george orwell's social and political thought:
power/knowledge, identity/difference, and guerrilla warfare

by

[redacted]

Roderick Peter Neufeld
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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

[redacted]

Dr. Warren Magnusson, Supervisor (Department of Political Science)

[redacted]

Dr. R.B.J. Walker, Departmental Member (Department of Political Science)

[redacted]

Dr. Charles Doyle, Outside Member (Department of English)

[redacted]

Dr. Trevor Williams, External Examiner (Department of English)

University of Victoria

Supervisor: Dr. Warren Magnusson

abstract

1. The texts of George Orwell may be read as attempts to critically address questions of identity/difference and power/knowledge, questions which are familiar to students of contemporary social and political thought, but which also may be said to have a lengthy and fertile history. As early as Plato's *Republic*, these questions - which, to speak in general terms, concern the political role of symbol, myth, and history in the quest to create and to undermine unity - have plagued and engaged a wide variety of political writers. Indeed, the *Republic* is a text which places an emphasis on the power of myth, symbol, and history to both bind *and* subvert the ideological glue which keeps community stuck to particular patterns of social and political existence. Orwell's texts speak to these problems as they are manifest in twentieth century political practices, practices which emphasize security and rigid enclosure, and which submerge and colonize difference by drawing difference inside the boundaries of nation-state, party line, culture, and class. As I read his texts, crises of identity are not primarily viewed by Orwell as diseases or stages of development for which a unified identity is the cure or end-point; rather, they are looked upon as political battles and as sources of creative and critical thought. The subject is not viewed as an autonomous actor who requires the guidance of singular Reason in order to maximize his or her interests; autonomy is regarded as illusory, and Reason as a *particular* configuration of power/knowledge which orders and structures society in *particular* ways. As a process of power, Reason tends to suppress alternative political practices and critical thought.

2. According to this reading of his texts, Orwell's response to these questions takes the form of a "guerrilla" orientation which seeks to transgress and transform authoritative boundaries between identities and power/knowledge formations, and which attempts to promote a "looser", "more fluid" sense of human identity. Guerrilla warfare is a practice which maintains an uneasy relation with the "regular armies" of identity (with, that is, party organizations, the State, theoretical paradigms, primary meanings of words and symbols, existing language games), which attempts to seek the invisibilities surrounding identity, and which also attempts to undermine (or

at least nurture a suspicion of) its own position on the terrain of power, knowledge, and identity.

3. Following the introduction, the second chapter discusses interpretations of Orwell's thought by N. Jacobson, J. Shklar, S. Macey, D. Beddoe, B. Campbell, M. Zuckert, and M. Morris. This helps to distinguish the interpretation offered here from others, and to locate Orwell vis-a-vis Camus, Foucault, and Bentham (the latter task being a subsidiary exercise of the thesis). Chapter three deals primarily with Orwell's texts prior to *1984*, especially with often-neglected texts such as his poem "On a Ruined Farm Near the His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory", his book reviews, and essays such as "Inside the Whale", "New Words", "Not Counting Niggers", "Marrakech", "Shooting an Elephant", and "Notes on Nationalism". This serves to frame chapter four, which deals primarily with *1984*, within a context provided by a reading of his earlier writings that is sensitive to the themes of language, ontology, and orientation toward political identity. The thesis concludes with a brief discussion of postfoundationalism and history, and then attempts to disrupt the authoritative closure of a conclusion by offering an "impressionistic" afterword that briefly discusses contemporary writers such as Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Kuhn, Dallmayr, and Walker. On a final note, it is suggested that *1984* may be read as a commentary on J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*.

Examiners:

[redacted]

Dr. Warren Magnusson, Supervisor (Department of Political Science),
[redacted] Director, Contemporary Social and Political Thought Program

Dr. R.B.J. Walker, Departmental Member (Department of Political Science)

Dr. Charles Doyle, Outside Member (Department of English)

Dr. Trevor L. Williams, External Examiner (Department of English)

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dedication

A writer draws inspiration, not only from bolts of lightning and the crash of waves upon the shore, but also from friends, family, free spirits, and the minute, yet bright, contacts of daily life. I dedicate this work (and this play) to each spark of light that has illuminated my path(s).

To my parents and mentors: Dr. Peter Lorenz Neufeld and Elsie Marie Neufeld;

To my great friends: Lisa Neufeld, Kathryn Neufeld-Hare, Robert Hare, Angie Sorrell, Evan Leeson, Darius Millar, Athana Mentzelopolous, Peiman Abdi, Matt Stevenson, Eugene C. Knight, Elliot Wilcox, and Mark Wilcox;

To those who have sparked my thinking at dim moments: Charles Horn, Susan Wilson, Bodo Krueger, David MacDonald, Brian Richardson, Marsh Bradbury, Mark Fonda, Shannon Gonzo, Francis Widdowson, and Professor John Charlot;

To those who forced (and begged) me to think: Professor May Yoh, Professor Mary Dietz, Professor Warren Magnusson, Professor Rob Walker, Professor Robert Bedeski, William Carroll, Friedrich Nietzsche, Gilles Deleuze, Peter Kropotkin, Karl Marx, William Connolly, Michel Foucault, Carlos Castaneda, Niccolo Machiavelli, Robert Pirsig, Fred Dallmayr, Ashis Nandy, George Orwell, Socrates, and (of course) the mysterious character(s) who wrote the *Chuang Tzu*.

May all of you continue to lead your lives, like Holderin's poet, "bareheaded beneath God's thunderstorms."

I would also like to dedicate this work to David Gilmour and Roger Waters.

Not to remain stuck to a fatherland
- not even if it suffers most and needs help most ...
Not to remain stuck to a science - even if it should lure us with the most precious finds that seem to have been saved up precisely for us. Not to remain stuck to one's own detachment, to that voluptuous remoteness and strangeness of the bird
who flees ever higher to see ever more below him
- Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

thought as a proceeding and a process,
a bizarre anti-Platonic dialogue ... a thought that appeals to the people instead of taking itself for a government ministry
- Deleuze/Guattari, "Treatise on Nomadology"

chapter one: the machine and the guerrilla

preface

1. George Orwell ranks as one of the most vocal critics of the "machine age", but his thoughts on this age have, I think, been neglected and often misconstrued. On the most general level Orwell may be grouped (if one cares to take part in the locational exercises common to political theorists and historians of philosophy) with those who identify themselves or are identified as "postmodernists" - in Orwell's texts, there is a preoccupation with the boundaries that delineate the landscape of the modern: boundaries between self and society, between classes, between nations, between times, and between linguistic/social codes.

Other locations may be suggested. He may, for instance, be placed on the philosophical map in the vicinity of Marx and Nietzsche, perhaps moving along a boundary-zone populated by Jack London and Albert Camus, two writers who exhibited similar tensions and concerns. Orwell shared with each an intense desire to assault conventional views of self, society, and their interconnection within the complex historical process known as "modernity".

In the reading of his texts presented here, modernity is associated with centralization, the refinement of technologies of surveillance and discipline, global warfare, the nation-state, concentration camps, the rise of the urban and the death of the rural, the hegemony of the expert, the destruction and/or invisibility of non-Western cultures, the rigidification of values by their organization in terms of good/evil oppositions, and commodification, both of language and labour. In his texts, the seamy underside of modernity is associated with the hegemony of the Machine. To Orwell, the Machine Age is populated by a certain type of self - one which he caustically described as the "gramophone mind".

2. George Orwell (Eric Blair) was born in Bengal, into a lower-middle-class family. Although Orwell/Blair was educated in the English public school system, his birthplace had a formative influence on his life and work. He returned to the Indian subcontinent as a young man employed in the Colonial police, and although he loathed his role in what he viewed as an

exploitative imperialist government, many of his works, including "Shooting an Elephant", "Marrakech", *Burmese Days*, "Not Counting Niggers", and *1984* drew upon his experience as a participant on the margins of Empire. His texts emphasize the "invisibility" of people living outside the dominant forces of the age - outside the West, outside modernity, and outside *any* center of *any* political formation, including the political formation of *selfhood*. In this respect, his work had much in common with Albert Camus, the Algerian-born French writer, and M. K. Gandhi, an Indian educated in England.

Orwell's texts may be read as a concerted assault upon those configurations of power and knowledge, identity and difference that are founded on an ontology of the autonomous subject. His thoughts on these questions resemble those of Marx (in the *Grundrisse*), Nietzsche (in *Ecce Homo*), Kropotkin (in *The Conquest of Bread*), and Franz Kafka (in *The Burrow*). The boundaries between self and society are blurred. In his texts, we meet a *spectre*: the ordering forces of time, place, symbol, and society. Orwell's texts challenge us with the accusation that people do not think sentences, but *sentences* - prefabricated phraseology, key metaphors, conceptual frameworks, theoretical edifices, beliefs, lived outlooks, the practices of the times - *think, create,* and *order* people. The Machine is the most insidious ordering force of all, for it is carried forth and multiplied by the complex socio-political process often referred to as the "West". The spectre produced by and haunting Europe (and humankind), one might say, is the spectre of the Machine, the spectre of the *gramophone polity.*

One senses Orwell's fear of and respect for the power of words in creating a prison-house for human beings. Words persuade, enclose, convince, and rationalise; conventional (machine-) politics is for the most part the ritual utterance of familiar catchphrases which placate and reassure - which soothe and subordinate - much like ritual responsive readings in The Church.

Before *1984* was written, Orwell's political thought was occupied by an almost obsessive concern with suffocation and decay; disengagement (and overcoming), except of the impotent variety poètically articulated in *On a Ruined Farm near the His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory* and *Burmese Days,* is viewed as an improbable occurrence. This motif of suffocation, of the self as helpless prey to the spectre of the times, is a key aspect of his work. Orwell's texts prior to *1984* may be interpreted as a concerted but not wholly conscious attempt to articulate *strategies* of

disengagement from the Machine Age. At least, such strategies emerge from this particular codification of his texts.

1984 is a myth for a special type of anarchist, a prayer-book for the rebel who wishes to refuse the world's direction. But it is subversive of itself, for it serves as a symbolic opening through which we can find our way out of the Machine Age. It is an open-ended myth which provokes us to reformulate and criticize. It confronts us with vague notions about politics and power that bear little resemblance to the type of political analysis which deals in authoritative precision and terse hypotheses. Orwell's view, however, was that such precision and clarity were not possible in the unwieldly process of creation which gives birth to new perspectives and political values.

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statement of thesis

george orwell's social & political thought: power/knowledge, identity/difference, & guerrilla warfare

When a writer engages in politics he should do so as a citizen, as a human being, but not as a writer ... [W]hatever else he does ... [for] his party, he should never write for it. He should make it clear that his writing is a thing apart ... [and] be able to act co-operatively while ... rejecting the official ideology. He should never turn back from a train of thought because it may lead to a heresy ... There is no reason why he should not write in the most crudely political way ... Only he should do so as an individual, an outsider, at the most an unwelcome guerrilla on the flank of a regular army.[1]

George Orwell's political thought was animated by political boundaries: boundaries between classes, nation-states, self and society, writers and ideologues, insiders and outsiders. The portrait of modernity he presents is one of increasing enclosure within static boundaries; the political practice which he suggests as a response is *guerrilla warfare*, a practice that privileges fluidity over stasis, movement over rootedness, and boundary-transgression over identity. It is acutely suspicious of political discipline, which *anaesthetizes* critical thought and make *invisible* alternative conceptions of society, self, and change. The central themes of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* revolve around what may be termed, following Thomas Kuhn, "paradigm-induced invisibility". Orwell, according to the interpretation offered here, presses *home* issues raised twenty years later in the following passage from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*:

A paradigm can, for that matter ... insulate the community from those socially important problems that ... cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies. Such problems can be a distraction, a lesson brilliantly illustrated ... by some of the contemporary social sciences.[2]

Nineteen Eighty-Four is a treatise on boundaries, enclosures, and codifications, and a manual for their transgression. When the boundaries which are placed around the text itself are transgressed - when, that is, it is understood in the context of Orwell's life and works - it will be seen that it speaks to contemporary social issues of considerable complexity. It is a commentary on the role of electronic and non-electronic media in the

[1] George Orwell, "Writers and Leviathan", CEJL, vol. 4, p. 413.

[2] Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 47.

ossification of social and political boundaries. It is also a commentary on the standardization of thought; on "universal" perspectives; on the exclusion of alternative perspectives by existing, hegemonic ones; and on the political consequences of succumbing to hypostatic boundaries provided and enforced by the State, by language, by militarization, by personal identity, by politico-theoretical disciplinary practices, and by an historical ethos.

The problems at stake *can* be reduced to a core question or statement, but not without inducing the blindness which is at issue. One question could be formulated as: how does one go about thinking oneself out of such constellations of power/knowledge? That is, what practices might enable us to combat the closure of paradigms and the invisibilities which surround them? Is there a "cure" for paradigm-blindness?

There are examples of boundaries throughout his texts: in an early poem, "On an Abandoned Farm near the His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory", he is a poet, an "alien", lodged within the agrarian/machine matrix; in *Down and Out in Paris and London,* he explores the worlds of the outcasts, tramps, vagrants, and criminals of the two cities; in the *Road to Wigan Pier* he explores the world of "invisible" miners and the unemployed; in *Burmese Days,* the protagonist, Flory, is caught between the west and nonwest; in Marrakech, he discusses the "invisibility" of the nonwest; in *Animal Farm,* he polemicizes against Soviet Russia at a time when criticism of Russia was not part of the *world* of discourse; and, finally, in *1984,* Winston is caught between the *world* of the modern machine and the *worlds* of alternative political and social practices.

Orwell raised the problematic of boundaries and invisibilities with the aim of prying open questions, perspectives, and people imprisoned and submerged by the *paradigms-that-be.* His political thought is marked by an emphasis on border-crossing. Orwell's border-crossing does not look outside borders in order to *assimilate* and *categorize* what lies beyond in terms of an existing inside. This would be tantamount to neutralizing threats to an existing order by co-opting them - by, in other words, negating the difference between inside and outside, while (simultaneously) affirming the privileged position of existing (inside) constructions of rationality.

