandoned. "Every attempt ended in the grotesque inversion of its promise - democracy produced despotism, science barbarism, and reason unreason."³⁴

In my opinion, this insight is of particular importance for the understanding of Orwell's criticism of the Left, so misinterpreted and misunderstood. Orwell's real intention and practice are characterised by John Rodden as follows: "Orwell's criticism was almost always directed at socialists, not socialism: and he mercilessly assaulted their lies and orthodoxies because he wanted socialists to be worthy of socialism." This observation is important for our study since it pinpoints the essential utopianism of Orwell and at the same time emphasizes an attitude which is often distorted by criticism that views his attacks as attacks on the ideal of socialism itself. A cynic would no doubt surmise that by transferring the criticism to the ideal and away from the persons professing that ideal, the critics ensure that no one need feel themselves directly alluded to.

Kumar believes the attempts to make practice fit principles affords them a "special poignancy" because they were based on the same conditions as the modern utopia. The nearer modern societies drew to utopia, or at least, the more they attempted to aspire to utopian ideals, the further removed freedom became, and the more human values were annihilated. "It was the 'scientific, 'rational', 'democratic' nation-state, the product of all that was considered progressive, that had delivered its citizens into bondage." This led to the conclusion that it was the utopian initiative itself that was to blame for the

contemporary predicament.

The whole of western development since the time of More was re-interpreted and recounted as a disaster, in so far as it represented the dominance of utopian principles. Science and democracy were no doubt noble ideals, good in themselves, but the attempt to institutionalize them in society had produced the exact opposite of utopian hopes. The anti-utopia was the image of those blighted hopes, a precise reversal of utopian expectations.³⁷

Nineteen Eighty-Four's place in terms of genre, when it is viewed as both a warning and a prophecy, is decidedly in the tradition of modern utopian and anti-utopian fiction, being at the same time an analysis of the contemporary world and a vision of the future, which Orwell sees as totalitarian. Yet, as Kumar remarks, this is increasingly denied, particularly when the novel essentially is interpreted solely as a satire. However, Fortunati powerfully argues that Nineteen Eighty-Four is in fact the end of utopia, similarly attested by the fact that no utopian or anti-utopian work since has had anything like the repercussions of Orwell's novel. In fact, the anti-utopian works that are commonly cited as terms of reference are Nineteen Eighty-Four, Huxley's Brave New World, first published in 1932, and to a lesser degree, because it is less well-known, Zamyatin's We, written in 1920-1921, there being no other work of similar influence since 1949. Zamyatin's novel We had greatly struck Orwell when he read it, and he went so far as to suggest that Brave New World was to a certain extent a plagiarism of it. 39

In We as well as in Nineteen Eighty-Four, the journey, typical of the

genre of utopian fiction has been replaced by the distancing of time. Fortunati recalls how many critics have remarked upon the effectiveness of the opening sentence of Orwell's novel, "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen", in worrying and shocking the reader through the technique of defamiliarization. Clocks in the reader's world do not strike thirteen, April is generally regarded as a mild, rainy month, and these two allusions therefore violate the reader's accepted code, a technique Orwell deploys to distance his reader "from empirical facts and push him or her towards a transgressive reading of the rhetoric of the text." Fortunati remarks that the traveller and the guide of the utopian novel are no longer found in Nineteen Eighty-Four, where Winston Smith occupies an ambiguous position both inside and outside the utopia.

Another departure from the tradition of the utopian novel is the attention to detail and individual differences, common on the other hand, to the traditional analysis of characters of the literary novel. The details of Winston's everyday individual existence are observed, and I would suggest that therein lies a significant observation of totalitarianism. Under a totalitarian regime, individuality is frowned upon, as tastes and enthusiasms that depart from the norm are less easily controllable. Totalitarianism does not tolerate eccentrics or spontaneity. As Howe emphasizes, Winston and Julia are "engaged in an effort to salvage the idea of the human as an idea, which means to experiment with the possibilities of solitude and the risks of contemplation."

In the three visions of totalitarianism provided by Orwell, Huxley and Zamyatin, different as they are from each other in many aspects, the greatest

fear that inspires them all is that of an excess of regimentation, in direct contrast to Plato's fear of chaos or disorder. Indeed, Gottlieb believes that the most striking moral of Orwell's satire is that through totalitarianism human beings are dehumanized and their freedom denied, totalitarianism swallowing up and eliminating the personality. She argues that it would be unfair to conclude that Orwell denies the freedom of the will as a "prerogative of our humanity"; rather, she considers that "the imaginative leap of satire can take place either in terms of space or in terms of time." As has been mentioned, this leap in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is into the future, and hence into time. As Gottlieb argues, it is innate to dystopian satire that the reader accept the satirical framework, and so we suspend disbelief while reading Winston's story. By the same token, "we are then also expected to step back from the future and contemplate the story from our time-plane."

Various studies have emphasized the sado-masochistic relationship between Winston and O'Brien and another aspect of the totalitarian mentality that comes through in the novel is the connection between totalitarianism and victimization. Although undoubtedly Orwell was not the first to remark upon this connection, Gottlieb believes him to be the first great writer to express the dynamism between the two "in all its horrible consequences not only as a psycho-political theory, but also in its full personal impact."

It has also been remarked how the London of Nineteen Eighty-Four resembles the London of the post-war period. With the descriptions, right from the first page, of the sordidness of Airstrip One, the smell of boiled cabbage, the electricity cuts, the generalized drabness, Orwell is attacking the

degradation of the life of the city, in a manner that foretells many of the issues subsequently decried by environmentalists and ecologists. *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott's cult film, for example, while depicting a futuristic Los Angeles of the year 2016, nevertheless conveys an atmosphere of squalor and desolation very reminiscent of that described by Orwell.

It is highly significant that the country is the only place where Winston and Julia are truly unobserved, while Winston's dreams of the Golden Country, a haven, echo one of the most persistent themes in utopian literature where the garden is seen as a symbol of perfection harking back to the Garden of Eden. Nature in utopian fiction has taken on many forms, coming under such names as Paradise or Arcadia; the simplicity of country life symbolizes the positive while negative apprehensions are found in the dangers of technology and urban life. Orwell was a great lover of the country, and although critics have consistently expressed surprise and dismay that at the end of his life he chose to go to the remote Isle of Jura to live, even going to the lengths of interpreting this move as a kind of death wish, I do not believe it at all out of character for someone who so loved nature. Furthermore, the Inner Hebrides under the influence of the Gulf Stream have a climate which is far milder than eastern Scotland, and Barnhill, the house which he rented, is situated in a truly privileged position looking out across the Sound of Jura to the mainland. This was the place where he wrote the novel, and two more unlike places are difficult to imagine. The essential dichotomy of Athens and Sparta was heavily weighted in Orwell's case on the side of Sparta, and he rejected the idea of the possibility of hedonistic totalitarianism advanced in We and Brave New World.

The life he led on Jura was exceedingly simple and rural. Here he could live life on his own terms, and it was here that he wrote of a dark world where all the inhabitants were surveyed by the omnipresent telescreen in a dirty, shabby run-down metropolis. Even when he was desperately ill Orwell was doggedly determined not to abandon his desire of being able to return to the Isle of Jura.

The complexity of the problems posed by genre may perhaps be laid at rest in Fortunati's endorsement of Howe's appreciation of how *Nineteen Eighty-Four* should be read: as a text comprising different interwoven and interacting genres: utopia, romance, satire, essay and standard novel.⁴⁴ Our anti-utopian reading of the novel now leads us to consider the important role played by Goldstein's Book and the Appendix incorporating the Principles of Newspeak.

5.ii. The role of Goldstein's Book in Nineteen Eighty-Four

The inclusion of excerpts from Goldstein's Book in the middle of the narrative has been the object of criticism as a somewhat clumsy insertion, holding up as it does the action of the narrative. However, Orwell was absolutely resolute that both this part of the book and the Appendix incorporating the principles of Newspeak should remain intact. He wrote from

the sanatorium in Gloucestershire where he spent the early months of 1949 before he was transferred to University College Hospital where he died, stating his reasons. An editor at the publishers Harcourt Brace was in favour of altering and abridging a large part of the novel and Orwell's letter detailed his refusal to do so, including amongst his reasons that a book is "built up as a balanced structure and one cannot simply remove large chunks here and there unless one is ready to recast the whole thing." He was mentally unwilling and physically unable to do this, and insisted that he really could not allow his work "to be mucked about beyond a certain point", and he doubted "whether it even pays in the long run." The immediate popular success which the novel achieved bears out his judgement on this last point, and examination of the structural and thematic strands confirms the wisdom of his reluctance to abridge the 'book within the book' that is Goldstein's Book, and to omit the Appendix.

These two works of expository prose afford the only vision of Oceania that is not seen through Winston Smith's eyes, with the exception of the excerpt from the children's history book borrowed from his neighbour Parsons. Accordingly, when reading them we are distanced from the protagonist, and this distance is compounded since the two devices refer to two different timeplanes: the Book refers back to the early days of the Revolution while the Appendix looks forward to the time when Newspeak will be established as the only language. As Gottlieb makes clear, by forcing us to detach ourselves from the narrative, we are reminded that satire does not present our world "as is" but rather "as it could be unless we assume responsibility and change our

course of thinking, and of course our action", for we are called back to our own reality and our own timeplace.46

There is, however, a certain ambiguity surrounding "the Book", for in the third part of the novel it is insinuated that it may well be a forgery, invented by the Inner Party, and even perhaps by O'Brien himself. Viewed from this angle it is in consequence a parody within a parody: what is apparently the truth is quite the reverse, nothing but a pack of lies, or maybe, paradox of paradoxes, a pack of lies which tells the truth.⁴⁷

Through reading "the Book", the reader, in learning the raison d'être behind the events that comprise the fictional narrative, identifies the historical background and relates it with events in the real world. In the first place, Emmanuel Goldstein, the Jewish intellectual of revolutionary theory, previously revered as a father of the Revolution, is identifiable as Trotsky, the man Stalin understood to be his greatest threat, and who even during his exile in Mexico was harangued as the most ignominious traitor to the Revolution and ultimately liquidated at Stalin's instigation. Chapter One of "the Book" refers back to the days of the early twentieth century when people still believed that everything would get better and that progress embodied in science and technology as well as better living conditions signalled the eventual disappearance of inequality. Similar reference is made to the utopian ideas of some at that time who believed that a return to the simple rural life was a possible alternative, a dream that proved impossible due to the conflict with the ever growing mechanization which it brought about. "The Book" writes of the "final phase of capitalism" being between the 1920s and the 1940s, thereby echoing the directives of official Communist propaganda of the time.

All these and many other examples enable Goldstein's Book to be the determining factor for the "focus of Nineteen Eighty-Four as a dystopian satire based on the interaction between two timeplanes." As Gottlieb states "it is Goldstein's Book that crystallizes the major themes of Orwell's satire as it concerns that complex target, the totalitarian mentality, with particular emphasis on its unique relationship to Time." The reader identifies the link with the known world and is forced to contemplate that a possible consequence might be the nightmare future depicted in the Oceania of the 1980s.

The complexity of the significance of time illustrated through "the Book" is further demonstrated by Gottlieb when she points to the fact that as Orwell's 'ideal readers,' we become conscious of a gap of nearly forty years between Winston's world and ours. "Goldstein's Book is a bridge between these two timeplanes, showing Winston how 'our' world of the 1940s has led to his world of the 1980s. As such, it emphasizes that Winston can no longer stop the totalitarian state machine: his world in 1984 embodies the inevitable consequence of a past he can no longer return to."

The significance of Winston's constant search for the historical background which he knows to be constantly falsified, and to whose falsification he himself actively contributes, is that he believes that once he understands the past, he will be apprised of an unmovable truth. Winston is searching for "the Truth"; he needs to be acquainted with and to understand reality, which he believes that history will provide him with. Truth in the world of Oceania, however, is a pragmatic concept, reminding us of the

definition by the deadpan, implacable, orthodox server of the totalitarian state, Gletkin, in *Darkness At Noon:* "Truth is what is useful to humanity, falsehood is what is harmful." It is only too clear that in the totalitarian regime of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, truth is what the Inner Party finds to be expedient to the changing needs dictated by propaganda and the deception of the populace.

The significance of the discipline of history in PC controversies is similarly very great, and indeed, as was previously stated, Hughes understands that it is in this field that PC has been most successful. It must, however, be emphasized that history, despite the allegations of some, does not claim to present a static reading of certain facts; it entails, on the contrary, a constant revision and reappraisal of past events. Robert Young in his examination of post-war theories of history, White Mythologies, provides an example pertinent to the present study, both in its subject matter and in the fact that it refers to history as perceived at the time Orwell was planning Nineteen Eighty-Four. Young discusses the Frankfurt School text produced in 1944 by Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment.⁵¹ The authors were exiled at that time, and this fact combined with the date, highlight the fact that the text attempts to deal with the phenomenon of fascism. Apart from the cause and effect aspect of the boom of fascism and the authors' circumstances, the intellectual challenge presented by the phenomenon of the advent and almost unchecked advance of fascism was that it appeared to have cut short the previously uninterrupted progress of reason embodied in the liberating enlightenment of ideals.