Nineteen Eighty-Four will be the central, though not sole, text of this thesis. It depicts a world divided into three mega-states - Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia - and a "peripheral" area contested by each. Each mega-state is a

world of its own, cut off from the *others* by formidable boundaries. Within Winston's Oceania, there are numerous boundaries: between inner-Party and outer-Party; between the proles and the Party; between the Party's *official* conception of history and *unofficial* history; and between the Party's present and any *unofficial* present. The Party's aim is to project its present onto the past and the future, and to terminate any barriers between *its* present/past/future and any *alternative* presents, alternative pasts, and alternative futures. *1984* depicts a world which is undergoing an explosive process of homogenization. The Party's aim (at least in Oceania) is to *discipline the within.* In other words, the Party's goal is to "structurize" agency - to remove agency from history. History is to become the movement through time of the machine-state; time, in fact, would be redundant if the Party were successful. Oceania's "future" and "past" would become the Party's *present,* and thus the Party's present would be both future *and* past. But Orwell's *Party* is a *multivocal* metaphor, a symbol which, like Big Brother, the thought police, and Winston Smith, carries, voices, and/or suggests multiple meanings. Symbolically, it does many jobs: it speaks not only of the conventional containers of politics known as political parties, but also the container of a particular organization of selves. It speaks of the iconization, deification, reification and standardization of political space and political movement.

There are (at least) two, competing streams of symbolism in *1984.* The first stream may be referred to as a conventional reading of Orwell that has dominated the field since the late 1940s. In this stream, *1984* is read as a treatise on the acceleration of technologies of discipline and control. Proponents of this reading of his texts warn us of the growing sophistication of apparatuses of power. Yet this reading neglects another possibility, namely that Orwell was attempting to write about the death of the modern human, and of the appearance of a new human be(com)ing, one whom, if we wish, may be termed "postmodern".

In order to sketch the contours of this second stream of thought and symbolism, it is necessary to first delve into questions of social ontology. Facing Big Brother in *1984* are two human subjects who attempt to subvert the imperatives of structure. But there is more than the traditional us-versus-them, us-versus-the-monster *code* in operation within this text. Orwell subverts the self-society and inside-outside social code which such traditional formats reinforce. The boundaries between the subjects (Winston and Julia) and the powers-that-be (Big Brother, the Machine, O'Brien) are blurred and hazy: in a very *real* sense the target of their assault is an

"intimate enemy" who has no definite location in the conventional space/time grid. The enemy is not an *external* force, external, that is, to the self or to a particular group. The *Thought Police* of Oceania are more than a conventional police organization that employs "discrete" and "material" technological devices to discipline the self: they symbolize a way of conceptualizing social reality, and as "a way" of thought/practice, they travel through channels of language which do not obey the ordering boundary between self and society. Since the target of attack cannot be readily located in a *particular* organization *external* to the self, but is, on the contrary, a way of organizing the self/society interconnection, *1984* does not provide reassurances that we know where and what (precisely) we must attack. We are not assured that "we" are *secure* from the accusation that the Machine has spread past our "autonomous" boundaries.

This reading and encodification of Orwell's texts focusses upon the multivocality of his symbolism, on the tensions that result in *more* than Winston's love of Big Brother, on the tensions that provide *openings* to the future. We can, indeed, refer to Big Brother as a symbol of those technocrats of power who suffocate human freedom, but such an identification of symbol with particular people or institutions is (somewhat) facile. Big Brother, O'Brien, and the Thought Police are indeed "intimately connected" with Winston - for in one sense, they *are* Winston, and they *are* the modern self. The struggles within *1984* are dream-like struggles which are not "really" within or without a particular person, because even dreams draw upon social nutrients. To put forward a simple *reductio*, the *second* stream presents a struggle within an individual-who-is-not-an-individual, one who is meant to *symbolize* the modern subject and the possibilities for *overcoming* the modern subject. The police state of Orwell's *1984* embraces somewhat more than the institutions normally conceived as central to such a political system: it embraces *more* than the KGB, the CIA, the FBI, or the Pentagon. Orwell's police state symbolizes a particular ontology; it is a way of being and acting that is central to Orwell's conception of the politics of modernity.

Orwell's *mythopoetic anarchism*, as I call it, is carried within both streams of meaning identified/hypothesized thus far. Just as the Party attempts to structurize agency, so does, in Orwell's view, the hegemonic conception of modern selfhood. Proceeding in a typically Orwellian (i.e., dramatic) vein, one might say that the modern self *begs* to be structurized, begs to be *one* with the Gods of Modernity. The ultimate expression of such self-immersion is Winston's love of Big Brother, a love which may be viewed as a union of

the times with the times, an effacement of difference, of alternatives, of future, of past, and of thought itself.

To frame this differently: Big Brother symbolizes *finality, order,* and theoretical/ontological/practical *eschatology*. As such, it may be viewed as a polished version of earlier symbols deployed within Orwell's texts - the *Whale,* the *Nation-State,* the *British Empire,* the *Visible World,* and the "mental world" produced by the boys' weeklies which were the subject of his 1940 essay. Big Brother, in other words, symbolizes modern political enclosures in the widest sense.

One might wonder where another modern deity is in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Has the *Money-God* been vanquished? It may be argued that Orwell is posing the following question: if capital were to be "defeated" - if, that is, humanity's engagement with the complex amalgam of capital, hedonism, luxury, and toxic surroundings were to end - what then? I argue that his answer is that we would still have to deal with other types of exploitation. There is, in Orwell's view, an "invisible" side to the capital-paradigm. On this side lie power relationships which "progressive" groups continually discover and re-discover. Orwell explicitly *denied* that revolutionary activity is futile. "All revolutions are failures", he wrote in "Arthur Koestler", "but they are not all the same failure." Orwell argued that revolutionary activity does not bring about an "end-state" of history. If capitalism is abolished other exploitative relationships will appear - and, in fact, capitalism and other exploitative relations *co-exist and clash*. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell undertakes an exercise of de-priorization. He de-priorizes capital (but *not* only capital) as the focal point of analysis. He does not call for the exclusion of capital-centered analysis; he calls for multi-centered analyses, for a decentering of thought, articulation, and history.

To expect his answers to questions of such complexity to have been free of ambiguity and tension is to invite disappointment. It is, rather, a mark of his political artistry - and of his orientation toward enclosures - that he left the matter searchingly examined but not solved or enclosed.

In Orwell's works, we find skepticism pitted against the Real, noncomformism against homogeneity, anti- and multi-rationalism against singular Reason, and anarchism against Archism - against the ordering *principia* of time, place, society, and self. He refuses to accept the thesis that there exists one unitary, uniform, and homogeneous entity called the "human race", and yet he also dares to speak of humanity - but a humanity

which is diverse and full of *invisibilities*. The primary orientation of his psychology of political engagement may be viewed as an exercise in *border-crossing* which loosens the self/society grip on self and society; it is an exploration of possible political practices, ones which political conventions tend to exclude and silence. One question he may be said pose is: *can human beings move beyond the foundational identities of modernity and reach a new post-foundational politics informed by a new orientation toward identity*? The answer suggested, implied, and at times clearly pronounced within his texts is that such a practice would involve the transformation of "everyday", "average", "prepolitical" people into *guerrillas*, into *makers of unofficial history* and *border-crossers*. The guerrilla orientation of Orwell's political thought does not neglect to engage in the *politics of place*, but it does fight the transformation of place into prison. It admits the unavoidability and, in fact, the *love* of a *home*, but it struggles to escape the drive for security and finality which has found such a place in the hearts of Modern Homes and their highly politicized inhabitants. This orientation energized Orwell's political writings. His orientation, his mythopoetic anarchism, and his particular style of humanism may also be termed "sisyphean", for his thought parallels that of Albert Camus in intriguing ways. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), the questions of inaudibility, invisibility, and finality are also posed with force. In Camus' work, as in Orwell's, acquiescence to the discipline of *static* selfhood is not regarded as an "authentic" or approved response to modernity. Instead, both *1984* and *The Myth of Sisyphus* may be read as promoting engagement with the *indefiniteness* of the political world.

To venture over another Hadrian's Wall between separate and hostile theoretical/practical communities Orwell (and, by extension, Camus) may be paired with Karl Marx. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx wrote that

> proletarian revolutions ... criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the ... weaknesses ... of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon *from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims*.[3]

Such a juxtaposition may seem odd, for it is disrespectful of the boundaries

[3] Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. by D. McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 303.

which demarcate and channel political and social thought. But it may also provoke and prod contemporary thinking about intellectual history precisely by virtue of its attempt to cross those boundaries which enclose particular texts within particular encampments of power/knowledge. In Orwell's case, such a juxtaposition may be viewed as crucial, given the repeated attempts to assimilate his texts within the ideological castles of the Cold War. In other words, it is important, given the historical development of Orwell's literary reputation (simplistically, though not without accuracy, it can be argued that he has either been deified *or* defiled in true Cold War, larger-than-life style) to ask about *Orwell's* boundaries as a political thinker. I also argue that although Orwell's thought deserves to be re-examined, it should not be *replicated,* and should not become a repertoire of catchphrases and prisonhouses. It is important to note that Orwell, despite his efforts at decentering and destabilizing European political thought/practice, only rarely endeavoured to look outside his own (Western) philosophical heritage. Or, even if he did, he rarely credited those "invisible" human beings whom he longed for us to see with a capacity for critical thought *equal to* an Orwell, a Camus, a Marx, or a Nietzsche. Orwell should not be viewed as an exemplar of the practice he opposed to modernism - but to this he might have responded: "Perhaps the notion of an exemplar is an example of another god who needs to be de-sanctified."

The interpretation of Orwell's political thought offered here is significant for the following reasons. Orwell is a writer whose texts are widely disseminated, and whose terminology has spread across continental and linguistic divides. It is difficult to think of another twentieth century writer whose work has "penetrated" so deeply into everyday discourse, and whose symbols and imagery have become so firmly embedded within the languages of the day. Orwell's *very* political art has emerged in the way twentieth century people speak about their world(s). Undoubtedly, this is the result of a complex historical process and is not the necessary consequence of his talent; certainly commodification and Cold War thinking helped this come to pass. But come to pass it has, and it is within the blurry confines of his contribution to political language that many struggle to articulate their views of past, present, and future. *Orwellia* has become a part of the "currency" of modern (and postmodern) social and political thought. Since "Orwell" is a familiar symbol, "he" is also an important social *location* or signpost around which political thought may be *further* articulated.

Secondly, scholars engage in an exercise often referred to as the "history of

ideas". What was Nietzsche's "debt" to Schopenhauer? What is the difference between the Hegelian and the Marxist dialectic? To what extent was Voltaire influenced by Chinese philosophy? The reading of Orwell's texts which is offered here may be viewed as falling within the parameters of this exercise. I will attempt to locate Orwell on a map of social and political thought that includes as reference points Marx, Kropotkin, Camus, and Kafka. And in the afterword, it will be suggested that Orwell to some extent prefigured the social and political thought of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Ashis Nandy. In the case of Foucault, for example, there is an interesting parallel between *1984* - read as a critique of universalizing/disciplinary tendencies in political theory and society which emerged partly as a response to social and political practices "originating" with Jeremy Bentham - and Foucault's work on Bentham's *panopticon* in *Discipline and Punish.*

Thirdly, this thesis engages in the exploration of the texts of a noted literary figure, and in the articulation of perspectives which *interconnect* and *participate* with those texts but which do not exhaust them or precisely delineate their boundaries. Questions are asked which are as much a product of the present as of the past. A crucial one is: how can Orwell help us to speak to political problems of the late twentieth century? I argue that his "guerrilla" response to problems of power, knowledge, identity, and difference holds some (preliminary) hope for the practice of politics in a world beset by modern and age-old boundary-drawing exercises.

Orwell's orientation to these exercise of power, knowledge, and identity may be read as an attempt to move beyond the modern, which in his texts is characterized by *entrapment* within rhetorical, national, doctrinal, theoretical, and political boundaries. To express this differently, the practice of guerrilla warfare is a response to problems of identity and difference, problems which have been expressed in many different ways but which continue to occupy an important place in the texts of ancient, medieval, modern, and postmodern social and political thought, whether expressed as tensions between "society and self", "attachment and detachment", "solidarity and individualism", "agreement and disagreement", or "objectivity and subjectivity". In Orwell's texts, these "separate" poles collide, blur, and fuse, being placemarkers on the terrain of power and knowledge. His answer to the problems posed by the linkage of power/knowledge, and identity/difference, is guerrilla warfare, itself a blurred signpost, but one which is meant to point to the overcoming of conceptual and political *rootedness* via an orientation informed by a distinctive configuration of political identity.

chapter two: interpretations

George Orwell's political thought has been the subject of much discussion and controversy, especially, but not only, since the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It was this work that firmly placed him in a position of global recognition - or, since the question of why a text receives attention is a thorny one, one can say that this work entered dominant ideological practices in a way that gave it and Orwell a global reputation.[4]

There are crucial silences surrounding the literature on Orwell (at least that which is most widely disseminated[5]). The questions posed of his political thought have been shackled by the susceptibility of his "key" texts to Cold War readings. *Animal Farm* and *1984* can readily be viewed as simple diatribes against National Socialist Germany and the U.S.S.R. They can, that is, be rendered theoretically impotent through their codification as instances of an opportunistic propaganda which suffers from a myopic refusal to criticize the "democratic" Anglo-European states, the United States and England in particular. Both texts may be reduced to the statement: "revolution betrays itself". Similarly, Orwell's views on language - if one remains on the (seemingly) familiar textual ground of the two above-mentioned texts and "Politics and the English Language" - may be encoded as follows: "let the meaning choose the word, and be suspicious of party bosses". Orwell is easily read as a pupil of the "straightforward" and "realistic" school of journalistic reportage.

My reasons for disagreement are lengthy: first, Orwell was cognizant of the boundary-lines that demarcate communicative practices, and he pursued a strategy which was attentive to considerations of rhetoric and audience. He was a wearer of masks. Failure to view the mask of "straightforward reporter" as a strategy of a skilled polemicist has resulted in a narrowing of the questions asked of his texts. This paradigmatic tunnelling (I am not suggesting that it is entirely escapable) has made invisible subtleties which emerge if *different* questions are asked.

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[4] For a discussion of how literary reputations are produced, see John Rodden's *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of 'St. George' Orwell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[5] By, for example, eminent scholars, former friends of Orwell, and those who have been involved in the grand Cold War polemics over Orwell's views on revolution (*Animal Farm* commentaries), socialism (*Animal Farm*, *1984*, and *Road to Wigan Pier* commentaries), and totalitarianism (chiefly *1984* commentaries).

Questions of rhetorical strategy extend beyond a particular tactic of rhetoric such as the "straightman-journalist". From Orwell's perspective, the language of the theoretician is exclusionary and promotes the *anaesthetization* of thought. He did not doubt the overall project of articulating new ways of understanding social change; his accusations are that the systematization of political thought is a process of power and entrapment, *power* because it is through a particular system, or configuration of power and knowledge, that one approaches social change, and *entrapment* because each is a limited vantage point, historically and culturally *specific*.

Central to Orwell's skepticism about theoretical language games are questions about rationality that have plagued and engaged political thinkers for at least two thousand years.[6] If we venture outside Orwell's "key" texts and then return, we return with a skeptic, albeit one whose skepticism is mitigated by a desire to create new words and symbols. If we "play with the possible" and compare him to Marx, Nietzsche, Camus, Kafka, and Kropotkin - if that is, we challenge the disciplinary boundaries which tend to forbid such comparisons

[6] Plato raises such questions in *The Republic*, most graphically in the metaphorical *complexia* of the cave, where political boundaries are (satirically?) drawn between the shadow-dwellers and the (initially) involuntary seeker of the light. Placing texts written by Orwell - such as *1984*, "Inside the Whale", *The Road to Wigan Pier*, *Burmese Days*, "Marrakech", and "New Words" - beside *The Republic* would be an evocative juxtaposition. To my knowledge, this strategy has not been pursued (at length) to date. Such a comparison would be consonant with the aims of this thesis, but will have to wait for a full expression elsewhere. [This is not to suggest that Plato is *privileged* as a "representative" of ancient perspectives on knowledge. Plato did not *reign* over these questions two millenia ago - a similar comparison could be launched between Orwell's texts and, for example, the texts known as the *Chuang-tzu* or the *Lao Tzu* (the *Tao te Ching*). See "The Natural Way of Lao Tzu" and "The Mystical Way of Chuang Tzu" in Wing-Tsit Chan, editor and translator, *A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). For more complete comparisons of the kind suggested, see David L. Hall, "Process and Anarchy - A Taoist vision of creativity" (mainly a comparison of A. Whitehead and Chuang Tzu), in *Journal of Philosophy East and West*, vol. XXVIII, no. 3, July 1978, and Graham Parkes, "The Wandering Dance: Chuang Tzu and Zarathustra", in the same journal, vol. XXXIII, no. 3, July 1983. The *reign* of Plato in the (currently non-global) *complexia* of the "West" is only slowly being de-centred - for a view of the *problem*, see the Western *apologia* of Anthony Flew, who writes in the preface of a recent dictionary of philosophy that "the classics of Chinese philosophy get such short shrift" in his text because "[not one] shows much sign of interest in the sort of question thrashed out in [Plato's]*Theaetetus*. The truth is that these classics contain little argument of any sort." This is interesting both for its significance as an example of what Orwell calls the "invisibilities" of location, and because in the brief reference to Taoism, it is written that the *Chuang-tzu* "challenges all conventional wisdom on its own terms" "through rational argument, interspersed with anecdotes and parables". Nonetheless, the author(s) of the *Chuang-tzu*, sadly, do(es) not merit an entry of his/her/their own. See A. Flew, ed., *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, revised second edition (New York: St Martin's Press, 1984). For a less Euro-centric exposition of these questions, see Fred Dallmayr, *Margins of Political Discourse* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), a truly radical text which even includes a chapter on M.K. Gandhi. Attacking eurocentrism in a similar fashion are Ashis Nandy's textual weapons, "Shamans, Savages, and the Wilderness", in *Alternatives* (New Delhi, Autumn 1990), and *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).]

- we will find that Orwell was far from a simple polemicist.

Norman Jacobson places Orwell alongside Hannah Arendt and Albert Camus, and thus provides a convenient starting point in the contemporary literature. After "connecting" Orwell with Camus through Jacobson's work, Judith Shklar's review of *1984* in the journal *Political Theory* will be examined. Shklar presents a portrait of Orwell in sharp constrast to Jacobson's, and the questions which their differing perspectives raise will briefly be examined. Samuel Macey's recent essay will point the discussion toward the complex meanings of *1984*. Macey's comments on the time-related aspects of this text provide an opening to Camus, whose Sisyphus struggles interminably in an Oceania-like *ethos*. Macey and Jacobson help reinforce the reading of Orwell's Winston Smith as *sisyphean* - but their analyses are problematic. Although they draw a picture of Orwell that contrasts sharply with Shklar's, they fail to notice that Orwell is asking us to reject finality, and to reject the statement at the end of *1984* that Winston loved Big Brother.

Whether *Julia*, Winston's companion, loved Big Brother is not known - but the question of Julia's role in *1984* is important. Recent interpretations of Orwell have been provided by feminist scholars, among them Dierdrie Beddoe and Beatrix Campbell. Unlike Beddoe and Campbell, I consider "Julia" to be a symbol which Orwell deploys at a critical moment to reinforce his views on power, knowledge, identity, and difference. Although their essays reveal unsavory and little-noticed facets of his texts, I disagree with their conclusion that Orwell was a misogynist, and with their suggestion that an examination (and/or "recovery") of his political thought cannot contribute to the re-articulation of social relations, including those which involve and concern women.

Crucial to this is the attempt to escape from hegemonic practices of power/knowledge and identity/difference. Orwell has been read (repetitively) as a theorist of totalitarianism - as an opponent of the modern police state. Michael Zuckert's essay, "Orwell's Hopes, Orwell's Fears: *1984* as a Theory of Totalitarianism" is illustrative in this regard, for it ignores those aspects of *1984* which deal directly with social ontology; it ignores the type of question that is generally seen as prominent within the texts of Marx, Nietzsche, Kropotkin, and Zamyatin. I argue that Orwell's use of the term "totalitarianism" is far from "clear and distinct", and that "totalitarianism" cannot be reduced to the stagnant Cold War commentaries on the Soviet Union and Communist China. To participate in such commentaries requires

a profound deafness to much of his political thought.

Finally, I will look at Mary-Jo Morris' suggestive essay on political language. Morris considers *1984* to be (at least in part) an indirect and/or direct assault on Jeremy Bentham. This "links" Orwell with Michel Foucault, whose discussion of Bentham's panopticon occupies an important place in *Discipline and Punish*. The relationship of political language to power/knowledge is a central theme of *1984*, and of the entire Orwell corpus.

interpretations: 1: norman jacobson

Now it is obvious that I am describing a dream rather than reciting political history, recounting a myth rather than explaining anything in the "real world."[7]

In the discourse of (pre- and late-) modernity[8] **words such as *real, objective,* and *explain* are powerful *weapons*.** *Myth, dream,* and *poem* are merely drunken master-corporals, linguistic Great Britains and Canadas who wish to please the American *führers* of *Science, Reason, and Ratio,* the leaders of the new world order of political modernity. The ranking words of the times regulate and unify our political life and imagination. At least since Plato's (satirical?) assault on poetry and music (but not, unsurprisingly, *noble* myths), political thinkers have privileged sober reasonableness over poetic intoxication with the possible - even though the latter tended to trip and fall over the boundary-zone into the pure pool of calculation. Both Eugene Zamyatin (in the tale of unity-through-sleep,*We*) and Eric Blair (or George Orwell, common man, English river, deployer of symbolic weapons[9]) present grim, mythical, and *real* pictures of the death of *fantasia*, grim pictures, that is, of the removal of human imagination. This, at least, is one way to codify their claims about modernity.

Norman Jacobson provocatively discusses the "functions and limits" of political theory from a standpoint that shares important ground with the above: equally *dramatic* and *mythical* ground. In his view, the history of

[7] Norman Jacobson, *Pride and Solace: The Functions and Limits of Political Theory*, xii.

[8] Such a combination is meant to suggest that analyses of the times are better served by codes which recognize the over-lapping, multicentric nature of political media and structured ways of thought (ideological practices) than by those which posit a linear, chronological sequence of discrete and internally homogenous eras, such as ancient, medieval, and modern. This does not exclude the possibility of priorizing and ordering discourses in a hierarchical manner (hierarchical in the sense of prevalence). On this, one might look at Gramsci's comments in *The Prison Notebooks*, or at Orwell's comments in *England Your England*. Jacobson, in fact, hints at such view by referring to "pre-19th century moderns" (p. 20).

[9] "George Orwell" is a construction, a symbolic weapon, a myth created by Eric Blair.

political thought may be viewed as a continual attempt to mythologize and proudly put forth "structures of solace"[10] which pacify human beings who, as human, are faced with the indefiniteness of the political world, a world of "endless complexity and contradiction".[11] The "great" political theorists have acted as "surrogates",[12] creating values, meaning, and ways of structuring the political world; and, as the term "surrogate" suggests, the thinkers in question (in Jacobson's texts, they include Plato, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Arendt, Orwell, and Camus, though the first four are divided from the rest by virtue of a boundary-drawing exercise to be discussed shortly) have remained *unsolaced*, for they refused to derive solace from existing "civic gods".[13]

Implicit in Jacobson's work is the view that *the greats* were anarcho-mythologizers: they may have claimed to be seekers of truth, but they were actually creators of meaning and spinners of noble and heroic myths that they themselves refused to embrace. Besides functioning as "engines" of solace, these myths acted as ideological glue to bind and "maintain the human community, or recreate it".[14] But these thinkers were *anarchists*, in the sense of Paul Feyerabend's "anything goes" anarchism.[15] They were capable of certain refusals, refusals of the given, of the civic gods, of the *archai* of

[10] Norman Jacobson, op cit., x.

[11] Ibid., xiii.

[12] Ibid., xii.

[13] "For all great theorists there has always been a sense in which the civic god is dead", ibid., p. 6.

[14] Ibid., pp. 2-3: "The political theorist has been tempted, then, deliberately to blind himself to certain of the 'facts of life.' But when he has actually yielded, the impulse has appeared less deception than desperation. When the tension has mounted unbearably and man becomes a danger to himself and his fellows, who then will maintain the human community, or recreate it? Political theory has been a heroic business, snatching us from the abyss a vocation worthy of giants. Once Plato gave to the world his blueprint for an ideal state, the goldrush was on. Plato's was not only the first and most compelling blueprint, but became the model for most subsequent attempts at resolution. As a model, it sought to solace man, to put him at peace with himself, to ease the destructive effects of the dualism raging within by prescribing a life in accordance with the dictates of reason." Jacobson's reading of Plato *participates* in the conventions which he seeks to disrupt. He argues that theorists have been approached for solace and for what might be termed "hyper-guidance"; Plato, according to his reading, dispensed solace and hyperguidance with his "blueprint"; but what is ignored is the possibility that Plato was offering *precisely* such a critique with a satirical *reductio ad absurdum* of the drive for security, hypostatic boundaries, and Weness. Must we agree with: "there can be no doubt whatever that Plato is only the first, albeit the greatest, in a long line of political philosophers who sought less to increase than to answer the sum of criticial questions confronting humanity"?, p. 16. Although this critique of Jacobson may be classified within that fuzzy realm of aesthetic preferences, it might better suit his aims to disrupt such conventional readings, and also to disrupt his own reading, thus providing a path for a more openly critical metatheory.

[15] See Paul Feyerabend, *Problems of Empiricism: Philosophical Papers, Volume 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially his discussion of Mao Tse-Tung, J.S. Mill, and radical "proliferation", pp. 66-68.

political life. They were defilers and defiers, and the rest (the herd, perhaps, if we wish to expose Jacobson's colorful yet hermeneutically self-made flag and genealogy) were the gracious acceptors of their gifts of solace. Jacobson's metatheory - his code of the codes - suffers from the boundary-making of heroes and brute-acceptors, anarchists who can face anarchy, and order-lovers who can or will not. He does not *wish* to reinforce such a boundary, but his myth includes and expands it, by refusing to include a world of thought *outside* the typical histories of *great* versus *feeble*. Statements such as

> The choices seem clear: abhor the prideful act of granting solace, and accept ineffectuality; or embrace the dispensation of solace, without which 'the masses' cannot conceivably be moved, and become a monument to pride, but effectual 'in the world'. Those who choose the first course are rather special cases, reflecting the cultural and metaphysical crisis of the West in a unique manner, primarily aesthetic in character. Resorting to the methods and magic of the Platos, Machiavellis, Hobbeses, and Rousseaus is unthinkable to them.[16]

may be viewed as indices of a profound refusal or avoidance, one which avoids going beyond the conventional "great man" view of history that Jacobson wants to unseat. This view of Jacobson's textual *agent provocateur* enables us to draw distinctions between his reading of Orwell and the one presented here. For Orwell, Arendt, and Camus, according to Jacobson, are among those who "abhorred" the dispensation of solace.[17]

In a statement which links Camus with Orwell, and which provides a point of departure between Jacobson's view of Orwell and the one being formed here, he writes:

> There is, Camus had written, no possible salvation for the truly compassionate soul, bad news indeed for humanity; no salvation by imputing a positive meaning to the universe, or positive values natural to human life. Conversely, even the most deeply struck pessimism is unwarranted, for it must necessarily impute the meaning at least of non-meaning in the world. What exists instead is but cosmic indifference, directionless drift, profound individual solitude. In the face of this horror we are enjoined, all of us, to create out of the chaos, out of the void even, and to bless the good fortune which has seen the rubbish of the past swept away before our eyes for the first time in over two thousand years. Such would appear to be the message of Orwell, Arendt and Camus. All of it, all those centuries of thought, systems, dreams and splendid visions, all have come down quite simply to this: universal shipwreck followed by darkness as pitch black as the ages ever knew - certainly a challenge worthy of the modern political theorist with no tricks up his sleeve.[18]

[16]Jacobson, op. cit., p. 18.