The authors, in regarding Marxism as the fullest political development

In brief, their answer was that within reason itself there had always been a certain aspect of irrationality, which, as Young points out, "despite its best intentions, had led to its involvement with tyranny and domination: 'Enlightenment is totalitarian'." In Young's next words we see reflection upon utopian ideals in the light of the contingencies and constraints posed by the phenomenon of fascism: "The very powers of rationality which enabled modern man to free himself from nature and control it[,] had also become an instrumental device to dominate him. If nature had been modelled by man into productive commodities, man's own subjectivity had also become reified into a self-identical instrument; man had become an empty and passive consumer."

The Frankfurt School paid particular attention to the problem of the relation of the phenomena of fascism, especially the case of Auschwitz, to the ideals of the Enlightenment and the progress of reason. However, fascism for the French poststructuralists was merely a symptom in the history of European imperialism included in the defeat of the European colonial powers by Japan. Accordingly, as Young demonstrates, fascism was never regarded by this school as an aberration, but simply as European colonialism returning to Europe by a country that had been forced to forfeit its colonial power upon losing the first World War.⁵⁴

In an earlier section of this study, reference was made to the differing terms applied to the "discovery of America" in recent times in Spain to illustrate the varying "fashions" in historical interpretations. This example is not fortuitous, as the same events have been the subject of great discussion in the United States, leading to a great diversity of reactions ranging from the subsequent reaffirmation of the traditional version of those events to the most radical updates of Rousseau's Noble Savage. The figure of Columbus himself epitomises the polarity of the historical debate, for as Hughes puts it, to Europeans and North Americans traditionally "he was Manifest Destiny in tights," supported by the popular tales and legends that surrounded his exploits such as the story about Columbus and the egg or the fiction that Queen Isabella pawned her jewels in order to finance his voyages. Hughes cites as an example of the opposite politically correct version, a book by Kirkpatrick Sale entitled *The Conquest of Paradise*, which made Columbus "more like Hitler in a caravel, grasping and filled with apocalyptic fantasies, landing like a virus among the innocent people of the New World." 55

The importance of these interpretations of history does not of course lie in deciding which is 'right' or 'wrong', as it should be clear that both versions probably contain elements of truth. What is of interest here is the fact that history is used as a tool to further a particular concept of the present-day world. History is not regarded as discipline, which through the study of the past, enables us to better understand our present. History when studied in this light tailors the facts to fit the cloth of an ideology, be it the hitherto little known relevance of black culture in so-called western culture, or the opposite stance which views the predominance of the white man as a sign of his natural superiority over the rest of mankind. It is this tailoring of the facts, so much an integral feature of totalitarianism which Orwell repeatedly denounced and

which Goldstein's Book once more exhibits. The totalitarian, far from preserving and enhancing the complexities of history, reduces and flattens them, and the same process is repeated in the way history is bandied about by both sides in the course of the PC debate.

This dubious use of an academic discipline to suit an overt or hidden agenda is not, however, confined only to history. In 1946 Orwell published an essay in *Polemic* entitled "Politics vs Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*", in which, in his characteristically forthright style, he discussed the satirical elements in this book he so much admired. In the course of the essay Orwell juxtaposes the reader's instinctive attitude to a novel when reading with a certain tendency which he regarded as all-too-prevalent among critics of literature, expressed as follows:

If a book angers, wounds or alarms you, then you will not enjoy it, whatever its merits may be. If it seems to you a really pernicious book, likely to influence other people in some undesirable way, then you will probably construct an aesthetic theory to show that it has no merits. Current literary criticism consists quite largely of this kind of dodging to and fro between two sets of standards.⁵⁶

Clearly, the parallel between the construction of a convenient literary theory and the interpretation of history also to suit ideological convenience is established. The history of the Revolution which led to the totalitarian regime in Oceania is revealed both to the protagonist and to the reader through the excepts from *Goldstein's Book*. The Appendix, also a theoretical treatise on one of the central instruments of power to the Inner Party, however, because

it deals with a future beyond Winston's lifespan, provides information which transfers us into a timeplane beyond 1984, and upon whose tenets Winston can do no more than speculate. The reader, in this last part of the book may pass judgement on the use of Newspeak in the furtherance of the totalitarian society that is Oceania.

5.iii. The role of the Appendix in Nineteen Eighty-Four

The Appendix to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a radical departure in style and content, coming immediately after the pathos of Winston's defeat witnessed in the description of his circumstances which show his total physical, mental and moral debasement. It is in this part of the book that Orwell's satirical intent is most in evidence, revealing a comic strain which rarely appears in the preceding sections. Gottlieb makes an interesting distinction between the catharsis of great tragedy and that of dystopian satire, the difference being that while tragedy may only pose the fundamental questions about the foundation and the limits of humanity, dystopian satire also has a message, a didactic intent. Since it is a cerebral genre it is forced to make a more direct appeal to rational thought processes and the nature of the catharsis must be in keeping with the genre.⁵⁷ Therefore, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* there are two points

(Goldstein's Book at the end of Part 2 and the Appendix at the end of Part 3) at which we, the readers, are recalled from Winston's inescapable predicament into the realization that his predetermined fate can still be averted by us so long as we are aware of the dangers that beset us. These two devices introduced into the text give added credence to the consideration of the novel as an anti-utopian satire.

The description of the language which the Party is creating in order to permanently consolidate its power, and the philosophical intent which motivates it, are seen as the ultimate step in the eradication of the thinking person, the only element that can challenge the hegemony of the Inner Party. Gottlieb argues that Newspeak in the year 2050 embodies the last stage in a three-step linguistic and moral decline: the betrayal of the Revolution (Animal Farm); the aftermath of the betrayed Revolution (Nineteen Eighty-Four); and the total elimination of free thinking (Newspeak, 2050). She bases her view on Crick's speculation that Orwell perhaps intended to write three novels in sequence or a trilogy, borne out by his Notebook references in which Boxer is a human character. "There is a significant sense of continuity between Animai Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, in spite of the difference in genre. It is fair to speculate that in the Appendix containing the "Principles of Newspeak" may be the vestige of what could have become the third volume of the trilogy, depicting the stage that follows the totalitarian practice of 1984." "S8"

What is incontrovertible, however, is that throughout the Appendix Orwell was dealing with the use and misuse of language which constituted preoccupations and concerns that had long been with him. Furthermore, the fact that he chose to place them at the end of the novel conveys the rhetorical force carried by the special emphasis of the end of a text. Orwell examines the degradation of language, satirized in the creation of Newspeak, and parallels it with the degradation of the enslaved people of Oceania under their totalitarian regime. The purpose of imposing this language upon the abject people of Oceania was advanced in Orwell's critique of Gulliver's Travels seen in the observation he makes about Swift, noting his "perception that one of the aims of totalitarianism is not merely to make sure that people will think the right thoughts, but actually to make them less conscious." (Orwell's emphasis) This is, of course, the aim of Newspeak as is explicitly stated in the Appendix: "The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible" (1984: 241). Similarly, "Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought" (1984: 242, Orwell's emphasis.)

The essence, therefore, of Orwell's satire, and his most important message, is presented to us in the last few pages of the novel. Throughout the narrative we have participated in Winston's struggle to discover and maintain his individual identity, and the dystopian satire warns us that this is a fate which could well be ours. Winston is similar to Orwell in this desire to conserve his own individuality, while at the same time seeing his salvation in joining the spurious Brotherhood. As Tarry notes: "Within Orwell there appear to be two warring desires: the desire to remain separate, self-conscious, moral, free and creative, and the desire to belong, to abandon the unequal struggle for

autonomy, and to become absorbed, to partake of collective immortality."60 Through the Appendix we learn that the core of the satire lies in Orwell's demand that the exercise of critical thought be not obliterated in order to appease the hunger for power of the totalitarian machine. This exercise is denied to the oppressed as is denied them the power to dream, ultimately negating their capacity to dream of or even yearn for utopia.

Slater refers to "the gramophone mind" which listens to the "same tune and the ready-made phrases that anaesthetize the brain that Orwell warned us to guard against, lest our familiarity with the tune's rhythm and lyrics lull us into a dumb acceptance of our own brand of Newspeak."61

Nevertheless, I believe that the satirical message is often misinterpreted by the reader because the state of shock induced by Part 3 of the novel colours and overshadows the reading of the Appendix. In other words, the Appendix, when it is read as a prolongation of the novel (the normal procedure), produces a different effect on us than when it is read in a detached way, free from the emotional involvement brought on by identification with Winston's predicament and fate. Here I differ from Gottlieb's interpretation of the catharsis induced by the satire. Gottlieb argues that the reader feels a sense of relief in recognizing that we are still *before* the catastrophe and therefore possess the freedom to avert it.⁶² Consequently, I feel that a distinction should be made between the effect produced upon the reader and the second message which close reading of the text produces. The lack of such a distinction may perhaps account in part for the negative views both of the editor at Harcourt Brace and of many critics about the whole Newspeak Appendix.

In direct contrast to the gloominess of the rest of the book, the irony in the Appendix is in fact highly comical, but this is not easily perceived by the reader still struggling to come to terms with Winston's ordeals and the nightmare vision of Oceania tyrannized by the power crazy Inner Party of Ingsoc. Orwell's ear for language and his acute sense of ridicule induce one to smile at the "typical sentence from a *Times* leading article", *Oldthinkers* unbellyfeel Ingsoc, particularly because of the incorporation of the very prosaic word "belly", not traditionally associated with the gravity of language of a *Times* leader. However, upon learning the shortest possible Oldspeak rendering of the message, it is difficult to escape the notion that Orwell was writing with his tongue in his cheek: "Those whose ideas were formed before the Revolution cannot have a full emotional understanding of the principles of English Socialism." (1984: 245)

Similar feelings are evoked on the final page of the novel by the well-known passage from the Declaration of Independence, with its poetic use of language, widely praised for its precision and for the sentiments it expresses, upon which the Appendix makes the following comment: "It would have been quite impossible to render this into Newspeak while keeping the sense of the original. The nearest one could come to doing so would be to swallow the whole passage up in the single word *crimethink*." (1984: 251) The total absurdity of this statement with the gross oversimplification of the Newspeak rendering is surely an ironic dismissal of the absurdity of the idea of Newspeak.

That Orwell was satirizing the creation of artificial languages such as

Ogden's Basic English or Interglossa, is an interpretation that has a long list of critics to endorse it.63 Chilton mentions that Orwell, who corresponded with Ogden, was at one time apparently considering promoting Basic at the BBC and through Tribune. However, he considers that it is quite plausible to read the Newspeak sections of Nineteen Eighty-Four as "satirical parody of the Babelbreaking Basic, much as Swift satirised The Real Character". He points to "a certain authoritarian, even imperialistic, streak in Ogden's little book that turned utopian Basic into dystopian Newspeak for Orwell." That the parody is unmistakable is seen in how both Ogden and the Newspeak grammarians deplored the remaining inflectional irregularities of English that 'mar the grammatical picture'; similarly, the reduction of vocabulary, and especially of verbs, is the guiding principle for both. Ogden recommends that all antonyms should be formed regularly and transparently: for example, straight/unstraight, etc.64 In the Appendix bad is said to be better expressed by ungood, and it is suggested that dark could be replaced by unlight, or light by undark. (1984: 243)

Randolph Quirk made a somewhat unflattering appreciation of Orwell's Newspeak which he regarded as much a satire on Basic as on totalitarian propaganda. Bailey explains certain similarities between Basic English and Newspeak such as the fact that they were both designed to reduce the necessity of a large number of words for the usual occasions of communication, and a drastically simplified grammar containing only five rules. Perhaps Quirk's reaction to Newspeak can be more fully understood in Bailey's following remarks: "For many people around the world, Basic English has provided an

entry point to the full range of English, and the rationale that led to its adoption continues today in, for instance, the idea of 'Nuclear English' promoted by Randolph Quirk."66

Hodge and Fowler regard the whole language programme offered in the Appendix as a satire on language-planners and experts on language in general. They disassociate themselves from the theory which holds that Newspeak was Orwell's prediction as to what would occur with the language. As they point out, these are theories encouraged by the rulers of Oceania, and "should be treated with the same scepticism as the periodic announcements that a final victory over Eastasia/Eurasia is at hand." However, what is intriguing is that Orwell had considered theories such as Ogden's as a positive weapon against the degeneration of English, which appears to support Chilton's thesis that Orwell became annoyed at the imperialistic streak which he discerned in Basic. Chilton in fact draws an interesting parallel between the status of Newspeak and Oldspeak and the variations of English employed in the British Empire:

The socio-linguistic situation portrayed is the following: a rigid codified language which is the preserve of an elite, and an oral vernacular (Oldspeak) which is spoken by the rest. It is a kind of diglossic bilingualism reminiscent of the relationship between Official Latin and Vulgar Latin in the later Roman Empire. More pertinently, it is reminiscent of the linguistic situation typical in parts of the British Empire well known to Orwell.⁶⁹

However, as Fowler comments, one of the major differences between Basic and Newspeak is the fundamental one that Basic was never intended to

replace Standard English but was designed to co-exist alongside with it, whereas Newspeak was intended to replace Standard English, and he therefore considers that Basic serves as an analogy to help readers to imagine what kind of linguistic system was advocated with the creation of Newspeak. This would seem to be a plausible explanation, especially in view of the fact that Basic English was still very fashionable at the time Nineteen Eighty-Four was written and would have provided the point of reference which it has already been mentioned is necessary for the reader to be able to identify the object of satire.