[17]Paradoxically, yet not necessarily incorrectly, Jacobson notes at the end of his book that his three theoretical heroes did dispense solace by presenting myths of solace-refusal.

It is important to draw a distinction between (what is regarded here as) Jacobson's "correct" reading of Orwell and Camus as thinkers who viewed theoretical works as limited vantage-points, who believed that claims to "objective" and "universal" knowledge are without foundation (Jacobson, in other words, views both as "anti-foundationalists") and his "incorrect" *location* of these mid-twentieth century writers as beyond the entrapment of time, place, culture, and language. In particular, one might question Jacobson's claim that we should

> *bless the good fortune which has seen the rubbish of the past swept away ... for the first time in over two thousand years ... [All] those centuries of thought, systems, dreams and splendid visions, all have come down quite simply to this: universal shipwreck*

While Orwell may have approved of the metaphor, "universal shipwreck", as a symbol of modernity, the view that Orwell (or Camus) would be comfortable with Jacobson's notion that the "rubbish of the past" has been "swept away", thus enabling *unhindered* vision, is questionable. One might ask whether Jacobson is (inadvertently) reinforcing ideological practices which rest on a particularly modern onto-assumption: namely, that it is possible to carry out sweep and destroy missions which allow theoretical bombardiers an unhindered view of their targets/objects (of, in other words, the Real). A more persuasive reading would highlight Orwell's insistence that, due to complex forces of language, culture, and history (which are not separate or discrete "elements"), we are radically *embedded* in the "rubbish of the past". From the vantage-point provided by this codification of Orwell's texts, Jacobson's view is predicated on an assumption of the modern subject

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[18] Ibid., p. 162. Italics removed - Jacobson's use of italics is extensive, symettrical, and an interesting rhetorical strategy. The preface is completely italicized (5.5 pages), as is the epilogue (coincidentally, also 5.5 pages). This may serve a number of purposes: to draw attention to the textual medium itself, as a work of "renaissance" art (in the manner of Machiavelli and Orwell); and/or to emphasize or heighten the mythopoetic aspect (perhaps not *aspect*, perhaps *totality*) of his work by "framing"the "main body" of his text with passages that seek to inform the reader that an atypical discourse/language is being deployed. It is assumed here that the use of italics is a rhetorical tool or symbolic index which connotes difference, and which invites the reader to re-read, pause, "note well", or treat as special the portions of the text which are so emphasized. It is suspected that such deployments are supplemental or ulterior symbolic operations which reinforce Jacobson's more general view of political thought as a type of "political alchemy" or "myth-making". In this regard one might draw parallels between Jacobson and Orwell, as Orwell was fond of unearthing (and/or inventing) such textual ploys in his essays and reviews. In Orwell's view, these rhetorical tools serve important functions in discourse, i.e., in the attempt to persuade and subjugate the reader. See his essay, "Second Thoughts on James Burnham", and his related *As I Please* column on I.A. Richards, the English scholar of rhetoric. See also Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) for a brief examination of "the frame" in American print and electronic media.

as *autonomous*, on, that is, a view of the subject as a *Robison Crusoe individual.*[19] Jacobson's reference to *"the modern political theorist with no tricks up his sleeve"* reinforces this reading of *Pride and Solace* as a particularly modern text which undermines its own modernity - as a text which *admits* to a degree of collusion between knowledge, power, and the techniques of persuasion, and yet simultaneously seeks to distance *itself* from all but the most pure of intentions.

In summary, Jacobson's view of Orwell is deficient because he avoids engagement with the question: how deeply embedded are our thoughts in the politics of time, place, and language? How immersed are we within the "whale"[20] of our perspectives? *How is it possible to disengage from existing categorizations and pre-conscious practices?*

interpretations: 2: judith shklar

For the most part, each one spends his time in philosophy, but when his turn comes, he drudges in politics and rules for the city's sake, not as though he were doing a thing that is fine, but one that is necessary. And thus always educating other like men and leaving them behind in their place as guardians of the city, they go off to the Isles of the Blessed and dwell.[21]

Judith Shklar, like Norman Jacobson, attempts to detect and determine the "function and limit of political theory". "Orwell" is a key symbol within their texts, because he operated in a border-zone that some, including Shklar, have

[18] The *Crusoe* symbol is deployed with both Marx and Orwell in mind. In the *Grundrisse*, we read: "The individual and isolated hunter or fisher who forms the starting point with Smith and Ricardo belongs to the insipid illusions of the eighteenth-century. They are Robinson Crusoe stories ... Man is in the most literal sense of the word a *zoon politikon*, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society." In 1944, Orwell wrote: "The greatest mistake is to imagine that the human being is an autonomous individual ... [Y]our thoughts are never entirely your own ... If Defoe had really lived on a desert island he could not have written Robinson Crusoe" (*As I Please*, 28 April 1944). The dates are significant because, according to David McLellan, *Grundrisse* was unpublished until 1941 and was "virtually inaccessible until 1953", i.e. nine years after Orwell wrote this passage. David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 345. Instead of Jacobson's "unhindered vision", a better metaphor to encapsulate Orwell's works is found in Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" - *1984* and *Inside the Whale* in a nutshell. Like some nutshells, however, this encapsulation is put forth to be cracked.

[20] The reference is to Orwell's "Inside the Whale" (1940), CEJL, vol. 1. The "whale" refers to deeply entrenched, pre-conscious conceptions of social reality. As Orwell writes: "Progress and reaction have both turned out to be swindles. Seemingly there is nothing left but quietism - robbing reality of its terrors by simply submitting to it. Get inside the whale - or rather, admit you are inside the whale (for you *are*, of course). Give yourself over to the world-process..." This is discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis.

[21] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Alan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), bk. VII, 540 b.

seen as "outside" the purview of political theory proper. In an essay on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Shklar writes that

> It is one of the many tasks of political theory to make unstructured beliefs and notions more coherent by relating them, critically and analytically, to the most comprehensive categories of rational thinking. It is a classifying function. We make ideas intelligible by placing them within the existing body of philosophical frames.[22]

She adds that "we have almost an intellectual obligation to see how [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*] can be read rationally rather than used as an occasion for collective flagellation. In short, we may be able to use *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and books like it to give them a more rational character, and in doing so enliven theory itself."[23] But the reading of George Orwell's political thought presented so far is almost diametrically opposed to Shklar's conception of the tasks of political theory. If Orwell is attempting to criticize existing categorizations, conceptualizations, and classification schemes of social and political life - and not to work within their cozy confines, and *not* to avoid collective flagellation (is this, perhaps, a metaphor for collective self-criticism?) - then Shklar's attempt to make *Nineteen Eighty-Four* "intelligible by placing [it] in the existing body of philosophical frames" would seem to negate Orwell's contribution to contemporary attempts to speak about politics, rather than "enliven" such attempts. Indeed, if we subject *Shklar's* views to careful scrutiny, we are able to enliven political theory in very interesting ways.

First, the questions of "rationality" and "unstructured beliefs". Implicit to Shklar's view is the assumption that there are certain *boundaries* to which we must pay attention: the boundaries between, on the one side, "unstructured beliefs and notions" and, on the other, the world of structured, "coherent", "rational" theory. The political theorist, in Shklar's view, "has almost an intellectual obligation" to cross this boundary and to take a work such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (which we are led to believe is "unstructured"), classify it within the political theorist's categories of rationality, and then, having fulfilled his or her *obligation*, return to the world of rationality to discuss his or her "findings". One one might respond to Shklar with the question: with what does the theorist return, if not merely with a more bloated version of the initial classification schemes? Shklar's view is merely the political theory counterpart to what Kuhn has referred to as "puzzle-solving", *normal* science. She views political theory as a type of

[22] Judith Shklar, op. cit., p. 6.

[23] Ibid.

internalized game, an orientation which seeks to defend and *guard* the boundaries of the existing "paradigms" and categories of rationality, rather than push and prod the boundaries themselves.[24] How, one might ask, did these boundaries come into existence? Or did they? One suspects that an ancient figure is lurking in the shadows of Shklar's text: the figure of Plato. Or, more accurately, *a* particularly powerful and entrenched rendering of Plato's *Republic*, one which treats the journey from cave *to* sun *to* cave as a journey of *obligation* on behalf of frenzied, unphilosophical shadow-dwellers, the inhabitants of the *polis* who need (if not desire) the touch of an enlightened knower of the *eternal* ideas, and who need the dispensation of solace from the theorist, if they are to avoid the whip of *collective flagellation*. But what if the theorist returns from those "Isles of the Blessed", returns to the cave and its world of shadows, with the subversive notion that the noncave is also - a cave?[25] This question provides a gate through which we might leave Shklar relaxing in the airport lounge, waiting for her flight to those blessed isles.

In opposition to Shklar's practice of border-crossing, Orwell's does not cross borders merely in order to *assimilate* and *categorize* what lies beyond them

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[24] As Kuhn writes: "Mopping-up operations are what engage most scientists througout their careers. They constitute what I am here calling normal science. Closely examined, whether historically or in the contemporary laboratory, that enterprise seems an attempt to force nature into the preformed and relatively inflexible box that the paradigm supplies ... [N]ormal-scientific research is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies." *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, op. cit., p. 24.

[25] Shklar does not refer to "the Isles of the Blessed" and the "cave" (Plato's *Republic*, bk. VII), but her essay may be read as an analogue to Plato's commentary on the relation between theory and politics, the forms and ephemerality. One may recall the following passage by the "novelist" Robert Pirsig: "The true system, the real system, is our present construction of systematic thought itself, rationality itself, and if a factory is torn down but the rationality which produced it is left standing, then that rationality will simply produce another factory." Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Enquiry into Values* (London: Corgi, 1976), p. 94. More respectably "theoretical", perhaps, is Ashis Nandy's comment about the totalizing aspects of "utopias" and "visions" of social life: "A vision which activizes those aspects of human personality which constantly seek certainty - that is, a vision which links up with the unconscious defences of mind which endorse every search for certainty - is likely to push the human mind toward totalism. [Such a vision or outlook] *should be able to free its partisans from its own patterns and to survive in them only as a certain quality of thinking and acting, as a form of suspicion of existing patterns.*" Ashis Nandy, *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*, p. 10 (italics added). Such a suspicion is notably absent in Shklar's analysis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four;* instead, we find a different sort of suspicion, the suspicion of (what are viewed here as, but not by Shklar) historically, politically, and culturally designated areas of *disorder*, of "unstructured beliefs and notions", which must be *made* coherent (i.e., disciplined) through the classifying schemes of the political theorist. For a view of rationality and political theory which directly challenges Shklar's view, see Michael Shapiro's "Politicizing *Ulysses*: Rationalistic, Critical, and Genealogical Commentaries" in *Political Theory* (Vol. 17, No. 1, February 1989), and P.K. Feyerabend, *Problems of Empiricism: Philosophical Papers, Volume 2*, op. cit, esp. pp. 1-33 and pp. 202-205.

in terms of an existing inside. In *1984*, this is *Big Brother's* version of border-crossing. Big Brother practices an efficient method of relating "unstructured" notions to the most comprehensive, *state*-ic, categories of rationality. It is plausible that (at least part of) the meaning which Orwell attempted to invest in the symbol of "Big Brother" concerned his refusal to acquiesce in what he bluntly accused James Burnham of accepting - the view that "politics is essentially the same in all ages".[26] Furthermore, Orwell's practice may be appropriately characterized as an *elastic type of guerrilla warfare*, in deference to his view that creative writers must be "neither highbrows nor lowbrows, nor midbrows, but *elasticbrows*", and to his view of the writer as *guerrilla*.[27]

interpretations: 3: samuel macey

It is a myth that industrial man was made by the machine; from its first origins industrialism is the application of calculative rationality to the productive order.[28]

If, to Judith Shklar, *1984* illustrates the "weakness of the populist imagination", to Samuel Macey it demonstrates the fecundity of a creative writer.[29] Macey's essay *tempts* one to recognize the elasticity of Orwell's political imagination, and to *breathe imagination* (as Camus advises) into a malleable social myth. According to his reading of *1984*, *time* is a central

[26] George Orwell, "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution", in CEJL, vol. 4, p. 173.

[27] "In Defence of the Novel" (1936), CEJL, vol. 1, p. 254. In Feyerabend's work, "elasticity" (individual and societal) is also an important symbol - see *Problems of Empiricism: Philosophical Papers, Volume 2* , op. cit., esp. p. 70: "It is depressing to see how a system that has much inherent elasticity is increasingly made less responsive by fascists on the Right and extremists on the Left until democracy disappears without ever having had a chance. My criticism, and my plea for anarchism, is therefore directed *both* against the traditional puritanism in science and society and against the 'new' but actually age-old, antediluvian, primitive puritanism of the 'new' Left which is always based on anger, on frustration, on the urge for revenge, but never on imagination. Restrictions, demands, moral arias, generalized violence everywhere. A plague on both your houses!" For a slightly different perspective, see William Connolly's deployment of the symbol, "slack in the system", in *Politics and Ambiguity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987). One senses Nietzsche hovering in the vicinity of both texts, although Nietzsche's pronoucements about *ressentiment* find explicit expression in Connolly's work only. For Feyerabend, it is J.S. Mill's *On Liberty* which emerges as his (avowed) textual predecessor (but definitely not *Utilitarianism* or *A System of Logic*). Although Feyerabend's fiery polemic on anarchism is dense and provocative, one cannot help noting the "age-old" and "antediluvian" rhetorical deployment of "extreme Left" and "extreme Right" metaphors, with, of course, his own view resting smack in the moderate "middle". In the next footnote, in fact, he himself notes the importance of "extreme positions".

[28] Anthony Giddens (1973), cited in Nigel Thrift, "Owners' Time and Own Time: The Making of a Capitalist Time Consciousness, 1300-1880", in *Space and Time in Geography: Essays Dedicated to Torsten Hagerstrand* (Lund, Sweden: CWK Gleerup, 1981).

[29] Shklar, op. cit., p. 16.

signpost around which many themes are gathered. Focussing on "certain time-related problems" in this text, Macey hints that there is a "cyclical" aspect to Orwell's text that forces us to question the sense of *finality* which moors many readings of this "dystopia". Although Macey leans toward the acceptance of the view that the *cycle* involves "the inevitability of punishment, confession, repentance, and reintegration before death of anyone who has strayed even in thought from the love of Big Brother", it will swiftly be seen that alternative codifications are possible.[30] Macey points out that the novel's actions - which, he notes, *probably* but not *definitely* occur in the (to Orwell, future) year 1984 - are framed within the context of a full *cycle* of seasons, and it is on this note that Macey rests his claim that

> the novel does offer a minimal ray of hope when one considers the chronology of its structure. Winston's diary written for the future between April 1984 and March 1985 does in fact become Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.[31]

But Macey slips into the noological furrow of viewing the diary only as "a warning aimed at Winston's past and our present", and of identifying Winston's diary *with 1984*. This unproblematized identification of author with character is not unusual, but the opening Macey provides in pointing to the seasonal cycle is illuminating. The novel begins in spring, the season of renewal and birth, and ends at the close of winter, the season of death, leaving Winston in the *Chestnut Tree Cafe* on the boundary between death and renewal.

Macey also notes the fact that Winston sits in the cafe at "the lonely hour of fifteen", a fact which has no little significance when we note that the events of the "last" chapter take place within this "lonely hour", and, to be as precise as possible, within the first thirty minutes of this lonely hour. In this lonely *half-hour* - which according to Macey and others (including Shklar), is the time of Winston's *integration* with and *acceptance* of Big Brother - there emerge uncalled memories of the past, there is questioning, wavering, *and* acceptance of Big Brother. Winston's vacillation between acceptance and rejection occurs within *ten minutes*. And within this short time Winston does not have complete, *conscious* control of himself, nor is he in the complete control of his supposed master.

Macey's analysis is also suggestive, however, because it highlights Winston's

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[30] Samuel L. Macey, "George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: The Future that Becomes the Past", in *George Orwell: A Reassessment*, edited by P. Buitenhuis and I.B. Nadel, intro. by Bernard Crick (London: McMillan Press, 1988), p. 29.

[31] Ibid., p. 30.

position as an inhabitant of the narrow boundary between warring conceptualizations of time. Macey notes that the novel begins when the clocks strike thirteen, a textual ploy which "combines a symbol that connotes disaster with an indication that society, in using the twenty-four-hour day, has rationalised the measurement of time".[32] He draws our attention to the juxtaposition between the precisely-delineated, rationalised machine-time of the Party, and the attraction of Winston for an alternative, less rigorous, less disciplined (and, one might add, taking into account Orwell's use of a seasonal framework), more *rhythmical* time. Macey notes that Winston "frequently refers" to the twelve-hour clock "or translates its time into that of the twenty-four-hour day into which he must always return" when he leaves the hideaway Julia and he had established in Mr Charrington's *antique* shop, a place which is notable for its "tarnished watches that didn't even pretend to be in going order", and for its symbolism as a place of "escape from the control of time."

Even if the view that Orwell attempted to privilege or counterpoise an early- or even pre-modern sense of time to a late-modern (or, perhaps, capitalist) sense of time is unacceptable, it is clear that time is a battleground in *1984*, and that Winston, who is old enough to remember "pre-revolutionary" time, symbolizes the attempt to retain and to nurture that time.[33] By "exhuming" the multiple references to time in *1984*, Macey prods one to see Orwell's work as more symbolically fertile than is often supposed; second, by hinting at a juxtaposition between different times - perhaps between "machine-time" and "human time", perhaps between the time of "calculative rationality" and time of *ratio-refusal*, perhaps between capitalist time and *possible* time, perhaps modern versus pre- and post-modern, perhaps paradigm versus non-paradigm time - Macey provides a suggestive outline that helps to frame a new portrait of Winston. Winston exists on a very critical border, for he is an actor caught *between* times: one that is precise, rigorous, efficient, and centralized; and one that is more open to change, to indefiniteness, to decentralized action. To Julia, however, who is too young to remember it, that *other* time is barely significant. It is, in a sense, "invisible".

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[32] Ibid., p. 24. In an early essay, Orwell alludes to such a view of rationalized time: "The clock's hands crept round with excruciating slowness ... One would force his eyes away from the clock for what seemed an age, and then look back again to see that the hands had advanced three minutes. Ennui clogged our souls like cold mutton fat. Our bones ached because of it. The clock's hands stood at four, and supper was not till six, and there was nothing left remarkable beneath the visiting moon." (*The Spike*, p. 42.) Other ways of codifying this particular numerical reference will be discussed at a later point in this essay. It is interesting to note the symbolic convergence between this reference and the beginning of Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

[33] For a discussion of "capitalist time", see Nigel Thrift, op. cit.

interpretations: 4: deirdrie beddoe and beatrix campbell

All people who work with their hands are partly *invisible* ... For several weeks ... old women had hobbled past ... with their firewood, and ... I cannot truly say that I had seen them. Firewood was passing ... One day ... the curious up-and-down motion of a load of wood drew my attention to the human being underneath it. Then for the first time I noticed the poor old earth-coloured bodies, bodies reduced to bones and leathery skin, bent double under the crushing weight.[34]

The portrait of Orwell as it has been sketched by Macey and Jacobson suggests that Orwell's works are more textured and elusive than some commentators - such as Judith Shklar - wish to admit or accept. Nonetheless, it "must" be recognized that Orwell's texts are fortified with rhetorical defences that seek to disarm the critic/reader by projecting themselves as the product of *common sense*. This reading of his texts, however, does not have to end with the recognition that he wore the mask of the "common sense commentator".

Deirdrie Beddoe and Beatrix Campbell essays are part of a concerted effort to "demythologize" Orwell; to, as Christopher Norris writes, "see more clearly the nature of that 'common-sense' ideology which lends itself so willingly to propaganda purposes".[35] The essays in this veil-shredding volume adopt the strategy (according to Norris) of reading "Orwell's texts *against the grain* of their own clearly-marked values and assumptions".[36] Norris writes that "it is for critics on the left to point out the varieties of false logic and crudely stereotyped thinking that produced [Orwell's] vision of terminal gloom". With a clearly-marked tone of despair, Norris states:

It is too much to hope that *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, like *1984*, will soon be consigned to the dusty annals of Cold-War cultural propaganda. Celebrations may cease upon the stroke of twelve, but there will still be many whose interests it suits to go on mistaking the Orwellian pumpkin for a Natopolitan coach-and-six.[37]

The essays by Beddoe and Campbell portray Orwell as pervasively "anti-feminist", and, in fact, contemptuous of women. Beddoe argues that

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[34] Orwell adds: "Yet I suppose I had not been five minutes on Moroccan soil before I noticed the overloading of the donkeys and was infuriated by it". "Marrakech", CEJL, vol. 1, pp. 390-392.

[35] C. Norris, introductory essay, *Inside the Myth - Orwell: Views from the Left*, p. 8.

[36] Ibid., p. 10, italics in text.

[37] Ibid., p. 11.

Orwell was not only anti-feminist but he was totally blind to the role women were and are forced to play in the order of things. His prejudice severely hampered his analysis of capitalism and its workings. He saw capitalism as the exploitation of a male working class by a male ruling class. Women were just men's wives - middle-class nags and working-class housekeepers, to be judged simply as good or bad in keeping a 'decent' home. He failed to see how capitalism manipulated both men and women, middle class and working class, alike.

Campbell states that Orwell was a "mysogynist" (sic)[38]; that "nowhere in Orwell do the working class make history"[39]; that his work "incites pity and philanthropy rather than protest and politics"[40]; that "Orwell's eye never comes to rest on the culture of women, their concerns, their history, their movements"[41]; that "his view of the nation is that of the family, an essentially unified whole, speaking the same language, united by kin, not divided by class"[42]; and that "in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* [Orwell] discovers his affection for his washerwoman just before Winston is about to be arrested", thus reinforcing the "isolation" and "defeat" of women.[43]

It is important to examine these critiques if the positive and emancipatory aspects of Orwell's political thought are to be separated - "reclaimed" - from what must be regarded as his ambiguous (and often patronizing) views on women in society.[44] Campbell and Beddoe both present arguments and evidence which forcefully disallow any portrayal of Orwell as a thinker fully, consistently, or even primarily, committed to the emancipation of women. But by presenting Orwell as an anti-feminist (and in fact as a misogynist) they overstate their cases and exclude consideration of evidence which would make Orwell's views on women more problematic than they would have us believe. In other words, the "case" of George Orwell is far more complex and ambiguous than their critiques suggest. Two routes will be pursued here: first, I will defend the claim that Orwell's writings are ambiguous (though not "saintly" or worthy of emulation) on the question of women; second, I will argue that *one* key aspect of his thought parallels and, in fact, reinforces, some of the general concerns raised by Beddoe, Campbell, and other

[38] Beatrix Campbell, "Orwell - Paterfamilias or Big Brother?", in *Inside the Myth - Orwell: Views from the Left*, p. 128.

[39] Ibid., p. 127.

[40] Ibid., p. 130.

[41] Ibid., p. 131.

[42] Ibid., p. 138.

[43] Ibid., p. 130.

[44] As Norris remarks in the introduction: "But clearly there is something more to be said if one wants to go on and *reclaim* Orwell's writings - some of it at least - for the purposes of socialist critique.", p. 8. My strategy may be understood (loosely and critically) within the context of this remark.

feminists.

One of Beddoe's claims - echoed by Campbell - is that Orwell was a misogynist, and that "a pervasive anti-feminism is evident in Orwell's writing."[45] To buttress this claim (or, more accurately, to *rhetorically frame* her essay within a particular context), she cites a letter from Orwell to one of his friends, Brenda Salkeld, in 1934. The passage she cites is as follows:

> I had lunch yesterday with Dr Ede. He is a bit of a feminist and thinks that if a woman was brought up exactly like a man she would be able to throw a stone, construct a syllogism, keep a secret etc. He tells me that my anti-feminist views are probably due to Sadism! I have never read the Marquis de Sade's novels - they are unfortunately very hard to get hold of.

Following this citation, Beddoe comments that "Brenda Salkeld, a friend of Orwell from Southwold days, described his attitude to women in general very succintly. 'He didn't really like women', she said in a Third Programme broadcast in 1960." Thus we have, according to Beddoe's account, an initial reason for suspecting Orwell of misogyny: in a letter to a female friend he made insensitive remarks about the feminists of his day; in the same letter he mentioned his lunch with Dr Ede, who linked Orwell's "anti-feminist" views with Sadism; and, in the same letter, Orwell remarked that it was unfortunate that he could not obtain de Sade's novels.

Orwell's friendship with Brenda Salkeld is mentioned by Beddoe, but the relationship of this friendship to his misogyny is not discussed in either Beddoe's or Campbell's essays. It is not necessarily a reason for dismissing Beddoe's claim, but his friendship with a woman does warrant at least minimal examination. Such an examination does not yield support for the claim that Orwell "didn't really like women" (as his friend Salkeld oddly claims) or for the stronger claim that he hated women. Instead, his letters to Brenda Salkeld indicate considerable respect on Orwell's part for her intelligence and interest in literature. The letters are full of references to a wide array of literature by authors such as Joyce, Dr. Garnett, Mark Twain, J.S. Haldane, Guy Boothby, Mrs. Sherwood, Hugh Walpole, Bernard Shaw, and Vacandard. More to the point, it is clear from the letters that Orwell is engaged in a *dialogue,* in an exercise of reciprocity, and not merely lecturing a "foolish woman". After a lengthy section on Joyce in one of the letters he writes: "Excuse this long and somewhat didactic letter. The fact is Joyce interests me so much that I can't stop talking about him once I start. I thought

[45] Beddoe, "Hindrances and Help-Meets: Women in the Writings of George Orwell", *Inside the Myth - Orwell: Views from the Left*, p. 139.

you would have read most of the books in that list. You [also] ask whether I was really impressed by the *The Dynasts* ... [Additionally] If you want to read *Portrait of the Artist,* Joyce's earlier book, you can get it out of Smith's ... Write again soon."[46] This letter, and the others which are available, do not lend support for the claim that Orwell was a misogynist.

"But", Beddoe writes, "one does not need other people [such as Ede or Salkeld] to testify to Orwell's anti-feminism and to his contempt for women: he does a splendid job quite unaided." Beddoe points to passages in *The Road to Wigan Pier,* such as the following, in support of her view that "he cannot mention feminism and the women's suffrage movement without scorn":

> England was full of half baked antinomian opinions. Pacificism, internationalism, humanitarianism of all kinds, feminism, free love, divorce reform, atheism, birth control - things like these were getting a better hearing than they would get in normal times.

Beddoe refuses to recognize that Orwell - a vocal *supporter* of "humanitarianism" and "internationalism", and an *unbeliever* in God[47] - would place himself amongst those he names. The ironic self-criticism in which Orwell engages is silenced by both Beddoe and Campbell. But this sort of self-critical activity is an important aspect of Orwell's contribution to contemporary attempts to speak about politics - it is the self-puncturing of the *authoritative* authorial stance typified by the following statement in "Politics and the English Language": "Look back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against."[48] These are not the words of a writer intent on projecting his masculinity and power through prose - though one *could* cite examples to the contrary. But the point is *not* that Orwell *really* was a feminist and that Beddoe and Campbell have simply not recognized his *true* nature, for his writings do contain passages that are not sensitive to issues of gender, and some which are actually obnoxious. To cite an example not mentioned by

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[46] Orwell, Letter to Brenda Salkeld (1933), CEJL, vol. 1, p. 128.

[47] For a glimpse of Orwell's views on religion, see "Notes on the Way" (1940) (CEJL, vol. 2, pp. 15-18). He writes: "What we are moving towards at this moment is something more like the Spanish Inquisition, and probably far worse, thanks to the radio and the secret police. There is very little chance of escaping it unless we can reinstate the belief in human brotherhood without the need for a 'next world' to give it meaning ... We have got to be the children of God, even though the God of the Prayer Book no longer exists..." In light of his ensuing comments on Marx and "bread", it might be argued that this reference to the Inquisition is an allusion to Dostoevsky's "Grand Inquisitor" of *The Brothers Karamazov,* and part of Orwell's characterization of modernity as driven by desires for "security" and "bread" rather than "justice" and "meaning". This is discussed in chapter four.