Both Goldstein's Book and the Appendix undoubtedly fulfill the role of supplying "authentic material" to validate the existence of the utopia (in this case, the anti-utopia) described in the novel. Fowler's analysis of Nineteen Eighty-Four, which it will be remembered adopts a stylistics approach, suggests that the voice of the Appendix may "plausibly be attributed to a new, distinct and anonymous figure with Gulliver-like characteristics: a traveller, or in modern terms an anthropologist or a linguist, who studies a foreign society and its products and reports with apparent objectivity what he sees and hears."

He points to cues to this role as being the pronoun "we" which is used twice in the first paragraph, the first of which refers to the writer and his readers, while the second is the impersonal "we" of science. As Fowler observes, the absence of "I" contrasts with the liberal use of it Orwell makes in his essays and journalistic opinions. Similarly there is minimal use of overt modality or judgement form the point of view of the author.

Another puzzling factor that emerges from careful reading of the

Appendix is that there are various clues which suggest that Newspeak never did achieve the status that the Party had designated for it. The Appendix is written in the past tense at an unspecified time after 1934: "In the year 1984 there was not as yet anyone who used Newspeak as his sole means of communication..."

"It was expected that Newspeak..."; "it could not be used [...] since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed"; "Newspeak was founded on the English language as we now know it..." (Emphasis added.)

Who writes the Appendix, for whom and why, are complex questions to answer, for as Hodge and Fowler remark, Orwell himself is "everywhere but nowhere" in the Appendix. The authors themselves ask where Orwell's understanding ends and where his readers' own speculation begins, admitting that it is often impossible to say. They suggest that in view of this situation the critic must be careful to avoid two extremes:

One is to claim Orwell's critical activity as his own, the other is in effect to rewrite Orwell's novel so that it confirms a new orthodoxy. Both perversions would find a happy home somewhere in Minitrue - another illustration of how relevant Orwell's satire is to the conditions of intellectual production in our society. But Orwell leaves us no single choice. By writing in this form he has produced something that is tailor-made to be appropriated by contrary interests. Qualities that are admired in works of art, like irony, ambiguity and multiple levels of meaning, are kinds of doublethink.⁷²

This appropriately pinpoints why criticism of Orwell generally is divided between those who find him fascinating and those who consider him

reflecting his own passionate espousal of so many and varied causes. Nineteen Eighty-Four is his literary testament, not because he desired it to be so, but because he was prevented from writing any more fiction by his increasing ill health. His style in writing continues to be greatly admired and certain elements in his novel transcend the book and are cited in everyday language. One of these is Newspeak of which Chilton remarks in a phrase Orwell could have made his own, that it "is probably used mainly to condemn any word or phrase that is unfamiliar, especially if you dislike the person using it." 13

NOTES

- 1. Philip Rahv, "The Unfuture of Utopia", in Harold Bloom, (ed.) George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 14. (First published in Partisan Review, 16, no 7, 1949).
- 2. Samuel Hymes, (ed.) Twentieth Century Interpretations of 1984: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 15.
- 3. Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 290.
- 4. Slater, Op. cit., p. 226.
- 5. CEJL, II, p. 463: "The new phase which I foresaw earlier has now started, and the quasi-revolutionary period which began with Dunkirk is finished."
- 6. CEJI., II, P. 168.
- 7. Kumar, Op. cit., p. 295.
- 8. Ibid., p. 295.
- 9. Gottlieb, The Orwell Conundrum, Op. cit., p. 92.
- 10. An example of the problems of interpretation of Orwell's work is provided in the following ironic comment by Hugh Kenner in Robert Mulvihill, (ed.) Reflections on America, 1984: An Orwell Symposium (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 64-65: "Orwell's wartime BBC acquaintance, William Empson, warned him in 1945 that Animal Farm was liable to misinterpretation, and years later provided an object lesson himself when he denied that Nineteen Eighty-Four was 'about' some future communism. It was 'about,' Empson insisted, as though the fact should have been obvious, that pit of infamy, the Roman Catholic church."
- 11. Ibid., p. 92.
- 12. "Fliminap" the Lilliputian treasurer, for example, is a satirical portrait of the Whig head of government, Robert Walpole, attacked in Swift's Tory circles for his political wheelings and dealings.

- 13. W. J. West, The Larger Evils, Op. cit., p. 1.

 See also Jonathan Rose, (ed.) The Revised Orwell (East Lansing: Michigan University Press, 1992), p. 2: "At the present time, the most radical revision of Orwell and his work is taking place in the USSR. The initial response of the official Soviet press to Nineteen Eighty-Four was, needless to say, vilification. By 1984, however, Izvestia and New Times were prepared to admit that the novel had merit as a dystopian satire -of the United States."
- 14. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 262.
- 15. Kumar, Op. cit., p. 105, citing Northrop Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias", in Frank E. Manuel, (ed.) Utopias and Utopian Thought, (London: Souvenir Press, 1973), p. 29.
- 16. Carl Freedman, Op. cit., p. 99.

 An earlier book, Christopher Small's The Road to Miniluv: George Orwell, the State, and God, (London: Victor Gollanz, 1975), examined Orwell's life and works from the point of view of his theology and spirituality.
- 17. Mireia Aragay i Sastre, "Satire Betrayed: A Look at Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four", Atlantis, Vol. XII, num. 1, June 1990, p. 74.
- 18. M. Hodgart, Satire, (London: World University Library, 1969).
- 19. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 261.
- 20. Aragay, Op. cit., p. 72.
- Mario Vargas Llosa, "La Utopía Arcaica", Centre of Latin American Studies, University of Cambridge. Working Papers 33, 1978, p. 20.
- 22. See Irving Howe, "1984: Enigmas of Power", in Harold Bloom, (ed.) George Orwell's 1984, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), p. 107: "The vision of things Orwell presents need not necessarily lead to any one political conclusion, except a stress upon the urgency of democratic norms. Liberals, conservatives, and socialists can all argue from Orwell's text in behalf of their views, though the more sophisticated among them will recognize that a political position must be justified in its own terms, independently of any literary text."
- 23. CEJL, IV, p. 475.
- 24. Irving Howe, "The Fiction of Anti-Utopia", in Irving Howe, (ed.) Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Text, Sources, Criticism, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1963), p. 179.

- 25. Vita Fortunati, "'It Makes No Difference': A Utopia of Simulation and Transparency", in Harold Bloom, (ed.) George Orwell's 1984, Op. cit., p.110.
- 26. Kumar, Op. cit., p. 4.
- 27. Ibid., p. 100-101.
- 28. D. M. Tarry, The Utopian Vision of the Total State in the Twentieth Century with special reference to Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley and George Orwell, unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1981, p. 15.
- 29. Kumar, Op. cit., p. 104.

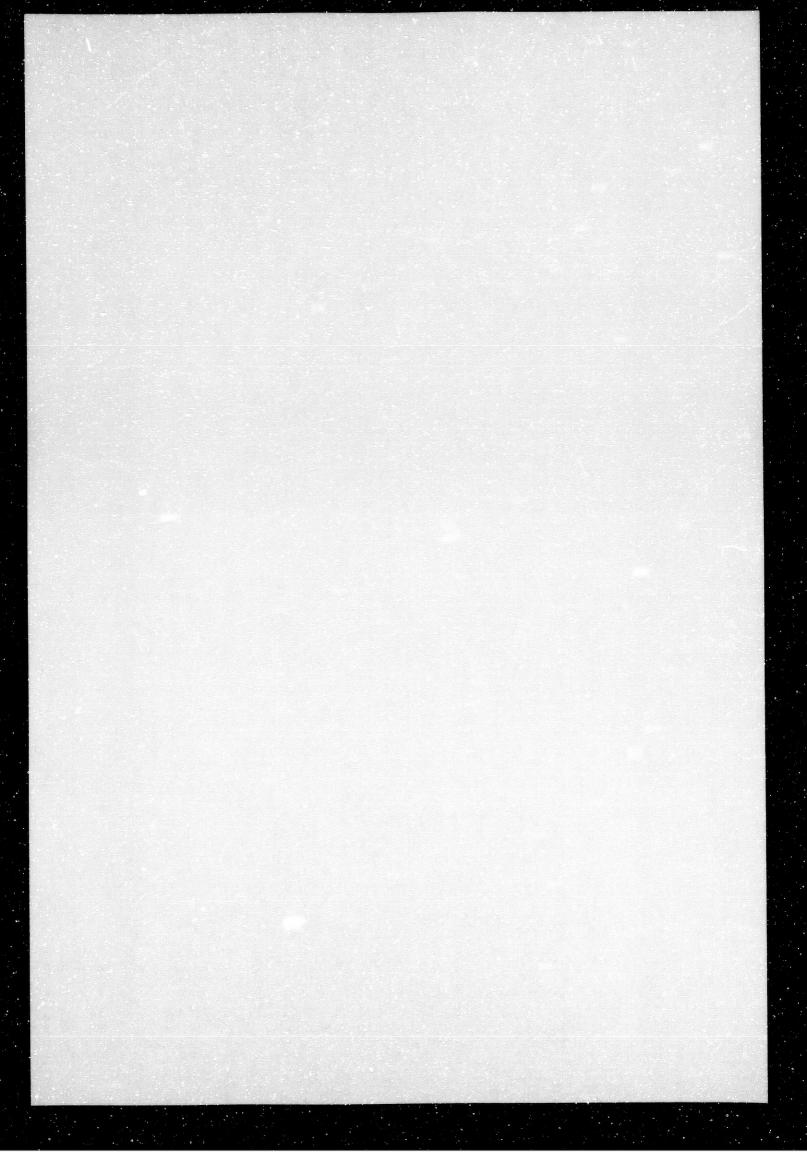
 See also Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 204: "I would venture to say that some of the best-known classics in the Utopian genre are anti-utopian, that simultaneously with the vision of Utopia appears the warning against Utopia as a perfect state of uninterrupted happiness"
- 30. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

 Kumar, *Ibid.*, p. 28, cites G. K. Chesterton's pithy comments written with respect to Wells: "The weakness of all utopias is this, that they take the greatest difficulty of man [i.e. original sin] and assume it to be overcome, and them give an elaborate account of the overcoming of smaller ones. They first assume that no man will want more than his share, and then are very ingenious in explaining whether his share will be delivered by motor-car or balloon."
- 31. Tarry, Op. cit., p. 5.
- 32. Ibid., p. 4.
- 33. Kumar, Op. cit., p. 110.
- 34. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- 35. John Rodden, The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of 'St George' Orwell, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 357.
- 36. Kumar, Op. cit., p. 110.
- 37. Ibid., p. 111.
- 38. Ibid., p. 294.
- 39. CEJL, IV, p. 546-547.
- 40. Fortunati, Op. cit., p. 112.
- 41. Howe, Op. cit., p. 179

- 42. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 273.
- 43. Ibid., p. 95.
- 44. Ibid., p. 113.
- 45. CEJL, IV, p. 545.
- 46. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 20.
- 47. Small, Op. cit., p. 208.
- 48. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 87.
- 49. Ibid., p. 96.
- 50. Arthur Koestler, Darkness At Noon, (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 182.
- 51. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1982).
- 52. Robert Young, White Mythologies: Writing History and the West, (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 7.
- 53. Op. cit., p. 7.
- 54. Ibid., p. 8.
- 55. Hughes, Op. cit., p. 117.
- 56. CEJL, IV, p. 258.
- 57. Gottlieb, Op. cit., p. 273.
- 58. Ibid., p. 279-280.
- 59. *CEJL*, IV, p. 251.
- 60. Tarry, Op. cit., p. 264.
- 61. Slater, Op. cit., p. 246.
- 62. See Gottlieb, Ibid., p. 273.
- 63. For a characteristic comment on the polemic raised by the appearance of artificial language such as Basic English and Interglossa, see CEIL, III, p. 107-108: "I wish now I had read Basic English versus the Artificial Languages before and not after reviewing the interesting little book in which Professor Lancelot Hogben sets forth his own artificial language, Interglossa. For in that case I should have realized how

comparatively chivalrous Professor Hogben had been towards the inventors of rival international languages. Controversies on serious subjects are often far from polite. Followers of the Stalinist-Trotskyist controversy will have observed that an unfriendly note tends to creep into it, and when the *Tablet* and the *Church Times* are having a go at one another the blows are not always above the belt. But for sheer dirtiness of fighting the feud between the inventors of various of the international languages would take a lot of beating."

- 64. Paul Chilton, Orwellian Language and the Media, (London: Pluto Press, 1988), p. 10.
- 65. Quirk, Randolph. "Natural Language and Orwellian Intervention", in Sidney Greenbaum, (ed.) *The English Language Today*, (Oxford: Pergamon, 1985), p. 48-53.
- 66. Bailey, Op. cit., p. 36.
- 67. Hodge and Fowler, Op. cit., p. 20.
- 68. *CEJL*, III, p. 244.
- 69. Paul Chilton, "Orwell's Conception of Language", in Suyterbuyt, Op. cit., p. 103.
- 70. Fowler, The Language of George Orwell, Op. cit., p. 224.
- 71. Ibid., p. 224.
- 72. Hodge and Fowler, Op. cit., p. 9.
- 73. Chilton, "Orwell's Conception of Language", Op. cit., p. 99.