[48] CEJL, vol. 4, p. 137.

either critic, in his review of *Almayer's Folly* by Joseph Conrad he writes: "One of the surest signs of [Conrad's] genius is that women dislike his books".[49] This was written in 1936, or roughly at the same time as *The Road to Wigan Pier*. The question of Orwell's sensitivity to issues of gender is important, but any adequate answer must address the question of *time*. Were his views on women *static*, or is there evidence of *transformation*? In support of the latter, one could cite Orwell's statement in 1944 that "women are the equals of men in everything except physical strength".[50] Also suggestive of transformation is his essay, "George Gissing", written in 1948, where he writes:

> Doubtless Gissing is right in implying all through his books that intelligent women are very rare animals, and if one wants to marry a woman who is intelligent and pretty, then the choice is ... restricted ... But what comes out in Gissing's treatment of his odious heroine, and of certain others among his women, is that *at that date* the idea of delicacy, refinement, even intelligence, in the case of a woman, was hardly separable from the idea of superior social status and expensive physical surroundings. The sort of woman whom a writer would want to marry was also the sort of woman who would shrink from living in an attic. When Gissing wrote *New Grub Street* that was probably true, and it could, I think, be justly claimed that *it is not true today*.[51]

Orwell's comments in this essay, as well as in the reviews previously cited, suggest a transformation in his views toward women.[52] *One* key aspect of

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[49] CEJL, vol. 1, p. 227.

[50] Review of Hilda Martindale's *Sweated Women Labour*, 1944, cited in John Rodden, op. cit., p. 215. Orwell's statement in full reads: "Her own career, and the self-confidence and independence of outlook that she evidently showed from the very start, bear out her claim that women are the equals of men in everything except physical strength." Unfortunately, this review, and Orwell's favourable reviews of Fortune and Burton's biography of Elizabeth Ney and of Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* are not included in CEJL. See "Elizabeth Ney - Feminist and Mad King's Sculptress", *Manchester Evening News*, 17 Feb. 1944, and "Front Sea View of Politics", *Manchester Evening News*, 2 Aug. 1945. Also of note is Orwell's comment that "I should like to meet Edith Sitwell very much ... It surprised me...to learn that she had heard of me and liked my books. I don't know that I ever cared much for her poems, but I like very much her life of Pope." Letter to G. Gorer (1937), CEJL, vol. 1, p. 284.

[51] "George Gissing", CEJL, vol. 4, p. 432, (italics added).

[52] It is crucial to avoid apologetics; it is also crucial to attempt to understand Orwell in reference to a wider context than an article or essay. In reference to Orwell's comments on "birth-control fanatics", his statement in another letter to Salkeld is revealing: "I wonder whether it is true ... that the CT [Church Times] advertisement columns are full of disguised abortion advertisements? If so it is pretty disgusting in a paper which is in constant pursuit of Bertrand Russell, Barney the Apostate, etc because of their birth control propaganda. By the way did you see Barney's recent pronouncements ... about the undesirable multiplication of the lower classes. His latest phrase is 'the social problem class', meaning all those below a certain income." (Letter to Brenda Salkeld (1933), p. 120. vol. 1). There is reason to believe that his attacks on "birth-control fanatics" were at least *partly* motivated by his abhorrence of what he viewed as an eugenics program disguised as a movement for birth "control". As Roddens states: "Some feminists have criticized Orwell's ... reference in *Wigan Pier* to 'birth control fanatics'. As a characterization of the movement's rank

Orwell's thought parallels some of the concerns raised by Beddoe and Campbell. This concerns *invisibility*, the invisibility of people who are peripheralized by socio-political "circles" which form exclusionary boundaries around them. This is Orwell's "business": the "business" of "making people conscious of what is happening outside their own small circle",[53] a *business* which seeks to loosen the ropes of existing rhetoric and hegemonic understandings of self and society.[54] When it is recognized that Orwell oriented himself and his writings - *intermittently* - toward the *invisible* and the *peripheral*, and when a process of transformation is seen as present in his writings, it will be also be seen that there are "grounds" for *reclaiming* the practice upon which such an orientation "rests". Noting such a practice in Orwell's writings, one can go beyond the caricature of his work as "a vision of terminal gloom" and ask: are there openings (invisibilities) behind and beyond the portrait of Big Brother as *final* and *eternal*? This question, however, leads to another: what is *Big Brother*? I argue that Winston Smith is intimately *connected* with Big Brother, because along Winston's path - his boundary-crossing - are the obstacles of *hegemonic* self- and other-

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and file, the phrase is totally unfair. But ... the chief publicists of ... British contraception ... in the 1920s and '30s, Marie Stopes and ... Margaret Sanger ... were not beneath eugenicist appeals. Stopes belonged to the British Eugenics Society and called her own organization 'The Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress.' She proposed sterilization for the poor, the feeble-minded, and half-castes in order to curb breeding ... Moreover, all this was going on when dire predictions were being made about the population decline; Britain's birthrate ... was at an all-time low [while] Nazi Germany's military buildup and pro-family population policies were generating fears of impending war ... Orwell's anti-contraception stand existed within this larger context" (Roddens, op. cit., p. 220). I would agree with Roddens - in reference to Beddoe and Campbell - that there has been a tendency to submerge Orwell, who wrote in a (partially) different time and place, within the standards and key issues of today. At least, I would agree to the extent that the critical appreciation of such a danger does *not* lead us into the pristine halls of whitewash, whereby Orwell suddenly becomes, to a contemporary audience, a gender-sensitive feminist. As Roddens remarks: "...the feminist Left's response to Orwell validates Judith Shapiro's anxiety 'about the extent to which we have been projecting our own historically specific situation onto the lives and experience of those we study...' ... [F]eminist critics are ... hardly alone in their sometime tendency to gloss or even 'rectify' the past. But insofar as it still constitutes as much an impassioned moral and political commitment as it does a well-developed critical method, feminist criticism [of Orwell] seems particularly liable, in Jean Bethke's Elshtain's words, to 'a de-historicizing sweep that deflects from cultural particularities in search of the 'root' of all ways of life.'" (Ibid., p. 221)

[53] "As I Please", *Tribune*, 17 January 1947.

[54] As Donald Barthelme states, "The silencing of an existing rhetoric (in Harold Rosenberg's phrase) is ... what is at issue in Barthe's deliberations in *Writing Degree Zero* and after - in this case a variety of rhetorics seen as actively pernicious rather than passively inhibiting. The question is, what is the complicity of language in the massive crimes of Fascism, Stalinism, or (by implication) our own policies in Vietnam? In the control of societies by the powerful and their busy functionaries? If these abominations are all in some sense facilitated by, made possible by, language, to what degree is that language ruinously contaminated (considerations also raised by George Steiner in his well-known essay "The Hollow Miracle" and, much earlier, by George Orwell?)", "Not-Knowing", *The Best American Essays: 1986*, Elizabeth Hardwick, ed. (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1986).

understandings. *His* revelation about *his* society, ostensibly brought about by *his* reading of Emmanuel Goldstein's book, provides (what to Winston temporarily *appears* as) an *archimedean point* from which he surveys his surroundings with "unhindered vision" - and Julia (*also* a voice of Orwell) is Orwell's way of placing clouds on such a seemingly un*mediated* vista. Julia immediately *exposes* Winston's refusal to engage with the *invisibilities* surrounding claims to knowledge. Thus, in *1984* at least, it is arguable that Orwell deploys the symbol of a woman at a crucial juncture.

interpretations: 5: michael zuckert

Inevitably [my] remarks will suggest that the member of a mature scientific community is, like the typical character of Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, the victim of a history rewritten by the powers that be. Furthermore, that suggestion is not altogether inappropriate.[55]

It is argued here that the escape from the entrapment of existing social conceptions and practices ("paradigms" in the widest sense) is the central motif of *1984*, and more generally, of Orwell's works. Orwell has been read (repetitively) as a *theorist of totalitarianism* - as an opponent of the modern, technological police state. But Orwell's view of "totalitarianism" should not be reduced to Cold War maneuvers, for such a reduction is made problematic by statements such as the following:

I was struck by the automatic way [people repeat phrases] ... fashionable before 1914 [such as] 'the abolition of distance' and 'the disappearance of frontiers'. I do not know how often I have met with the statements that 'the aeroplane and the radio have abolished distance' and 'all parts of the world are now interdependent'. Actually, the effect of modern inventions has been to increase nationalism, to make travel enormously more difficult, to cut down the means of communication ... It is nonsense to say that the radio puts people in touch with foreign countries ... [E]ach national radio is a sort of totalitarian world of its own, braying propaganda night and day to people who can listen to nothing else ... History books have been re-written in far more nationalistic terms than before, so that children may grow up with as false a picture as possible of the world outside.[56]

Such discussions may be comforting when they refuse to examine Orwell's criticisms of Western Liberal Democracy, but such comfort is purchased at the cost of an acute deafness to much of his political thought. Questions concerning knowledge and perspective are central to *1984*, and to use the term "totalitarian" to refer solely to *particular* state systems - and not to ontologies embedded within and carried by language, culture, and symbolic

[55] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* op. cit., p. 167.

[56] George Orwell, "As I Please" 28 April 1944, *Tribune*, in CEJL, vol.3, pp. 145-146.

interaction generally, is to invite, in Nietzsche's terms, the "dead stop" of silence. Zuckert's work, "Orwell's Hopes, Orwell's Fears: *1984* as a Theory of Totalitarianism" resembles Shklar's (and a number of other interpretations) in that both identify Orwell with one of the characters of his novel; second, both tend to overlook the open-endedness of *1984*, and concentrate on the "fatalism" and "pessimism" - the closure - that supposedly constitutes one of its main themes. *Julia's* status in *1984* is a question that makes problematic the views presented by Zuckert, Shklar, and, indeed, those of Jacobson, Macey, Beddoe, and Campbell.

Shklar writes that Orwell had "an idealized view of the proles" - we have already traversed her accusations about the limits of "the populist imagination". Her claim probably arises from Winston's oft-quoted statement, "If there was hope, it lay in the proles! The future belonged to the proles ... The proles were immortal" (*1984*, p. 188), and from her view that Orwell "loathed intellectuals". Shklar identifies Orwell's view with the words of *one* of his characters (and with an undefended assertion that he loathed high-brows). Similarly, Zuckert assumes that Emmanuel Goldstein's "Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism" (*1984*, 163-185) *is* Orwell's view. Such identification leads both Shklar and Zuckert astray. Instead of treating Goldstein's "theory" (and Winston's response) as a *moment* in *1984* - and as a *particular* moment in a journey through *particular* perspectives - they treat it as what Orwell (straightforwardly) *says*. Zuckert follows a path which arrives at:

> As Orwell says: 'The cyclical movement of history was now intelligible ... and if it was intelligible, then it was alterable.' From Orwell's point of view, the discovery of this social knowledge was the really decisive thing, not the various technological devices (such as telescreens) which normally attract most attention in his book.[57]

The passage, 'The cyclical movement of history was now intelligible ... and if it was intelligible, then it was alterable', is from *Goldstein's* book.[58] What is objectionable is not the assertion that technological devices are not "the really decisive things" - for whether the telescreens are examples of "technology" is another question entirely. What is questionable is Zuckert's assertion that "the discovery of ... social knowledge was the really decisive thing". It is possible that Orwell uses Goldstein's book both as a "mouthpiece" for *some* of his views (*which ones* constitutes a *problem*,

[57] Michael P. Zuckert, "Orwell's Hopes, Orwell's Fears: 1984 as a Theory of Totalitarianism", in *The Orwellian Moment: Hindsight and Foresight in the Post-1984 World* (London: The University of Arkansas Press, 1989), p. 51.

[52] *1984*, p. 176.

not a matter of straightforward *assertion*), as a way of illuminating the dynamics that exist between humans and their theoretical constructs, and as a way of focussing on the process of identification between self and group, self and group-think, group and group-view. The book of Goldstein is not just *a* book, but to Winston Smith *the book*.[59] It is an *object* of reverence, like *the Bible*. Winston has a "Saul-like" experience, a sudden broadening of vision, as if he now could understand the whole world, without even finishing *the book*:

The woman down there had no mind, she had only strong arms, a warm heart, and a fertile belly. He wondered how many children she had given birth to. It might easily be fifteen. She had had her momentary flowering, a year, perhaps, of wild-rose beauty, and then she had suddenly swollen like a fertilized fruit and grown hard and red and coarse, and then her life had been spent laundering, scrubbing, darning, cooking, sweeping, polishing, mending, scrubbing, darning, cooking, sweeping, polishing, mending, scrubbing, laundering, first for children, then for grandchildren, over thirty unbroken years. At the end of it she was still singing. *The mystical reverence that he felt for her was somehow mixed up with the aspect of the pale, cloudless sky, stretching away behind the chimney-pots into interminable distance. It was curious to think that the sky was the same for everybody, in Eurasia or Eastasia as well as here. And the people under the sky were also very much the same - everywhere, all over the world, hundreds of thousands of people just like this, people ignorant of one another's existence, held apart by walls of hatred and lies, and yet almost exactly the same* - people who had never learned to think but who were storing up in their hearts and bellies and muscles the power that would one day overturn the world. If there was hope, it lay in the proles! Without having read to the end of *the book*, he knew that that must be Goldstein's final message.[60]

If this is Orwell's view of the "proles", it is hardly "idealized". But more importantly: *is* this his view? Are there indications which might lead us to think that instead of being Orwell's view, the utterances of Winston - like *the book* of Goldstein - are meant to comment on the limitations of books generally? Immediately after Winston's revelation, Orwell writes:

The proles were immortal, you could not doubt it when you looked at that valiant figure in the yard. In the end their awakening would come. And until that happened, though it might be a thousand years, they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could not kill. 'Do you remember,' he said, 'the thrush that sang to us, that first day, at the edge of the wood?' *'He wasn't singing to us,' said Julia. 'He was singing to please himself. Not even that. He was just singing.'* [61]

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[59] Referred to on pages 159, 162, 174, 188.

[60] Ibid., pp. 187-188, italics added, except for references to *the book*.

[61] Italics added.

Winston Smith's response to Emmanuel Goldstein's *book* may be viewed as an illustration of Orwell's views on doctrine, political theory, and orthodoxy. *The book* is placed in his hands by O'Brien, an agent of Big Brother. This suggests that within doctrine there is the danger of co-optation and the reproduction of priest-flock relations. The manner in which Winston responds to *the book* reveals Orwell's ambivalence towards theory. It is not just a book to Winston, but a container of secrets and truths about society. Winston becomes entranced and the book is transformed into an *icon* to be treated with reverence.

Before he finishes the book, Winston 'knows', that is *invents*, its conclusion: hope, he 'concludes', lies in the proles. To Orwell, doctrine/theory must be supplemented by imagination; the book is useful, but it must be complemented. Winston's new perspective, too, must be complemented, or rather *made problematic* because it too represents a partial view. Thus Orwell has *Julia* - in a way that is halting and short-lived - challenge Winston's hegemony, his tendency to think that the world revolves around him and his new perspective. Orwell and Winston Smith are not co*terminous;* Julia is also a significant voice in *1984*, though a quiet one. The deployment of her challenge may be read as Orwell's attempt to question the universality of new-found perspectives. Winston makes a 'discovery' that is intermixed with his hope, and projects it across time and space, as if to say, "the universe revolves around my perspective". Julia responds, quietly, "no it does not". Winston's revolutionary embrace of *totality* is dislodged by the new Copernican, *Julia*. *Julia* inhabits the twilight of the new idol, the border-zone of the not-so-final.

In pointing to the final and the not-so-final, Orwell underlines the problem of finality. To the revolutionaries and to seekers of knowledge, he asks: "Where is the final?". Zuckert has identified a *cycle* in *1984*, but it is the *wrong* cycle (or, at least, one of many possible cycles). It is, instead, a cycle of universal tyranny with the possibility of success over particular tyranny. Big Brother is a multi-vocal image, and this is one aspect of his imagery. Big Brother as a symbol of *specific* tyranny is subverted through even partial disengagement, through the very act of articulating unofficial history(ies),[62] but Big Brother as a *type* is not overturned by the actions of two individuals seemingly isolated in time and space. Since Big Brother is a symbol of the tyranny embedded in any present he will always "return".

[62] Big Brother is not only external or internalized authority/tyranny. "He" is also that aspect of human beings which yearns for, produces, and defends order. He *is* personal identity, which must be overturned in order to make room for transformation. See the discussion in chapter four of this thesis.

interpretations: 6: mary-jo morris

It seems somehow a pity that the very concept of homesickness is presently going to be abolished by the machine civilisation which makes one part of the world indistinguishable from another.[63]

Such plans offer far better prizes than taking away other people's provinces or land, or grinding them down in exploitation. The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.[64]

Mary-Jo Morris[65] attempts to "trace" *1984* to controversies surrounding the development of "ideal languages" such as Basic English and Esperanto, and, ultimately, to Jeremy Bentham's views on language and prisons (schools, and modern living...). She argues that Orwell's work is a critique of Bentham, I.A. Richards, and other proponents of what might be termed "narrow language games". Morris, like Jacobson and Macey, provides another launchpad for this examination of Orwell's thought.

The *Panopticon* (generally attributed to Bentham) has been the subject of considerable political commentary, notably by the aforesaid father of Utilitarianism, by C.K. Ogden (a promoter of Basic English), and by Michel Foucault.[66] To Mary-Jo Morris, the panopticon of Bentham and Ogden is a key point of entry to Orwell's *1984*. She describes Bentham's version as

a circular building with cells lining the walls; in the centre of the building is a watchtower from which the warden is able to observe all the cells without himself moving. The inspector is concealed from the prisoners ... [The system's] effectiveness depends upon constant surveillance and monitoring of prisoners activities.[67]

As Morris notes, Bentham viewed such a scheme of social architecture as applicable not just to prisons in the *conventional* sense of the term, but "to all establishments whatsoever, in which ... a number of persons are meant to

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[63] Review of *Zest for Life* by Johann Woller, 1936, CEJL, vol. 1, 234-235.

[64] Winston Churchill, on Basic English (speech at Harvard, 1943). Cited in Mary-Jo Morris, "Bentham and Basic English: The 'Pious Founders' of Newspeak".

[65] Mary-Jo Morris, op. cit.

[66] See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Toronto: Vintage Books, 1979), especially the chapter entitled "Panopticism". As Foucault writes: "[The Panopticon] is an important mechanicsm, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relations in which individuals are caught ... The Panopticon is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power" (p. 202).

[67] Cited in Mary-Jo Morris, op. cit., p. 106.

be kept under inspection. No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing, in any branch of industry, or training the rising race in the path of education." Ogden, influenced by Bentham's "theory of fictions"[68] and sharing his distaste for (and horror of) verbs, processes, actions, and the "fictions" which arise from non-referential words and "word magic", devised his own "panopticon" as the core of Basic English.

Limiting its vocabulary to 850 words (because that is "the number which can be legibly printed on a single sheet of notepaper" and because one person can learn this number in a month), the Ogden Panopticon, is a "sentence builder" formed by "concentric circles of cardboard on which words are printed so that, no matter how the circles are manipulated, the words appear in a grammatically coherent order". "Thus," Morris notes, "the student can see how an English sentence is constructed".[69] Nouns are privileged over verbs - and Basic places great emphasis on sight to the exclusion of other senses. *Movement* is reduced to the relation of immobile things; movement and process are reduced to *stasis*.

Although Basic English was, of course, presented by its proponents as an instrument by which international communication and peace could be achieved, charges of "cultural imperialism" were often levelled against the project. I.A. Richards, a defender of Basic on the grounds of *utility* and *efficiency*, hinted that Basic would have considerable political implications:

> There is a widespread feeling ... that the maintenance of what may be called the English-speaking outlook in political and moral traditions requires an English-speaking people, a democracy which is linguistically united.

Morris draws parallels between Orwell's development of "newspeak" - of which, as Orwell writes, "the whole aim ... is to narrow the range of thought ... we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible because there will be no words in which to express it" - and Basic, and draws attention to his familiarity with (and ambivalence towards) the overall project of an "ideal" language. As she acknowledges, this ambivalence led him to initially give qualified approval of Basic, "as a sort of corrective to the oratory of statesmen and publicists", but then to launch a devastating satire on all attempts to strip

[68] Ibid., p. 104.

[69] Ibid., p. 106.

language of subtlety and range of expression.

The ambivalence which she sees in his writings is important to note, for it exposes a particular tension in Orwell's thought about language and politics. In "Politics and the English Language", for example, this tension emerges in *both* an expression of approval for simple, "fresh", nontechnical language uncluttered by old, dead, or mixed metaphors *and* an admission that language cannot be completely reconstructed by any particular writer at will. In his essay "New Words" (discussed in chapters three and four), Orwell argues that the development of new concepts and ways of viewing the world is crucial to any attempt to critically disengage from the heavy weight of the existing rhetoric or "reasonableness" of the times, and that such an attempt to disengage is painful, awkward, and halting. In both instances, Orwell vacillates between the allure of simplicity and the danger of simple reductions and tightly controlled theoretical homes. New ways of viewing political reality are, in his view, crucial to critical thinking about politics; but they tend to entrap and "anaesthetize", to develop into a type of prison-house in which critical thinking is domesticated.

Although, as Morris admits, it is uncertain that Orwell was familiar with Bentham's writings, certain parallels lend plausibility to this view.[70] More important - since a "causal" connection is highly speculative - is Orwell's familiarity with Bentham's theoretical descendants such as Ogden and Richards, and their project of language reduction. As we have noted elsewhere, Orwell was concerned with the limitations and boundaries of theoretical languages, and with the invisibilities which such "language games" (to use Wittgenstein's convenient phrase) and cultural "paradigms" produce.

Morris hints at an interesting way of codifying *1984*: it may be viewed as a multi-layered satire or critique of political boundaries. Newspeak, in a sense, is a parallel to the prison of Oceania, a linguistic disciplinary process which parallels the panopticon of the state. Morris provides, therefore, reasons for viewing *1984* as a critique of modernity, and not just as an attack on the State or a particular state, *narrowly* and conventionally considered. And by addressing Orwell's ambivalence toward Basic English, she avoids caricaturing his work as a simplistic polemic against all attempts to "clutter"

[70] Among others which Morris notes, there is Bentham's statement, which Orwell's character O'Brien echoes, that a Panopticon would present "a rare field for discovery ... *Two and two might here be less than four* ... if any pious founder chose ..." ibid., p. 109.

and "change" the King's English. To employ an old metaphor, Orwell's view of political language is predicated on his belief that attempts to divert the "ship of state" (and humankind?) away from "universal shipwreck" and towards new destinations is necessary, crucial, but also risky.

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chapter three: pre-*1984*

Something quite new begins with Plato; or it might be said with equal justice that in comparison with that Republic of Geniuses from Thales to Socrates, the philosophers since Plato lack something essential ... Plato himself is the first magnificent hybrid character ... The activity of the older philosophers tends, although they were unconscious of it, toward a cure and purification on a large scale ... the philosopher protects and defends his native country. Now, since Plato, he is in exile and conspires against his fatherland.[71]

To come to terms with Orwell's political thought, one must come to terms with his language. But his language and key words are not, as he admitted in "Notes on the Way", entirely his own (in the sense of property, *a la* Kropotkin). Nor is the language that will emerge in this project entirely Orwell's own: it will not be unalloyed symbolic ore, recovered from his linguistic caves without impurity. One might imagine the historical Orwell as almost inaccessible, as the *Real* for which the "Orwell" of this exercise in alchemy is but a (hopefully persuasive) surrogate.

In book six of the *Republic,* Plato forms, "in speech", an evocative metaphor to encapsulate *state* politics: it is the infamous image of the "ship of state", a vessel full of intoxicated power-seekers who know nothing of the *true* art of political navigation. And Plato's "allegory of the cave" portrays the social ties-that-bind as inhibitive, as either distortions of the Real with one possibility for revelation (philosophy), or distortions of the Real with only the possibility for limited shifts in perspective (cave-noncave-cave...). In both metaphors, Plato's "moves" may be thought of as *mythopoetic* attempts to symbolize and encourage critical thinking about political reality. Thus the image of *universal shipwreck,* deployed by Norman Jacobson to characterize modernity, may be said to have a distinguished genealogy, although, considering the tension in Plato's works between "myth" and "philosophy", it is advisable to leave open the question of whether the ancient Greek would have shared Jacobson's predilection for *meaning* over *knowledge.*[72] Still, the Plato who spoke fondly of the "calculating" part of the human soul was also the Plato who retained a great passion for enticingly artistic, metaphorical plays of meaning. As he said to Adeimantus immediately before bestowing to

[71] F. Nietzsche, "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks", from *The Philosophy of Nietzsche,* Geoffrey Clive, ed., Oscar Levy, trans. (Mentor Books, Toronto: 1965), pp. 156-157.

[72] On this point, see Lawrence J. Hatab, *Myth and Philosophy: A Contest of Truths* (Open Court, La Salle, Illinois: 1990).

political philosophy his *wordship*: "At all events, listen to the image so you may see still more how greedy I am for images."

Whether Plato, the sometime-creator of myth, advocated the control of mythopoetic thinking - or whether he was arguing that it is the imperative of power to *seek* control of such disturbing centers of change - is an open question. But he identified mythopoetic thinking as a source of disturbance as well as a source of identity, as both a challenge to existing conceptions and practices of the political as well as a weapon for their defense and perpetuation: noble myths bind *and* subvert. Plato, Glaucon, and Adeimantus seek Justice by building a mythical image of a city, a city which they admit does not exist *per se* in the political present. Myths are the building blocks of a new community, a new construction of justice, but they are also the cement of an established communal order.

More than two millennia later, George Orwell constructed an image, a "myth" of another urban political community - London/Airstrip One of Oceania - in which existing political conceptions and practices were entrenched to such a degree that Plato's guardians would have soon become redundant: they would have been rapidly replaced by "gramophones minds" incapable of making innovative modifications to the chart used by the ship of state's navigator, simply because the ship is anchored in the dead calm of present power projected onto past and future.

Much of the literature on Orwell has been anchored in the dead calm of Cold War polemics, and his image of the modern community, the Oceania of *1984*, has served as the eye of a now (hopefully) spent hurricane of political debate. But his pre-*1984* thought has been neglected, and this has tended to moor readings of his later work, which has often been *equated* with his political thought, in theoretically stagnant waters.