6. CONCLUSIONS: GEORGE ORWELL, PROPHET OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Political correctness became recognised as a phenomenon as such many years after Orwell had died, and yet his name and a number of his ideas have been repeatedly invoked with regard to issues connected with the PC debate. "Orwellian", "thought police", "newspeak", "doublethink", "totalitarian", are some of the epithets employed in the discussion of the virtues or otherwise of PC. Although it is true that these terms have frequently been used in a loose sense to give colour to and to emphasise the strength of an argument, it is understandable that his name has so often been taken in vain on both sides of the debate. Orwell, who continues to be very widely read as a novelist, and whose views on language have almost attained textbook-like credibility in some quarters, was a champion of free speech, and was adamant about the importance of being able to express oneself in freedom, at times going to the extreme of deliberately being provocative in his opinions in order to do so. At the same time he was intrinsically fascinated with language, language both per se, and language as a potential instrument whose use, or more often misuse,

could cause immense harm. These two concepts are central to the whole PC debate, and so it seems that Orwell was fated to be one of the most likely candidates for heroic or demon status, according to how his ideas and writing are interpreted.

The issue of free speech is charged with emotive content, and as has been seen with relation to the speech codes in American universities and in relation to the press, it is brought up time and again in discussion of PC. When the detractors of PC invoke the right of free speech, they argue that the imposition of speech codes limits a fundamental right to say whatever they wish. What is demanded, of course, in the name of free speech, is not the right to say anything or to talk nonsense (this could be a form of "duckspeak" after all), but the right to express one's ideas, however unpalatable they may be to some.

The advocates of PC, on the other hand, view the curtailment of free speech in a totally different light. They understand that to use certain epithets or certain ways of referring to people's race, sexual inclinations or physical attributes, for example, will wound those people's self esteem, demeaning them and hence accentuating their inferior status in society. They believe that in order to contribute to the avoidance of this situation of inequality, society should tend towards the elimination of the use of the wounding terms. Where they regard free speech as threatened is in the mass media which are controlled, for the most part, by groups which are potentially hostile to PC. Consequently, the news reporting of PC incidents is heavily biased against them and they have a much-reduced chance of having their views reported

fairly, still less in a sympathetic light.

In 1946 Orwell discussed several fundamental aspects surrounding the problem of freedom of speech which are brought up in different guises during the discussion of political correctness, in his essay entitled "The Prevention of Literature":

[...] I am not trying to deal with the familiar claim that there is more freedom in totalitarian countries than in democratic ones, but with the much more tenable and dangerous proposition that freedom is undesirable and that intellectual honesty is a form of antisocial selfishness. Although other aspects of the question are usually in the foreground the controversy over freedom of speech and of the press is at the bottom a controversy over the desirability, or otherwise, of telling lies. What is really at issue is the right to report contemporary events truthfully, or as truthfully as is consistent with the ignorance, bias and self-deception from which every observer necessarily suffers. (Emphases added.)¹

From the above it can be seen that Orwell considers that the concept of freedom is being questioned in certain quarters in similar terms to the way it is currently also being questioned. His use of the bald phrase "telling lies" demonstrates his disapproval of the countenancing of such doubts. By "intellectual honesty" we may understand that he is referring to the right to say things as he sees them although, or perhaps particularly because, they are "unpalatable" - not PC- to the prevailing orthodoxy of the moment. Similarly, his stance with regard to what is now known as "viewpoint neutrality" is clear. He believes it to be desirable but considers that it is unattainable since every

reporter will inevitably present issues in such a way that they reflect their conscious or unconscious ideology.

In the PC debate one of the problems has been that defenders of the traditional standpoint have been unwilling to acknowledge that in attacking PC, they too are defending a political position. A frequent accusation levelled against PC has been the claim that "everything is political". Those in favour of the issues championed by PC tend to overtly state their aims, admitting that their defence of certain options and opinions is motivated by their desire for social change, but for a long time their opponents' position has been less straightforward, or perhaps they have merely been prey to the self-deception to which Orwell alludes. This latter explanation, however, does not exonerate the intellectual from blame, since to claim ignorance of the motivating forces behind an opinion essentially weakens the force of that opinion.

In Nincteen Eighty-Four Orwell foresees a society in which free speech is not an issue because there is, in reality, no call perceived for it. Because the State has been largely successful in suppressing any form of creative thought, and because it has suppressed all terms of reference beyond those it chooses to dictate to the people, there are no longer any matters that warrant discussion. Such a state of affairs, as Slater reflects, "inhibits the habit of debate, which lies at the heart of the free society and is kept beating through the lively discussion of different and wide-ranging points of view." It is true that this situation has not been reached with respect to PC, yet the very fact that the word "war" is so frequently applied to the PC debate, or that the "attack" on free speech is so feared, indicates in itself that much discussion on this topic

is, at least, highly fraught.

Throughout the present dissertation the terms and epithets bandied to and fro on both sides of the debate have been deplored, one reason being that verbal excess has obscured the issues and consequently made unemotional discussion of them very difficult. It is unfortunately true, that all-too-often the word "war" is the most appropriate one since the polarization between both sides is now so great, that a civilised exchange of opinions has been rendered virtually impossible, and invective has taken its place. The absence of the habit of debate leads to an unanimated, lifeless society, for it is when ideas are questioned and debated that there still remains vitality. Slater aptly makes this point with respect to Oceania: "Without debate we end up with a state that quite apart from being oppressive and inhibiting free speech, is essentially stagnant, incurious, and especially stultifying to any creative impulse." (Emphasis added.)³

Such understanding of the implications of the lack of discussion has relevance to current educational practices. We have seen how part of the PC debate on American university campuses is concerned with what and how disciplines pertaining to the humanities should be studied. Broadly speaking, positions range from those who support content and approaches which mainly continue in a line established by traditional syllabuses, to those by pro-PC Faculty and students who oppose them, challenging such practice and philosophy. PC advocates instead, propose a radical reappraisal of the content of courses to take into account the circumstances and interests of the students, in particular the members of minority groups. Race, class and gender are seen

as the primary determining factors underlying all aspects of change, including, of course, social change. Since factors of class, race and gender have traditionally affected who gets into what university or college, efforts have been made to redress the imbalance in favour of white middle class males whose access to higher education has overwhelmingly been easier than that of any other groups.

Similarly, with regard to the focus and content of courses, for example, it would be considered more appropriate that a black student study manifestations of their own black heritage, rather than the traditional focus which concentrated on the version, of say, history or literature from the point of view of the white man; or, as a further example, investigation could be undertaken of virtually any topic from a feminist perspective.

In principle there should be no objection to these and similar areas of study, but when they are undertaken to the exclusion of other approaches they become a kind of intellectual straitjacket. If schools and universities allow the terms of inquiry to be limited, if the students are permitted not to look beyond their immediate concerns into the world far removed from their personal background, or back into a past which is also far removed, then I believe that the schools are reinforcing an essential lack of intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness, which paradoxically should be two of their main aims to foster.

This charge can be laid at the door of many current approaches to education. The trend throughout the education system, which I believe is essentially well founded, is for the child to learn from its own environment, thereby gaining confidence in its own ability to understand and evaluate further

experiences. Accordingly, the small child first learns about its own body, its home, then its village or town and the nature of its surroundings, then about its state (in America), or its autonomous region (in Spain), and then presumably about its nation, and subsequently about the rest of the world.

In practice, however, the end of the road never appears to be reached. When is a child or young person considered able to plumb the depths of an alien culture? For the teacher of foreign languages and culture, this is an important question. It seems that the PC position denies the enrichment that comes from making the effort of imagination to learn about and understand standpoints and experiences different from the student's own. PC thinking in general regards and values experience and topics close to what are perceived as group interests, viewing those of other groups with indifference or suspicion.

However, not only PC positions can be accused of this indifference or lack of curiosity, for in the American context, for instance, those who show no desire to learn about the history and circumstances that are part of the culture of other races which constitute an important part of the social fabric of their country, are similarly guilty of it. Orwell, whose concerns were firmly staked on the side of the underdog (in PC terms "disadvantaged minorities"), expressed sentiments about the study of history which are truly in line with much of the philosophy that underwrites political correctness. In "Looking Back on the Spanish War", he wrote the following:

When I think of antiquity, the detail that frightens me is that those hundreds of millions of slaves on whose backs civilization rested generation after generation have left behind them no record whatever. We do not even know their names. In the whole of Greek and Roman history, how many slaves' names are known to you? I can think of two, or possibly three. [...] The rest have gone down in utter silence.⁴

We cannot but conclude that he would have applauded the efforts currently being made to study an "alternative" version of history, such as North American history as perceived by the black slaves; what Orwell emphatically would not have approved of was the intolerance that has sprung up around PC. Because the climate of opinion is now so rarefied and there is mutual suspicion on both sides of the spectrum, neither side is prepared to cede, and both steadfastly resolve to deride and remain ignorant of the other's view, thereby missing out on a portion of the enrichment that genuine inquiry and curiosity produce.

In such a climate of opinion it appears to be difficult to attempt to learn about and understand norms and values which one does not share. Viewed from the outside it would seem that to advocate knowledge of "Western" culture alongside the study of alternative approaches, would be an obvious way of including both the traditional approach and the radical one. Such a two-pronged scrutiny would also have the virtue of exposing the student to contrasting opinions which he or she could be asked to evaluate, weighing up the merits and bad points it contains. However, in practice it is not quite as simple as this, for as can be appreciated from the epithets applied to either side of the debate, scant respect is held for the opposite view. In the absence of respect tolerance is no longer a viable attitude, since respect for the other's

point of view implies understanding that while one might be radically opposed to a certain opinion, nonetheless it should not be dismissed as not worth uttering on moral grounds. PC has an unfortunate tendency to reject the right of different persuasions to express their opinions, echoed by its opponents who similarly reject everything related to PC.

The fact that upholders of one position appear to be reluctant to acknowledge the merits of the opposing stance is compounded by a second reality, namely that students at American universities, for the greater part, reach higher education with a negligible background in the humanities. Consequently, their further education does not consist in building upon a background but rather of laying the foundations for their formation in the humanities. This in turn means that since extensive reading is not widespread, the amount of texts to which the students have access is necessarily limited, and so their courses tend to reflect only one point of view. In the context of a PC frame, however, this is not regarded as problematic since the function of the university shifts -in their view- from one which seeks to discover the foundations and conditions for truth to an attempt to effect social change. In essence, a more egalitarian society is sought, although tolerance does not figure as a major priority either in its pursuit or once it has been achieved.

In present circumstances to discuss racism, for example, in an informed, unemotional and balanced way does not prove to be easy. Whereas the current problems of racism in North America concern African Americans, and also immigrant communities from Central and South America and from Asia, the most prevalent form of racism in Orwell's society was anti-semitism. The

terms in which he referred to this question in "Antisemitism in Britain", which was written in early 1945, are extraordinarily pertinent for our times. The frankness and candour with which he expresses his views, would, I venture, not be easy to emulate today, when the quality of "intellectual honesty" is in shorter supply.

Orwell considers that one of the results brought about by the Nazis' persecution of the Jews in Germany has been the prevention of serious investigation of antisemitism. He refers to a "brief inadequate survey" undertaken by Mass observation a year or two previously, but the findings of any other survey that may have been made have not been revealed. He then goes on to state that at the same time "there has been conscious suppression, by all thoughtful people, of anything likely to wound Jewish susceptibilities," supporting his case with the following illustration:

After 1934 the 'Jew joke' disappeared as though by magic from postcards, periodicals and the music-hall stage, and to put an unsympathetic Jewish character into a novel or short story came to be regarded as antisemitism. On the Palestine issue, too, it was de rigueur among enlightened people to accept the Jewish case as proved and avoid examining the claims of the Arabs - a decision which might be correct on its own merits, but which was adopted primarily because the Jews were in trouble and it was felt that one must not criticize them. (Emphasis added.)⁵

It is not stretching so oint to state here that if one replaces 'Jew' with 'Black', the circumstances that Orwell describes are almost identical to the prevailing situation in present-day Britain and America. Since opinions and positions are

so polarised, it is becoming increasingly difficult to steer a middle course. A contemporary analogy with Orwell's example might be found in Northern Ireland. In this society, where moderate attitudes are not the rule, one would need to exercise caution before expressing views pointing to the possible advantages that union with the Republic of Ireland might bring, among members of the Protestant community. Similarly, if one were among the Catholic community, one would hesitate to elaborate upon possible benefits that the British might have effected there. The reason is that in both of these communities these opinions could be regarded as "incorrect", and by effectively violating a protocol, the merits or not of what one is advocating are disregarded. Instead, one's character becomes the object of suspicion, for one is voicing opinions that are perceived to be unacceptable.

A similar situation exists with regard to political correctness. If a woman states that men are not necessarily to blame for all women's problems, and that indeed many women may be directly responsible for their own circumstances in life, she is likely to be branded as little less than a traitor to the cause by feminists, particularly if these views are expressed in the company of men. Orthodoxy seeks to require all women to adhere to a common interpretation of the reasons for women's inferior status in society. Hence, in analogous circumstances, a person who wishes to be considered "progressive" will be careful not to state an opinion which could be interpreted as not PC since one expresses views that can be construed as "reactionary" at one's peril in PC circles. In reality, unless one wishes to provoke an argument one exercises a form of self-censorship.

Moreover, if one does not belong to a minority group one is in effect barred from the right to effect criticism of that group unless one is prepared to incur unpleasant consequences such as being labelled a sexist, racist or homophobic. The fact is, that a gay group can call itself *Queer Nation*, but that if a heterosexual uses the word "queer", this is perceived as a display of homophobia. Similarly, racism cannot adequately be studied by white people since because they are not the object of racist attacks it is considered that they cannot fully understand what it means to be black and consequently discriminated against. This, and other examples which can be extended to all minority groups, demonstrates how the PC approach to learning and research rejects the idea of detached, independent inquiry, favouring an approach which values personal experience above independence and also above what Orwell terms "intellectual honesty."

Orwell attributes to Hitler's oppression of the Jews, a situation "in which the press was in effect censored in favour of the Jews while in private antisemitism was on the up-grade, even, to some extent, among sensitive and intelligent people." This last observation reminds us that while PC terms may regulate public utterances on certain questions, there is no guarantee that these will influence private thoughts and opinions. Orwell in fact is suggesting here that because it is considered unkind or in bad taste to speak ill of Jews (revealed in the practice of a form of overt as well as self-censorship), it does not necessarily dispose the speakers any more favourably towards Jews and may actually have precisely the opposite effect. In the case of PC it is evident that although the underlying philosophy is based on the desire to achieve a

more equal society, the way in which its claims are presented has tended to alienate many who in theory would be favourably disposed towards their conception of society.

Orwell subsequently turns his attention to the place of antisemitism in English literature, declaring that a perceptible antisemitic strain has existed in English literature from Chaucer onwards. He can readily bring to mind passages "which if written now would be stigmatized as antisemitism, in the works of Shakespeare, Smollett, Thackeray, Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley and various others." This is a highly significant detail with regard to our approach to literature, for Orwell is, of course, not prepared to disallow writers simply because they represent ideologies or opinions which he does not share. He believes Shakespeare to be reactionary, even, as he says, for the standards of Elizabethan England, and had little or nothing in common ideologically with Eliot whom he regarded as a reactionary Anglo-Catholic royalist,7 none of which marred his admiration for and enjoyment of their writing.

Unfortunately PC does not subscribe to the separation of social values from aesthetic ones: writers are favoured because they espouse causes and ideologies considered "socially instructive" for the students, and those whose views or political tendencies do not echo PC opinions are rejected. Social considerations override all others.

Orwell is also aware of a new intolerance in the England of the 1930s and 1940s of any criticism of Jews. He believes that "however little the average intellectual may have agreed with the opinions of Belloc and

Chesterton, he did not acutely disapprove of them." We may contrast this situation with the circumstances as they now stand, both these writers commonly being castigated as arch-reactionaries by advocates of PC (apart from obviously belonging to the ranks of DWEMs), and see the circumstances Orwell describes as current in his day reflected in present-day practices:

Chesterton's endless tirades against Jews, which he thrust into stories and essays upon the flimsiest of pretexts, never got him into trouble - indeed Chesterton was among the most generally respected figures in English literary life. Anyone who wrote in that strain *now* would bring down a storm of abuse upon himself, or more probably would find it impossible to get his writings published.⁸

This last circumstance would probably not apply today as the severe shortage of paper of the second World War was no doubt part of the cause then.

However, it is abundantly clear that in this article Orwell is identifying some of the very same charges that are made against the more radical elements advocating politically correct readings and interpretations of literature.

Moreover, he equates antisemitism with a form of nationalism, which he sees as particularly widespread, and identifies and gives expression to his views on what we have now come to know as positive discrimination:

A Jew, for example, would not be antisemitic: but then many Zionist Jews seem to me to be merely antisemites turned upside-down, just as many Indians and Negroes display the normal colour prejudices in an inverted form. The point is that something, some psychological vitamin, is lacking in modern

civilization, and as a result we are all more or less subject to this lunacy of believing that whole races or nations are mysteriously good or mysteriously evil. I defy any modern intellectual to look closely and honestly into his own mind without coming upon nationalistic loyalties and hatreds of one kind or another.⁹

Naturally, in Orwell's day, nationalism could be directly attributed as one of the inspirations for the perpetration of the most appalling atrocities, of which the most noteworthy were those committed in the name of genetic purity. However, in our times, leaving aside the recent examples of ethnic cleansing, radical multiculturalism in the United States does not preach the equality of races but rather seeks to invert the prevailing superiority of the white man, asserting the supremacy of the black race over all others. This was seen in the sixties with the slogan "black is beautiful", and its equivalent in the 1990s is the rewriting of history which now demonstrates that human beings are descended from a black "Adam and Eve", and consequently, all races that are not black are manifestations of degeneration. Orwell's prophetic vision of the rewriting of history in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is in the process of becoming reality in our times, thanks to political correctness.

Orwell rejected an interpretation of history or literature which was not sensitive to the circumstances in which the events or the creation scrutinised took place. For him there would be no place for a reading of *The Merchant of Venice*, say, as simply a manifestation of anti-semitism, or of *Tess of the d'Urbevilles* as yet another illustration of date rape. He defended T. S. Eliot against a charge of antisemitism made by Fyvel, in the following terms:

It is nonsense what Fyvel said about Eliot being antisemitic. Of course you can find what would now be called antisemitic remarks in his early works, but who didn't say such things at that time? One has to draw a distinction between what was said before and what after 1934. Of course all these nationalistic prejudices are ridiculous, but disliking Jews isn't intrinsically worse than disliking Negroes or Americans or any other block of people. In the early twenties, Eliot's antisemitic remarks were about on a par with the automatic sneer one casts at Anglo-Indian colonels in boarding houses. On the other hand if they had been written after the persecutions began they would have meant something quite different. 10

PC fails to take into account Orwell's insight, and bases its historical and literary judgements in a way I believe to be either deeply flawed, or demagogic, or both. It would not be politically correct to apply Orwell's reasoning, and consequently Socrates could be equally censured for keeping slaves as the plantation owners in the Southern States before the American Civil War. There seems to me to be a basic lack of discernment and a disturbing abdication of the mind in a reading which overlooks any intrinsic difference between these two examples, or hundreds more which a PC interpretation would disregard.

While applying rigid social criteria to its interpretation of the humanities, PC, on the other hand, rejects the concept of objective truth, which is replaced by orthodoxy. Totalitarianism is a twentieth-century political creation and the form of orthodoxy which Orwell attacked in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In this fictional world the people of Oceania blindly accept the

orthodoxies imposed by the regime, and have consequently lost their freedom.

PC is our fin de siècle orthodoxy, in which we are not presented with the debasement of a language -Newspeak- through the creation of a radically reduced offshoot, but which is conversely an orthodoxy which imposes a form of self-censorship of language, and ultimately of thought.

Orwell was aware of certain totalitarian trends in his society which he feared, and these trends have certain parallels in the way PC has ceased to engender rational debate and has favoured insult and bigotry. He regarded intellectuals above all others as being particularly susceptible to the totalitarian lure. Although in Nineteen Eighty-Four, Orwell's vision is of a totalitarian system of government, which thankfully has not been fulfilled, it is nonetheless the impression that PC seeks to impose a certain point of view and practice that so many find objectionable. Political correctness is seen as dictating to people what they can and cannot do, what they should or should not think, and this is one of the aspects of PC that most alienates those who are not whole-heartedly committed to the cause. If political correctness were working towards encouraging people to behave better towards minorities, without the underlying coercion which goes with it, public reaction, as has already been pointed out, would doubtless be more favourably disposed towards the principles to which it adheres and the action it proposes.

Advocates of PC claim they have been forced to adopt the stance they have by the violent opposition of the upholders of contrary views. There is little doubt that the strata of society which have traditionally been in positions of power feel -with reason- that their hegemony is being challenged by the

advent of new ways of looking at the world around us and by the questioning of the historical conditioning to which we have all been exposed. Their anger and bewilderment are compounded by the fact that they are little used to having the foundations of their beliefs seriously challenged in this way. It is, I believe, important to take stock of one's own claims and convictions and to question and reappraise one's motives in subscribing to them.

The establishment is not prepared to relinquish its favoured position in society and fights against any prospect which threatens it with a loss of power. It therefore views PC as the enemy to be overcome. If the opponents of PC were willing to be more open-minded about the PC version of history and present-day society and recognise the truth of some of its arguments, they might conceivably adopt a more conciliatory attitude and attempt to redress some of the more flagrant examples of inequality which abound in the post-capitalist world. We would thus be brought nearer to the kind of society which Orwell dreamt of, a society in which both freedom and equality could co-exist. However, this too presupposes a willingness on the part of the establishment to reflect honestly and sincerely upon its own practices and motivations, which at present it shows no sign of being prepared to attempt. It adopts an offensive strategy which currently consists of ridiculing and denigrating anything that smacks of PC.

In common with most writers of dystopian fiction Orwell's dreams were utopian. He saw politics as the means through which to achieve the just society for which he yearned, yet at the same time regarding politics, as he stated in "Politics and the English Language", as "a mass of lies, evasions,

folly, hatred and schizophrenia."

In the United States of our time there is no scope for political action to achieve radical social change, since the influence of those small left-wing parties that exist is negligible. Furthermore, the university and college campus in the United States has replaced the political arena for the discussion of the great issues of the day. Thus political correctness fills the role of the instrument of social change, and is, similarly, a manifestation of utopian idealism.

Critics have variously seen Nineteen Eighty-Four as pronouncing the death sentence on the Enlightenment, or the end of the Renaissance. Thomas More is a quintessential figure of the Renaissance, just as Rousseau is a central figure for the Enlightenment, both of whom are crucial to the development of the utopian ideal. The Enlightenment believed that the advancement of science and technological innovation would bring with them the dramatic alleviation of man's suffering. Nineteenth century knowledge of science and technological advances seemed to promise utopia, while politically, utopia appeared to be represented by the ideals of the American constitution on the one hand, and later by the political system of a people's democracy which finally came to fruition with communism in Russia. During Orwell's lifetime disenchantment with both these putative utopian societies grew progressively greater, although there were still outposts of hope whose advocates refused to acknowledge the evidence before them. The deterioration of the political system in the countries of Eastern Europe signalled the decline of the remaining vestiges of worn out political ideals, while technology ultimately turned upon its creators, revealing its potential destructiveness in 1986 in Chernobyl.

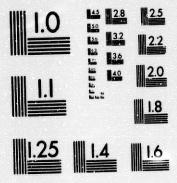
On the eve of the twenty-first century, utopian ideals are represented by political correctness to bring about a fairer society, together with faith in the power of ecology to reverse, or at least to counteract, the damage inflicted on our planet by the arrogance of man. PC has undoubtedly succeeded in awakening a greater sensitivity to the special needs and rights that should be accorded to groups such as the handicapped, or racial minorities, and in alerting society to the discrimination to which minority groups are often subjected. This success should not be denied to them. However, once again it should be stressed that the coercive spirit perceived works against a more general recognition and acceptance of the validity of many PC causes. Coercion, as Orwell believed, does not consist simply of brutally forcing someone to do one's will. The form of emotional blackmail he illustrates in the case of the mother, who conditions her ch." d's behaviour by showing it how its transgressions will make her suffer, is a more subtle but no less powerful form of domination.

One of the spheres in which PC is most strikingly present is in the field of language, where the attack on what are seen to be euphemisms and the introduction of PC neologisms attract general comment, part of it unfounded. Orwell's preoccupation with the English language led him to express many insights about the use of euphemism which have been borne out during several decades since his death. He wrote extensively about euphemisms, and in his characteristically forthright manner, derided their abuse. The use of euphemisms enables us to avoid certain terms which refer to facts and ideas which cause us embarrassment or distress. In more recent times we have seen

the recourse to euphemisms on the part of official and administrative offices, and this practice, as has been noted, has been particularly prevalent in times of war. However, the fundamental difference between the use of the euphemism "pass away" for "die", and "collateral damage" for "civilian deaths", is that the latter is used to cover up something that is understood to be morally unacceptable, or at the very least, difficult to defend. In the first case, it is a question of refinement, however false one may consider it to be in certain contexts, but in the second the intention is not to protect the hearer from something unpleasant, but to protect the speaker.

In practical terms, the essential difference between the Pentagon using the term "collateral damage", however, and the advocation of the use of the term "African American" is that a perception of an element of coercion exists in the latter case. To say that "collateral damage" is the equivalent on the Right of the PC use of whatever term we care to choose, is therefore not exact. For while a government may choose to use a certain term in order to soften the full extent of the horror of what is being described, PC, on the other hand, seeks to impose a specific terminology, applicable everywhere, always, and for all. And the problem here is that however well-intentioned the aims may be, however they seek to achieve through their use a more equal and hence a better society, the means by which they are trying to accomplish these laudable aims are coercive; besides, the definition of better and worse should be considered open to discussion.

When PC becomes prescriptivist about the language which should or should not be used, it hits an emotional fibre and provokes a reaction far in



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS STANDARD REFERENCE MATERIAL 1010a (ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2) the recourse to euphemisms on the part of official and administrative offices, and this practice, as has been noted, has been particularly prevalent in times of war. However, the fundamental difference between the use of the euphemism "pass away" for "die", and "collateral damage" for "civilian deaths", is that the latter is used to cover up something that is understood to be morally unacceptable, or at the very least, difficult to defend. In the first case, it is a question of refinement, however false one may consider it to be in certain contexts, but in the second the intention is not to protect the hearer from something unpleasant, but to protect the speaker.

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When PC becomes prescriptivist about the language which should or should not be used, it hits an emotional fibre and provokes a reaction far in excess of its other manifestations. This is in part because language is seen as a major factor in establishing our social identity, our linguistic performance contributing both to the creation and recreation of our social structure. Prescriptivist ordinances are seen as an attempt to tamper with that identity and structure and are consequently viewed as an attack upon them. This is even more true of English-speaking countries, which do not have a tradition of language Academies such as those that exist for French and Spanish, for example, one of whose functions is to explicitly sanction "correct" usage.

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that in connection with PC Orwell's name is taken in vain. Nowhere is this more so than with the language aspect of PC, where the word "Newspeak" repeatedly occurs, usually in reference to outrage at a neologism. In the great majority of cases this recourse to the word "Newspeak" belies a fundamental misreading and misunderstanding of Orwell's purpose in the creation of Newspeak, and of its function in the novel. Newspeak does not simply mean new words, but refers to the creation of a metalanguage, which is a symbol for the manipulation of language, in order to achieve the base aims of a totalitarian regime. However, to apply Newspeak as an epithet to deride what some see as absurd circumlocutions, is to grossly distort or, at least, underestimate Orwell's purpose.

Orwell is in fact the unwitting victim of his own success, since because so many people have read *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the phenomenon of Newspeak is almost universally recognised and so is used as a blanket denigration of these new terms. Furthermore, since Orwell and his linguistic creation are invoked

by the opponents of PC, its defenders also attack Orwell, since he is erected as a kind of emblem of the crusade for linguistic purity. Accordingly, I consider that an opportunistic use of the name and ideas of Orwell is made on both sides of the PC debate.

Orwell, in the title of this dissertation is considered a prophet of political correctness. Superficially, the language of his artistic creation bears some similarities to certain aspects of the influence PC has come to bear on our use of language. Moreover, Orwell was concerned with what he saw as the degradation of the English language, a worry which is shared by many today. However, Orwell's greatest prescience, I believe, is that he foresaw a totalitarian trend in his society and envisioned the use of language as a tool to perpetuate the totalitarian mentality. While we do not live in the totalitarianism of the boot in the face, there is, however, a great pressure to conform to group norms, exercised through the use of groupthink. Identity politics, which functions in defense of the specific group considers that expressions of dissent should not be aired beyond the confines of the group, which further increases the impetus towards orthodoxy. PC accentuates this pressure by making the way we speak determine how we are considered in society. Although this has always been so, to a certain extent, the parameters introduced by PC prescription make the pressure much more widespread. Because the drive to conform is so strong, dissent is silenced, and, as has been noted, the absence of debate impoverishes the expression of freedom. Orwell had the foresight to perceive the danger of the paradox of language used to control language in order to control thought.

Were Orwell alive today his name would not be so readily taken in vain for he would be here to lucidly refute the arguments in which he is invoked. The advocates of PC may sneer at "Orwellian linguistic naivety", while its detractors use "Newspeak" in many spurious ways to mean any new coinage, disregarding the satirical purpose of Newspeak. Orwell was not saying that such a language was going to be invented, but that language would be used to further totalitarian purposes. In our times language is being used in the struggle to assert the new orthodoxy in which it is wielded as a weapon.

The present dissertation has linked the phenomenon known as political correctness with certain aspects of the work and ideas of George Orwell in an attempt to show how this author's concerns expressed through his writing in the 1940s can still be of use for us today as a warning about some problematical trends in our contemporary society. PC is an end of century form of orthodoxy in a century which has exalted the concept of freedom but which has also witnessed the most brutal and efficient attacks on freedom through totalitarian regimes of varying hues in different parts of the globe. Orwell, who insisted on the necessity of equality and freedom, was disturbed at the abdication of the right to freedom which he recognised in many intellectuals of his time. He moreover diagnosed the potential for ill that misuse of language could entail.

In the present day there are similar signs which threaten our freedom, many of which are detected and denounced by voices raised in protest. None,

however, has the strength or the directness which Orwell achieved, and it would be difficult to be as influential as he has proved to be. The respect which his universally acknowledged integrity awakened, even in his enemies, coupled with his characteristic style of writing, apparently so effortless and straightforward, made him an powerful defender of the causes he championed.

PC language is broadly seen as euphemistic. In the previous pages we have shown that PC language is broadly seen as euphemistic. Since euphemisms are associated with enhancement or diminishing of self-esteem, their linguistic relation to minority groups has been analysed as an integral part of PC aims.

Both positive and negative euphemisms may be used consciously or unconsciously, and in the former case they may constitute a form of code. The euphemisms coined by organisations such as the FBI and the CIA became notorious in the United States and have been termed "dishonest euphemisms" since their aim was to deceive. Their use is not restricted to government offices, however, since they are a common feature of the language of advertising. Euphemisation follows a parallel course to the monetary rules laid down by the so-called Gresham's Law, based upon two observations: bad use drives out good -the word gay originally meant lively or enjoyable, but its current meaning of homosexual has effectively made the original meanings out of date - and euphemisation becomes tainted by association with the underlying "bad" meaning.

The term political correctness or PC was coined by left-wing militants during the 1970s, although the linguistic prescriptivism with which it is

urging the use of less dysphemistic terms to refer to women. Political correctness is the current post-Marxist leftist orthodoxy, whose importance began to take shape on American college and university campuses during the mid to late 1980s. PC asserts that no cultural messages are free of ideology, assumptions of power relationships or reinforcement of orthodoxies, and, echoing the theories of deconstruction and Foucault notably, that all these are unwittingly expressed through choice of language. PC specifically refutes the possibility of a neutral standpoint, believing that it is unrealistic to understand that any linguistic choices are inconsequential.

In modern American society there is minimal scope for leftist political action which is currently carried out on university and college campuses. Here, the application of PC ideas has been found in the promotion of racial and sexual equality, and, chiefly in the Arts and Humanities faculties, in the attempt to open up the literary canon to women and non-white writers, and to reformulate what perspectives of history are valued and how it is taught. The introduction on various campuses of speech codes designed to eliminate incidences of hate speech signalled the beginning of generalised attention to PC on the part of the mass media, the majority of which have remained frankly hostile to it, ridiculing its more extreme manifestations, and likening it to a modern form of witch hunting. Various books written about the PC debate have achieved best seller status, tending, however, to stress the more extreme manifestations of PC, (as were described in the corresponding sections of 2.iii.), and not stating the case completely fairly. Internationally, it is its

nominalist "purification" of language which has attracted the most attention.

Leaving aside the more obvious absurdities in the use of PC in certain situations, I find its weakest aspect to be an essential contradiction in its application, which strives to enforce a restrictive concept of tolerance and prescribe behaviour. Conversely, I believe its strength to lie in its challenge to people's hitherto unthinking use of words which has led to heightened linguistic awareness. Discussion of the underlying linguistic hypotheses is centred on the connection between language, thought and reality, and particularly with respect to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis on the influence of language on behaviour. The modern tendency is not to subscribe to a strong form of the Whorsian hypothesis, but rather to favour a more or less weak version which considers that under certain circumstances people's behaviour will tend to be guided by the linguistic categories of the languages they speak. The theory of Speech Acts, first formulated by Austin, takes into account the different effects and consequences, whether intended or unintended, that an utterance may produce upon the hearer. Similarly, it is seen that there always exists a point of view in any verbal representation and that in consequence realism in language matters is unattainable. This has a significant bearing upon the interpretation of intent with regard to speech codes.

Postmodernism attempts to challenge certain traditional assumptions about the nature of truth, objectivity, rationality, reality and intellectual quality. Categories of aesthetic and moral value are contested and are not considered as identical categories since they are socially and historically contingent. This reappraisal leads to a review and re-evaluation of the texts taught. The very

purpose of education is questioned, and further education is no longer regarded as a training ground for elites, but as something that should be open to all, since rejection on elitist grounds injures the self-esteem of those who are perceived as not having made the grade. Traditionally, incoming students are chosen according to their student records and their performance in the SAT test, but the idea of merit is judged to be a social construct. Therefore, the existence of objective measures and objective tests is contested.

In order to redress some of the disadvantages suffered principally by black students, some universities implement a quota system which is known as affirmative action or alternatively affirmative discrimination. Since these two terms come to acquire more dysphemistic than euphemistic connotations, they are both subsequently replaced by the term diversity. The radical changes proposed for the university system are violently opposed by the media which begins to portray the campuses as hotbeds of radical action in the hands of militant leftists. It is argued that the proposed changes will produce a lowering of standards to which the counterargument alleges a general anti-intellectualism present in American life whose bias against the Academy has been exacerbated during the presidencies of Reagan and Bush. PC is identified with the left, but both sides display a similar degree of intolerance and their viewpoints are seen as irreconcilable.

Invocation of the First Amendment is most found on the "right", which otherwise appears to show little interest in free speech issues. Various colleges and universities during the late eighties are the scene of incidents of racial hatred, prompting the elaboration of Speech Codes whose aim is to regulate

speech which may be considered demeaning. The University of Michigan's Speech Code is copied by other universities, amongst them Tufts, Brown, Penn State and California. The Michigan Speech Code is challenged in the courts through a test case known as "Doe v. University of Michigan" in which Doe contends that his classes at the university could be open to the charge of sexism according to a strict interpretation of the Speech Code. Doe's claim is upheld, the Speech Code being declared as interfering with a free and unfettered interplay of competing views, essential to the institution's educational mission.

The issue of viewpoint neutrality which PC denies, central to the PC debate, turns against the elaboration of speech codes as it is argued that rules against hate speech are not viewpoint neutral. Liberals in America consequently are faced with a dilemma: while recognising that hate speech harms minorities, they reject speech regulations because they sweep too broadly.

Postmodernism, and by extension PC, also advocates the revision of the literary canon, seen as the domain of Dead White European Males (DWEMs). The concept of intersubjective standards by which the quality of literary and artistic works can be judged, is similarly questioned, as are the tenets of the Western Rationalistic Tradition whose study had commonly been supposed to not only confer knowledge of the subjects themselves, but also to provide insights which could be applied to the world beyond them. The ideal of excellence is considered elitist since it implies viewing some manifestations of culture as superior to others. All value is radically contingent and not a fixed attribute, an inherent quality or an objective property of things but the effect

of multiple, continuously changing and continuously interacting variables.

Literature Departments begin to lose this name and become Cultural Studies,
the Humanities being studied under various guises such as "oppression studies",
or "feminist critique".

The ensuing uproar is again echoed and fanned by the media which delights in the more absurd and extreme aspects of this radical approach, branding the students as "cultural illiterates" and accusing the radical Faculty of indoctrinating them. Intellectuals who join the fray include John Searle who attempts to calm the heat of the debate, declaring that poststructuralist theory is "no more than silly", and that books such as Kimball's best seller serve to obscure the true extent of the silliness and spread alarm that tradition is being undermined in the University. In 1994, Harold Bloom, out of sadness and dismay at the turn of events in Literature Departments throughout the country, is moved to write a five-hundred-page book entitled *The Western Canon*, in which he dubs the canon revisionists "the School of Resentment" and states that they oppose aesthetic considerations to the class struggle. His book also becomes a best seller, demonstrating the interest which the PC debate has generated, and, I feel, lending quality to the debate led through the publication of books, most of which are opportunistic.

The polarisation of opinions on PC issues makes the middle road virtually unfeasible. What has been termed the "shallow diversity" approach is rejected by advocates of PC as not paying enough attention to the fate of marginalized groups within western society. Minority group issues range from feminists' concerns such as date rape, eradication of sexist usage and women's

"empowerment", to the drive towards a multiculturalist society. Feminism is undoubtedly the most influential force among the ranks of minority groups, which detractors often equate with the so-called "victim culture". This is characterised by an attitude which stresses the role of the victim who is regarded as unable to defend him or herself, the *subjective* being valued above all other considerations in affirmative action. It is sometimes believed to be a form of "reparation" of past misdeeds and leads to reverse discrimination which highlights those aspects that emphasise difference.

Mainstream thought in America sees this as undemocratic since the interests of the minority become more important than those of the majority, minority groups seeking equal rights with the majority culture. Furthermore, the mass media drastically simplify all PC issues in order that they be more easily digestible for the general public, thereby making the issues appear to be clear-cut cases of right or wrong, reflecting no nuances, and also exaggerating the news which will sell well. However, in the United States, at least, there still remains a perception that neutral, balanced reporting is possible and indeed sometimes achieved. A fruitful line of future research could be the analysis of the rhetoric of the media with regard to PC.

Orwell, an experienced columnist, was convinced that a writer's stance is inevitably influenced by his or her political beliefs, believing moreover, that intellectual detachment is only possible in times when society is stable and feels secure. The motivating force behind all that he wrote, according to his own analysis, invariably stemmed from a feeling of injustice. However, in contrast to political correctness, he lamented it if through the political bias a text suffers

aesthetically, and also deplored inflated bombastic linguistic style, a feature nowadays of PC texts. Orwell laboured to achieve a writing style of clarity, a contrivance which has been likened to a window pane. He campaigned through his journalism and essays for a purer English language, free from dead metaphors, jargon and what he called sloppy language, which would express things clearly and as they are, singling out many words which are used dishonestly such as class, fascist, totalitarian, democracy, reactionary, bourgeois, equality and progressive, whose intrinsic meanings are twisted to serve the spurious intentions of the user.

I detect a defensive element in some professional linguists' criticism of Orwell's linguistic naivety, for his influence on the general public's perception of what "good" language is, has been enormous. He was not interested in theories but in the social repercussions brought about by practice. Similarly, I do not believe that he was essentially anti-intellectual but what he did attack was the justification of the unjustifiable by intellectuals; in his day, their defence of totalitarian practice, which I believe can be paralleled in the lack of disinterested, balanced criticism of the freedom-inhibiting aspects of PC on the part of present-day intellectuals. Orwell believed that the control of the mind sought in totalitarian systems dictates what *not* to think and what *shall* be thought, thereby controlling the individual's intellectual and emotional life and hence setting up a code of conduct. With the introduction of speech codes I regard the analogy to pertain since, when non-PC terms are eliminated, it is either due to outside imposition, or, if voluntarily adopted, "acceptable" thoughts will ensue.

The prophetic elements of Orwell's message are frequently played down, alleging that he was inclined to overreact, and claiming that he became too involved with the topics that concerned him. Surprisingly, for the rewriting of history is based on totalitarian practice, this criticism is also levelled at this aspect of his thought. The problem of shifting truths, crystallised in Orwell's day in the abrupt about turn of communists to keep pace with Stalin's changing alliances, was given fictional form in Nineteen Eighty-Four. He was concerned about the idea that history could be "created" rather than learned; the current emphasis on historicism and subjectivity is tending to prove Orwell's fears not to be simply the product of an over-fertile imagination. The feminist and other rewritings of history are in effect obscuring the reality of past ages and their perceptions, establishing an altered perspective and set of sensibilities in the present.

In the novel's Oceania, the dictates of the Inner Party lead to a form of schizophrenic thought, which is paralleled in what I see as the necessary abdication of common sense required in order to accept all PC doctrine. Common sense is decried by theorists, be they the political theorists who defended the undefendable in Orwell's day or the theorists of all the "isms" connected with PC. Over-rigid adherence to theories may similarly block common sense and in the case of the protagonist Winston Smith, his refusal to renounce his thoughts and his yearning for the truth mark him out as doomed, for the Party needs unthinking people.

I believe that Eric Blair/George Orwell would have been broadly in favour of many of the ideas behind PC as he was radically opposed to any

form of injustice. However, he would not have been prepared to compromise his aesthetic instincts to further PC, and would have been a sharp critic of the many absurdities and contradictions it produces, both linguistically and in its application. For this, he no doubt would have been criticised by both sides of the debate; that was what happened to him throughout his life, after all. Orwell feared in his society the devaluation of intellectual honesty, which is similarly denied on both sides of the PC debate, as has been seen. Whole-hearted supporters of PC are encouraged if they subscribe to its orthodoxy; detractors may be branded as reactionaries, homophobics, racists or sexists if they step out of line. Orwell saw this as a totalitarian tendency, and the satirical aspects of his last novel, compounded with the fact that he purposely made its setting England, remind us that the totalitarian mentality is not necessarily accompanied by goose-stepping or secret police squads.

The novel's linguistic creations of Newspeak and Duckspeak have important links with the metalanguage of political correctness, as we have shown in chapters 4 and 5. Euphemism, one of the most important traits of Newspeak, has a crucial place in PC language, while the names of the Ministries in Oceania deliberately deflect attention away from their real functions. Newspeak is envisaged by the Inner Party as the ultimate step in the eradication of the thinking person.

Orwell's anti-utopian fiction owes much to his admiration of Gulliver's Travels in which he perceived that one of the aims of totalitarianism was to make people less conscious. Orwell himself had utopian ideals, chiefly seen in his desire for a society of freedom and equality which he came to believe

could only be achieved through democratic socialism. Although he was essentially a loner, his experience in the Spanish Civil War was crucial. Here he gave himself whole-heartedly to the cause of overcoming fascism, only to find in May 1937 that the revolutionary spirit which so impressed him in the Barcelona of the previous January had been totally subverted. I believe that his feeling of a fundamental betrayal brought on by this experience made him never again willing or able to totally espouse any cause.

Accordingly, his honesty was his most important contribution towards the creation of a fairer society, and his analysis of his society was undertaken in this spirit. He knew that by not accepting the orthodoxies of his day he was open to attack on all sides, but considered that what he said, needed saying. Orwell was anti-intellectual only in so much that he did not aspire to always be "right" and to seek to attain the truth through scholarship and checking of facts. He sought to make people think, to reappraise their circumstances, and in order to achieve this, he was frequently provocative. At other times he was wrong, but not as often as his detractors insist.

I believe that we would do well to reconsider Orwell's warnings about society and not let ourselves be led astray by those who regard him as a crank. Orwell was the voice of the child in Anderson's *The Emperor's New Clothes*, but unlike the child who spoke in ignorance of the effect of his words, Orwell was fully aware of the provocativeness of many of his opinions. He was willing to speak plainly and urge us to seek the truth about sensitive and difficult matters which we generally find it more comfortable to ignore. It is time PC found this kind of appraisal.

NOTES

- 1. CEJL, IV, p. 83.
- 2: Slater, Op. cit., p. 208.
- 3. Op. cit. p. 208.
- 4. CEJL, II, p. 298.
- 5. *CEJL*, III, p. 382.
- 6. Op. cit., p. 383.
- 7. CEJL, II, p. 335.
- 8. *CEJL.*, III, p. 385.
- 9. Op. cit., p. 387-388.
- 10. CEJL, IV, p. 509.
- 11. Op. cit., p. 167.

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De conformidad con lo establecido en la Normativa de Doctorado de la Universidad de Granada, se adjunta a continuación un resumen en español de las conclusiones de esta tesis.

La presente Tesis une el fenómeno conocido como "political correctness" (corrección política o CP), con ciertos aspectos de la obra y el pensamiento de George Orwell para demostrar de qué manera las preocupaciones del autor expresadas a través de su obra escrita durante la década de los cuarenta, pueden ser de utilidad para nosotros, como advertencia sobre algunos temas problemáticos de nuestra sociedad actual. La CP es una ortodoxia de fin de siglo enmarcada en una época que precisamente ha exaltado el concepto de libertad, pero que a la vez ha sido testigo de los ataques más brutales y eficientes a la libertad a través de regímenes totalitarios de distintos colores y en diferentes lugares del globo.

Orwell insistía en la necesidad de la igualdad junto con la libertad, y le preocupaba la abdicación del derecho a la libertad, rasgo que detectaba entre muchos intelectuales contemporáneos suyos. Asimismo exploró el potencial para el mal que podía entrañar el mal uso del lenguaje.

En nuestro mundo de hoy en día existen signos parecidos que amenazan nuestra libertad, muchos de los cuales se detectan y son denunciados por voces que se alzan en protesta. No existe ninguna voz, sin embargo, con la potencia o la inmediatez alcanzadas por Orwell, y sería difícil ejercer ahora la influencia que él logró tener. El respeto universalmente reconocido por su integridad, incluso entre sus enemigos, unido con su estilo literario característico, conseguido aparentemente sin esfuerzo, le convirtió en un poderoso defensor de las causas que secundaba.

El lenguaje políticamente correcto se considera como eufemista. Los eufemismos sirven específicamente para disminuir las connotaciones negativas de palabras cuyo contenido es tabú, mientras que los disfemismos, por otra parte, refuerzan deliberadamente las connotaciones negativas. Los eufemismos negativos las disminuyen, buscando minimizar la ofensa, y, por consiguiente son de naturaleza defensiva, mientras que los eufemismos positivos, al contrario, tienen el efecto de reforzar dichas características. Los títulos profesionales se prestan muy especialmente a la eufemizacion positiva puesto que aumentan la autoestima. El aumento de la autoestima de los grupos minoritarios forma parte integral de los propósitos de la CP.

La eufemización sigue un trayecto paralelo al de las leyes monetarias establecidas según la ley de Gresham, basada en dos observaciones principales: el uso "malo" reemplaza el "bueno" -la palabra gay originalmente significaba "alegre", pero su uso actual de "homosexual" ha relegado su significado original al desuso- y la eufemización llega a ser contaminada por asociación con el significado "malo" subyacente.

El término "political correctness" o PC fue acuñado por militantes de izquierda durante la década de los setenta, aunque el prescriptivismo lingüístico con el que se identifica se remonta a finales de la década precedente cuando grupos feministas abogaban por el uso de términos menos disfemísticos referentes a las mujeres. La corrección política es la actual ortodoxia pos-marxista de la izquierda, cuya importancia empezó a tomar cuerpo en los campus universitarios de Norte América a mediados y finales de los ochenta. La CP afirma que ningún mensaje cultural es libre de ideología, suposiciones de relaciones de poder o refuerzo de ortodoxias y, haciéndose eco de las teorías del desconstructivismo, y principalmente de las de Foucault, afirma también que todas ellas se expresan inconscientemente a través de la elección lingüística. La CP rechaza específicamente la posibilidad del punto de vista neutral, entendiendo que es irrealista la creencia que cualquier elección lingüística no tiene consecuencias.

En la sociedad norteamericana moderna los cauces de acción política de izquierda son mínimas y por lo tanto dicha acción tiende a realizarse en los campus universitarios. Aquí, la puesta en práctica de las ideas PC se ha visto en la promoción de la igualdad racial y sexual y, principalmente en las Facultades de Letras y Humanidades, en el intento de abrir el canon literario para admitir en él a escritores femeninos y de razas distintas de la blanca. En la reformulación de las perspectivas del estudio de la Historia se plantea cuáles se debe valorar y cómo debe de impartirse la asignatura. La introducción en varios campus universitarios de códigos de habla concebidos para eliminar incidentes de expresión de odio, marcó el principio de una atención generalizada a la CP por parte de los medios

de comunicación, los cuales se han mostrado francamente hostiles a ella, ridiculizando sus manifestaciones más extremistas y asemejándola a una moderna caza de brujas. Diversos libros escritos sobre el debate de la CP consiguen ventas elevadas, aunque tienden a realzar las manifestaciones más extremistas de ésta, y no presentan el fenómeno con total equidad. Cabe destacar, en este orden de cosas, dos obras basilares para el estudio de la CP: *Illiberal Education* de Dinesh D'Souza y *Tenured Radicals*, de Roger Kimball. Internacionalmente, la atención dedicada a la CP se centra en la "purificación" nominalista del lenguaje.

Dejando aparte los absurdos más obvios de la puesta en práctica de la CP en ciertas situaciones, creemos que su aspecto más débil reside en una contradicción esencial en su aplicación, que a la vez se empeña en imponer un concepto restrictivo de la tolerancia y a prescribir el comportamiento. Por otra parte, estimamos que su fuerza se encuentra en su reto al, hasta la fecha inconsciente, uso de palabras, lo cual ha conducido a un aumento de la consciencia lingüística. La discusión de las hipótesis lingüísticas subyacentes se centra en la conexión entre lenguaje, pensamiento y realidad, principalmente respecto a la hipótesis de Sapir y Whorf acerca de la influencia del lenguaje sobre el comportamiento. La tendencia moderna no apoya una forma fuerte de la hipótesis whorfiana, sino que favorece una versión más o menos débil que considera que bajo ciertas circunstancias el comportamiento de las personas tenderá a ser guiado por las categorías de los idiomas que hablan. La teoría de los actos del habla, formulada en primer lugar por Austin, tiene en cuenta los diferentes efectos y consecuencias, bien sean intencionados o no, que puede ocasionar sobre el ovente

una locución. Asimismo se constata que en cualquier representación verbal siempre existe un punto de vista y que por lo tanto el realismo es inalcanzable en cuestiones de lenguaje. Esta percepción tiene repercusiones muy significativas en la interpretación de las intenciones respecto de los códigos del habla.

El posmodernismo intenta retar las suposiciones tradicionales sobre la naturaleza de la verdad, la objetividad, la racionalidad, la realidad y la calidad intelectual. Se cuestionan las categorías estéticas y de valor moral, no considerándolas categorías idénticas, puesto que son social e históricamente contingentes. Esta nueva apreciación lleva a una revaluación de los textos enseñados. Se cuestionan los propósitos mismos de la educación, y la enseñanza universitaria ya no se considera como un aprendizaje para élites, sino como algo que debería estar al alcance de todos, ya que el rechazo por motivos elitistas hiere la autoestima de aquellos que son considerados como fracasados. Tradicionalmente se eligen los estudiantes que acceden a las universidades según sus expedientes académicos y la nota conseguida en la prueba de acceso a la universidad SAT, pero ahora se considera la idea de mérito como un fenómeno social. Por lo tanto, se cuestiona la existencia de las medidas y pruebas objetivas.

A fin de compensar en parte las desventajas padecidas principalmente por estudiantes negros, algunas universidades instauran un sistema de cuotas que se conoce como "acción afirmativa" o "discriminación afirmativa". Dado que ambos términos adquieren connotaciones mas disfemísticas que eufemísticas son sustituidos por el término "diversidad". Los medios de comunicación se oponen violentamente a los cambios radicales propuestos para el sistema universitario y

comienzan a retratar a los campus como nidos de acción radical en manos de militantes izquierdistas. Se alega que los cambios pretendidos conducirán a una reducción en los niveles de conocimiento a cuya alegación se responde invocando el anti-intelectualismo de la vida norteamericana, caracterizado por una cierta hostilidad frente a lo académico y supuestamente exacerbada durante las presidencias de Reagan y Bush. La CP se identifica con la izquierda, pero ambas facciones dan muestras de una intolerancia parecida, y sus puntos de vista se convierten en irreconciliables.

La invocación de la Primera Enmienda a la Constitución es más frecuente por parte de la derecha, por otra parte poco dada a mostrar interés por temas de libertad de expresión. Escenas de odio racial se suceden en varios campus universitarios a finales de la década de los ochenta, e inspiran la elaboración de Códigos del Habla con la finalidad de regular expresiones de menosprecio. El Código del Habla de la Universidad de Michigan se copia en otras universidades, como Tufts, Brown, Penn State y California. El Código del Habla de la Universidad de Michigan es impugnado en los tribunales de justicia, donde se falla a favor del demandante que alega que las clases universitarias que imparte serían susceptibles de ser tildadas de sexistas según el Código del Habla. El tribunal declara que el Código del Habla interfiere con el libre intercambio de ideas, requisito esencial para el desarrollo de la misión educativa de la institución universitaria.

La CP niega la existencia de la actitud neutral, lo cual se vuelve en contra de la elaboración de los códigos del habla cuando se alega que las reglas en contra

de las expresiones de odio no se elaboran desde un punto de vista neutral. Los liberales americanos se encuentran con un dilema puesto que mientras reconocen que las expresiones de odio causan daño a las minorías, rechazan las reglas del habla por ser demasiado amplias.

El posmodernismo, y por extensión también la CP, aboga por la revisión del canon literario considerado como el dominio de los Hombres Blancos Europeos Muertos. Se cuestiona el concepto de unas reglas tipo por medio de las cuales se puede juzgar la calidad literaria y artística de las obras, así como los presupuestos de la tradición racionalista occidental cuyo estudio se suponía que no sólo comportaba el conocimiento de las propias asignaturas, sino que también llevaba a intuiciones con aplicación más allá del mundo inmediato. El ideal de la excelencia se juzga como elitista porque conlleva la valoración de algunas manifestaciones culturales como superiores a otras. Todo valor es radicalmente contingente y no un atributo fijo, una cualidad inherente o una propiedad objetiva de las cosas, sino el efecto de múltiples variables, que cambian e interaccionan continuamente entre si. Los Departamentos de Literatura empiezan a nombrarse de distinta forma y se convierten en Departamentos de Estudios Culturales, y las Humanidades se estudian desde diversos puntos de vista tales como "estudios de opresión", o "crítica feminista".

Los medios de comunicación alientan el furor consiguiente, regocijándose en los aspectos más absurdos y extremos de este enfoque radical, tildando a los estudiantes de "analfabetos culturales" y acusando al profesorado de indoctrinación.

Entre los intelectuales que se destacan en el debate señalaremos a John Searle, el

"solamente boba" y que los libros como el de Kimball sirven para oscurecer la verdadera dimensión de las bobadas y fomentan el pánico diciendo que se está minando la tradición en la Uuniversidad. En 1994, Harold Bloom, impulsado por la tristeza e incredulidad que le inspiran los hechos acaecidos en los Departamentos de Literatura de todo el país, publica un libro de quinientas páginas que se titula El Canon Occidental. Llama a los revisionistas del canon "la escuela de los resentidos" y declara que enfrentan las consideraciones estéticas con la lucha de clases. El libro consigue grandes ventas, mostrando el interés que suscita el debate sobre la CP, y, en mi opinión, elevando la calidad de éste tal como había sido llevado a través de los libros publicados, en su mayoría oportunistas.

La polarización de las opiniones sobre temas de CP hace que el término medio sea efectivamente inviable en la realidad. Las reivindicaciones de los grupos de minorías van desde las inquietudes feministas, tales como las violaciones conocidas como "date rape" (efectuadas por personas con quienes salen), la eliminación de términos sexistas y el poder femenino, hasta el empeño por conseguir una sociedad multicultural. El feminismo es, sin duda, la fuerza de mayor influencia entre los grupos de minorías. La llamada "cultura de la víctima" se refiere a una actitud que subraya el papel de la victima, considerada incapaz de defenderse, valorándose lo subjetivo ante toda otra consideración en la acción afirmativa. Se cree a veces que representa una forma de "reparación" de injusticias pasadas y lleva a la discriminación inversa que resalta el factor diferencial.

El pensamiento mayoritario en América considera antidemocrática esta faceta de la CP puesto que los intereses de la minoría se anteponen a los de la mayoría, al buscar los grupos minoritarios derechos similares a los que detenta la cultura mayoritaria. Además, los medios de comunicación simplifican radicalmente todos los temas relacionados con la CP a fin de que sean más fácilmente digeridos por el gran público, presentando los temas en términos de blanco y negro sin reflejar matices y exagerando las noticias de venta "fácil". A pesar de ello, todavía persiste en los Estados Unidos la creencia en la posibilidad de una información neutral y equilibrada y que, en la práctica, así suceda.

Orwell era un columnista experimentado y estaba convencido de que el punto de vista del escritor estará inevitablemente influenciado por sus creencias políticas. También creía que la imparcialidad intelectual solamente es posible en épocas de estabilidad y seguridad. Según su propio análisis todo lo que escribía venía motivado por una profunda sensación de injusticia. No obstante, al contrario de la CP, lamentaba que un texto sufriese estéticamente a raíz de un sesgo político, y se oponía al estilo inflado y pomposo, característico de los textos políticamente correctos. Orwell se esforzaba por conseguir un estilo literario claro y diáfano. A través de sus ensayos y de sus trabajos periodísticos pedía un uso más puro de la lengua inglesa, libre de metáforas banales, de jerga y de lo que llamaba lenguaje chapucero, que debería expresar las cosas con claridad y tal como son, señalando especialmente palabras como clase, fascista, totalitario, democracia, reaccionario, burgués, igualdad y progresista, cuyos significados intrínsecos se desvirtúan para servir las íntenciones espurias del hablante.

Creemos detectar un elemento defensivo en la crítica por parte de algunos lingüistas profesionales cuando hablan de la ingenuidad lingüística de Orwell, ya que su influencia sobre la percepción del gran público de lo que constituye el "buen" lenguaje ha sido enorme. No le interesaban las teorías sino las repercusiones de orden social que entrañaban la práctica. De igual manera, no nos parece que fuera esencialmente anti-intelectual, pero lo que sí atacaba era la justificación de lo injustificable por parte de los intelectuales, ya que en su época aquellos que defendían la práctica totalitaria, lo cual estimamos tiene su equivalente en la falta de crítica imparcial y equilibrada de los aspectos de la CP que inhiben la libertad, por parte de los intelectuales de este momento. Orwell creía que el control de la mente buscado por los sistemas totalitarios determina a la vez lo que no hay que pensar y lo que se pensará, consiguiendo de este modo el control sobre los aspectos intelectuales y emocionales de la vida y estableciendo a continuación códigos de conducta. Consideramos que la analogía se mantiene con la introducción de los códigos del habla porque, cuando se eliminan los términos que no son políticamente correctos se debe o bien a una imposición externa, o si es voluntariamente asumida, conducirá a pensamientos "aceptables".

Con frecuencia, se quita importancia a los elementos proféticos del mensaje orwelliano, citando su tendencia a exagerar y alegando que se dejaba involucrar demasiado con los temas que le inquietaban. Lo sorprendente, dado que en los regímenes totalitarios se rescribía la historia, es que se le critica por esta parte de su pensamiento. Se dio además forma literaria en 1984 al problema de verdades movibles, cristalizado en la época de Orwell en la vuelta de ciento ochenta grados

de los comunistas a fin de seguir los pasos de los cambios de alianzas de Stalin.

Le preocupaba la idea que la historia podía ser "creada" más que aprendida; el énfasis actual sobre el historicismo y la subjetividad nos demuestra que los miedos de Orwell distan mucho de ser meros productos de una intaginación demasiado fértil. Las feministas y otras minorías escriben de nuevo la historia consiguiendo oscurecer la realidad de épocas pasadas y sus percepciones, alterando la perspectiva y las sensibilidades para acoplarlas con las actuales.

Los dictámenes del Partido Interior en la Oceania de la novela llevan a una forma de pensamiento esquizofrénico que encuentra paralelo en lo que consideramos la necesaria abdicación del sentido común requerido para poder aceptar toda la doctrina de la CP. El sentido común es menospreciado por los teóricos, bien sean los teóricos políticos que defendían lo indefendible de la época de Orwell, bien sean los teóricos de todos los "ismos" en el área de la CP. La adhesión demasiado rígida a las teorías puede asimismo inhibir el sentido común y en el caso del protagonista Winston Smith, su negativa a la renuncia de sus pensamientos y su anhelo por la verdad marcan su perdición, porque el Partido necesita personas que no piensen.

Creemos que Eric Arthur Blair hubiera apoyado muchas de las ideas subyacentes a la CP, puesto que se oponía radicalmente a cualquier manifestación de injusticia. No obstante, no hubiera estado dispuesto a comprometer sus instintos estéticos para secundar la CP, y hubiera ejercido una crítica ácida de los muchos absurdos y paradojas engendrados por ella, tanto en su aspecto lingüístico como en su aplicación práctica. Debido a esta actitud le hubieran criticado, sin

duda, desde ambos lados del debate; después de todo, esto mismo le ocurrió a lo largo de su vida. Orwell temía la devaluación de la honestidad intelectual en la sociedad de su tiempo que se ve negada de parecida manera, tal y como se ha demostrado aquí, por ambos lados del debate sobre la CP. Se refuerza a los incondicionales de la CP siempre que apoyen su ortodoxia; los detractores pueden verse tildados de reaccionarios, homofóbicos, racistas o sexistas si se apartan del camino. Para Orwell esto reflejaba una tendencia totalitaria y la sátira de su última novela nos recuerda que una mentalidad totalitaria no siempre viene acompañada por el paso de la oca o los cuerpos de la policía secreta.

Las creaciones lingüísticas en la novela de "Newspeak" y "Duckspeak" tienen importantes lazos con el metalenguaje de la corrección política, como se ha demostrado en los capítulos 4 y 5. El eufemismo, uno de los rasgos más característicos del Newspeak ocupa un lugar preferente en el lenguaje de la CP mientras que los nombres de los Ministerios en Oceania distraen, deliberadamente, la atención de su verdadera función. El Newspeak es concebido por el Partido Interior como el último paso en la erradicación de la persona pensante.

La ficción anti-utópica de Orwell debe mucho a la admiración de su autor por Los Viajes de Gulliver, obra en la cual nuestro autor detectaba que uno de los propósitos del totalitarismo consistía en hacer a las personas menos conscientes. Orwell compartía ideales utópicos, evidenciados principalmente en su anhelo por una sociedad de igualdad y libertad, si bien él llegó al convencimiento de que sólo se lograría este objetivo a través del socialismo democrático. Aunque esencialmente era un solitario, le fue crucial su experiencia de la Guerra Civil

española. Aquí se entregó en cuerpo y alma a la causa de derrotar el fascismo, encontrando en mayo de 1937 que el espíritu revolucionario que tanto le había impresionado en la Barcelona del enero de ese mismo año, había sido totalmente traicionado. Creemos que el sentimiento de traición fundamental provocado por esta experiencia, le restó, a partir de entonces, voluntad y capacidad para dedicarse totalmente a cualquier causa.

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Por lo tanto, su honestidad constituía su mayor contribución a la creación de una sociedad más justa, y se dedicó al análisis de su propia sociedad según este criterio. Era consciente de que al no aceptar las ortodoxias de su tiempo se exponía a los ataques desde todos lados, pero consideraba que lo que decía merecía decirse. La anti-intelectualidad de Orwell lo es tal en cuanto que no aspiraba siempre a tener la "razón" y a perseguir la verdad por medio del estudio y la comprobación de los hechos. Buscaba hacer pensar a sus lectores, que replanteasen sus circunstancias, y para conseguir estos fines con frecuencia era provocativo. Algunas veces se equivocaba, pero no con la frecuencia que le atribuyen sus detractores.

Pensamos que nos sería útil reconsiderar las advertencias de Orwell acerca de la sociedad, no dejándonos engañar por aquellos que le ven como un excéntrico. Orwell era la voz del niño del cuento de Andersen, El Traje del Emperador, pero al contrario del niño, que desconocía el alcance de sus palabras, Orwell era totalmente consciente de la medida de la provocación que engendraban muchas de sus opiniones. Estaba dispuesto a hablar con claridad y a urgirnos a buscar la verdad sobre temas difíciles y delicados que generalmente encontramos más cómodo dejar en el tintero. Ya es hora de que la CP encuentre una voz parecida.