In order that Orwell's early political thought may be "recovered" (or at least recodified outside the imperatives of the Red Scare paradigm), and in order that Orwell's image of the city may be framed in a wider context, this chapter interrogates his early texts, with a particular focus on his orientation toward political language and writing. The following, therefore, traces (selects) routes of Orwell's pre-*1984* political language. After looking at two early examples of Orwell's writing, three "key" essays ("Inside the Whale", "Marrakech", and "Writers and Leviathan") will be examined. These will serve as "focal

points" or "hubs" around which Orwell's pre-*1984* political thought will be arrayed.

nomadic irreverence and disengagement

In 1934, Eric Blair (who later created the image, "George Orwell") composed a poem, *On a Ruined Farm near the His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory.* It is here that Orwell's concern with the "gramophone" polity first emerges, a theme that is prominent in his later social and political thought. Modernity is symbolized in this poem in various ways, but most potently as a "gramophone factory", first in the title, where it is juxtaposed with a ruined farm, and later (by poetic implication), with "black and budless trees", "acidic" fields and flowers. The poet exists in the boundary-zone between wilderness and city, between urban and agrarian, between the Machine and the Machine's *other:* "There, where the tapering cranes sweep round, and great wheels turn, and trains roar by like strong, low-head brutes of steel, there is my world, yet why so alien still? For I can neither dwell in that world, nor turn again to scythe and spade, but only loiter among the trees the smoke has slain."[73]

"As I stand at the lichened gate", the first stanza reads, "with warring worlds on either hand - to left the black and budless trees, the empty sties, the barns that stand like tumbling skeletons - and to right the factory towers, white and clear like distant, glittering cities seen from a ship's rail". Although the author attempts to convey a sense of loss, and indeed, a sense of living with the death of the non-Machine, one would be mistaken to interpret the poem as a complete rejection of modernity, or as a romantic longing for simpler and healthier times. This, in fact, is the crux of the matter, for the time of "scythe and spade" is *not* privileged as an ideal to be achieved, but as a potent

[73] (re-lined) These are also key themes in Zamyatin's *We*, but to all indications Orwell was unfamiliar with *We* until 1944. See his letter to Gleb Struve, 17 Feb. 1944, in the *Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell* (CEJL), ed. by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York: 1968), vol. 3, p. 95. Orwell had difficulty obtaining a copy of *We*, and eventually read the french translation under the title *Nous Autres.* The fact that these themes are present in Orwell's early texts leads one to question the view, made popular by Isaac Deutscher, that *1984* was almost entirely based upon Orwell's reading of Zamyatin's work. In particular, one is led to question Deutscher's statement: "[Orwell's] lack of originality is illustrated by the fact that Orwell borrowed the idea of *1984*, the plot, the chief characters, the symbols, and the whole climate of his story from a Russian writer who has remained almost unknown in the West. That writer is Evgenii Zamiatin ... Orwell's work is a thoroughly English variation on Zamiatin's theme; and it is perhaps only the thoroughness of Orwell's English approach that gives to his work the originality that it possesses." Isaac Deutscher, "1984 - The Mysticism of Cruelty", in *Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Text, Sources, Criticism,* ed. Irving Howe, p. 197.

symbolic world that exerts a strong pull on the poet, who, cursed by "double doubts"[74], is trapped in a zone of rejection, "alienation", and immobility.

On a Ruined Farm presents us with the spectre of immobilization in the face of a Machine that destroys the past and entrenches the future within an everlasting present, and as such it is a poem which prefigures *1984* in important ways - but the Orwellian spectre, which has been equated thus far with the complete structurization of agency and the hegemony of the Machine Age, emerges in this poem alongside a "space" which is the location of *disengagement* with society, while in *1984* disengagement is a *precursor* to creation and transformation.

Orwell's poem marks the beginning, therefore, of a language which emerged throughout his later reviews, essays, and novels. Of particular note is the motif of the boundary. In his 1936 review of *Zest for Life,* by Johann Wöller, he writes:

> The underlying theme of the book is the peculiar double homesickness which is the punishment for deserting your native land. It is really a mistake to travel - or rather, one should travel only as a sailor or a nomad travels, not sending roots into foreign places.[75]

However, the very notion of "foreign places" is problematic in Orwell's texts, for important reasons. First, it is unquestionable that his birth in India and his lengthy stay in Burma had a deep impact on his life and political thought. Second, his fear that "the very concept of homesickness is presently going to be abolished by the machine civilisation which makes one part of the world indistinguishable from another"[76] suggests that he could not clearly and precisely *identify* a foreign place, or identify *with* a home - thus *his* (and not merely *Wöller's*) "double homesickness". In other words, despite his

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[74] This is one expression of a key tension which haunted Orwell's thought. As he wrote in another review, "Galsworthy was a bad writer, and some inner trouble, sharpening his sensitiveness, nearly made him into a good one; his discontent healed itself, and he reverted to type. It is worth pausing to wonder in just what form the thing is happening to oneself." See his review of *Glimpses and Reflections* by John Galsworthy (1938) CEJL, vol. 1, p. 308. This tension also surfaces in Orwell's notion of "doublethink" in *1984*, a concept not without ambiguity, for although most readings of *1984* treat doublethink, a term which denotes the simultaneous holding of contradictory opinions or views, as a decidedly negative and politically self-anaesthetizing aspect of thought that promotes despotism, it can also refer to a creative *tension* which *enables* social criticism and the articulation of new social possibilities. This tension is connected, I think, to another, one which exists between his desire for clarity, and his recognition that criticism entails disturbing and remoulding that which is "clearly" reasonable according to the logic of the times (in Gramscian terms, that which is currently hegemonic).

[75] Review, *Zest for Life*, by Johann Wöller, translated from the Danish by Claude Napier, CEJL, vol. 1, p. 234.

[76] Ibid., p. 235.

declarations of love for "England", he viewed England and modernity as (to use a term he did not) increasingly *decentered,* as spilling over their geographical boundaries and homogenizing the *foreign.* If one asked where the boundaries of Orwell's home and polity existed, one would have to respond with equivocation.

But Orwell's review of *Zest for Life* contains a linguistic element absent in *On a Ruined Farm:* it contains his suggestion "that one should travel only as a sailor or a *nomad* ... not sending roots into foreign places". In this remark is the beginning of another prominent theme in his political thought, the beginning of a political practice in which Orwell participated, and which was more fully articulated in his later essays.[77] In these early texts, the battlelines are already apparent: in them, the *nomadic* is pitted against the *rooted.*

If one can speak of "projects" in a generalized way, Orwell's project is the articulation, criticism, and creation of new and meaningful ways of *coming to terms* with social and political realities. His irreverence is a centrepiece, because irreverence is viewed as crucial in the attempt to do battle with the authority of existing rhetoric - to do battle, that is, with *reverence* toward existing ways of framing and constituting political reality. Self-criticism and self-irony are also key weapons, because the self is entrenched within existing power structures. The boundaries around "individual subjects" are seen as hazy, blurred, and gray. Power is not located in discrete, autonomous "individuals" - on the contrary, individuals are de-valorized as focal points of change. The project of formulating what may be designated as "new languages about politics" is viewed as slow-moving, fraught with roadblocks and barriers, and always incomplete. But each writer (considered, of course, in a blurry way) is a mediator within a dense and complex social network. Preconscious or preconceptual aspects of thought are pointed to as both insidious inhibitors *and* treasure-houses of creative thought, outside the

[77] This is not to suggest that Orwell was fully conscious or aware of this practice at the time of this review. It is more plausible to suggest that these are, as he named his 1940 essay, "notes on the way". It is also important, I think, to recognize that one implication of Orwell's statements, "your thoughts are never entirely your own", and "in a half-conscious way", "men" already possess "a sense of community", because "man is not an individual, he is a cell in an everlasting body, and he is dimly aware of it" ("Notes on the Way", p. 17), is that this practice did not wholly *originate* with Orwell, nor was it, from beginning to end, *consciously forged* by Orwell. This point is made to defend and flesh out Orwell's social *ontology,* which will be discussed more fully at a later point. Obviously this is important in reference to his views on the possibility - and the difficulty - of "disengagement" from ideological practices.

"reasonableness" of the everyday.

Three essays in particular attest to this encapsulation of Orwell's political thought: *Inside the Whale,* "Politics and the English Language", and "New Words". These will provide a staging-ground for the subsequent examination of his views.

inside the whale

> Even the whale's own movements would probably be imperceptible to you. He might be wallowing among the surface waves or shooting down into the blackness of the middle seas (a mile deep, according to Herman Melville), but you would never notice the difference. Short of being dead, it is the final, unsurpassable stage of irresponsibility.[78]

To Orwell, human beings live inside "whales", inside highly politicized *encapsulations* of social reality. The whale symbolizes home, polity, doctrine, the "world-process", and deeply embedded conceptions and practices of the real - that is, the whale is a symbol of social ontology and ideology, but it is a symbol which moves beyond the fully articulate and the fully conscious, beyond the notion of ideology as a *set* of clearly identifiable and systematic rules, laws, and tenets. Conscious rejection of a verbalized set of "beliefs" does not entail moving "outside the whale" or placing oneself beyond ideology; ideological *rootedness* is a tricky affair which makes disengagement (and the distinction between religion and science, faith and reason) deeply problematic. As Orwell writes:

> [by 1930] the debunking of Western civilization had reached its climax ... Patriotism, religion, the Empire, the family, the sanctity of marriage, the Old School Tie, birth, breeding, honour, discipline - anyone of ordinary education could turn [them] inside out in three minutes. But what do you achieve, after all, by getting rid of such primal things as patriotism and religion? You have not necessarily got rid of the need for *something to believe in.* There had been a sort of false dawn ... [when] young intellectuals ... had fled into the Catholic Church ... They went, that is, to the Church with a world-wide organization, the one with a rigid discipline, the one with power and prestige ... One need [not] look farther than this for the reason why the young writers of the thirties flocked into or towards the Communist Party ... Here was a Church, an army, an orthodoxy, a discipline. Here was a Fatherland and - at any rate since 1935 or thereabouts - a Fuehrer ... [The] 'Communism' of the English intellectual is something explicable enough. It is the patriotism of the deracinated.[79]

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[78] *Inside the Whale*, p. 521.

[79] In the same essay, however, Orwell modified his analysis by arguing that factors such as unemployment among aspiring middle-class writers, together with their sense that most occupations were not worthy of their energies, *and* their desire *to* engage with the world-process, contributed to their entry into groups such as the Catholic Church and the Communist Party. It is typical of Orwell's style (and his occasional sloppiness) that he provides a complex

The whale's movements are, to some degree, *imperceptible - beyond perception*. This is apparent whether one's focus is solely on "Inside the Whale", or whether it includes other essays. In the former, Orwell initially deploys the myth of Jonah and the whale to "touch upon what is probably a widespread fantasy" in modern times -

> For the fact is that being inside a whale is a very comfortable, cosy, homelike thought. The historical Jonah, if he can be so called, was glad enough to escape, but in imagination, in day-dream, countless people have envied him. It is, of course, quite obvious why. The whale's belly is simply a womb big enough for an adult. There you are, in the dark, cushioned space that exactly fits you, with yards of blubber between yourself and reality, able to keep up an attitude of the completest indifference, no matter what happens.

- and to explain the seductiveness of religious and secular doctrine. This aspect of Orwell's deployment of the whale metaphor has not gone unnoticed;[80] some have even categorized Orwell as "beyond doctrine", or as one who (in Jacobson's words) refused the "solace" of existing conceptions of politics.

In David Kubal's work, the essay itself receives no discussion, even though his title, "Outside the Whale", is a direct reference to Orwell's text, and even though the above passage frames his entire project. Instead, Kubal informs us that Orwell's essay is full of "despair" (p. 24, p. 115) and "fatalism" (p. 26), that "it presents existence as almost meaningless and hopeless" (p. 79), and that Orwell rejected the essay "because he no longer, it seems, agreed with its pessimistic spirit".[81] Kubal ignores two important "moves" in Orwell's essay. First, he misses Orwell's movement *from* a position which views doctrine/ideology as a "thing" which is external to human beings, and which can be consciously and readily rejected or accepted, *to* one which views doctrine/ideology as deeply embedded and pervasive. That this is Orwell's view is evident from his articulation of the whale metaphor itself. In addition to the proviso that the "whale's movements" are "probably imperceptible", he comments that

> the passive attitude will come back, and it will be more consciously passive than before. Progress and reaction have both turned out to be swindles. Seemingly there is nothing left but

analysis followed by and interspersed with statements such as "this is explicable enough" or "this is simply...".

80 Two examples are Norman Jacobson and David L. Kubal, *Outside the Whale: George Orwell's Art and Politics*.

81 With the exception of a bibliographic reference, these exhaust Kubal's critical comments on *Inside the Whale*.

quietism - robbing reality of its terrors by simply submitting to it. Get inside the whale - or rather, admit that you are inside the whale (for you *are*, of course). Give yourself over to the world-process, stop fighting against it or pretending that you control it; simply accept it, endure it, record it.[82]

The whale, that "dark, cushioned space that exactly fits you", is a symbol of selfhood; but it is also a symbol of the "world-process", for Orwell immediately associates acquiescence to the container of the self with acquiescence to the world: "Get inside the whale - or rather, admit that you are inside the whale (for you *are*, of course). Give yourself over to the world-process". It is at this point in the essay that he departs from a simple dichotomy of "inside" ideology versus "outside" ideology.

At stake are questions of structure and agency: human subjects are not only unaware of the full extent and nature of their connection to ideological practices, they are also implicated in structural processes to such an extent that passive acceptance of their present perspectives and constructions of selfhood means acquiescing to the larger, political processes referred to as "the world-process". The responses provided by Kubal (this is *bleak* and *depressing*; but we must shove off nasty ideologies) and Jacobson (*unhindered* vision) miss Orwell's point entirely. Kubal ignores the key question around which Orwell's essay revolves. This concerns *outlook* and *orientation* and, specifically, the outlook and orientation of "schools" of writers. Although Orwell brushes these amorphous groupings of politico-literary figures with very wide strokes, his primary target is the outlook that he believes characterizes Henry Miller's work. Miller does not, according to Orwell, passively submit to a popular doctrine, grouping, or theoretical edifice, but his outlook is passive nonetheless. Orwell lets this be known in the following portrayal of modernity:

Miller's outlook is deeply akin to that of Whitman ... *Tropic of Cancer* ends with an especially Whitmanesque passage, in which, after the lecheries, the swindles, the fights, the drinking bouts and the imbecilities, he simply sits down and watches the Seine flowing past, in a sort of mystical acceptance of the thing-as-it-is. Only, what is he accepting? In the first place, not America, but the ancient bone-heap of Europe, where every grain of soil has passed through innumerable human bodies. Secondly, not an epoch of expansion and liberty, but an epoch of fear, tyranny and regimentation. To say 'I accept' in an age like our own is to say that you accept concentration camps, rubber truncheons, Hitler, Stalin, bombs, aeroplanes, tinned food, machine-guns, putsches, purges, slogans, Bedaux belts, gas-masks, submarines, spies, *provocateurs*, press censorship, secret prisons, aspirins, Hollywood films and political murders. Not *only* those things, of course, but those things among others. And on the whole this is Henry Miller's attitude.[83]

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82 *Inside the Whale*, p. 526.

It is against this "attitude" that Orwell rallies his rhetorical forces. Or, to encode this differently, Orwell portrays a spectrum of orientations, orientations which he views as being centered *inside* the whale. He claims Miller departs from these, but - and this is crucial in locating Orwell's own point of departure, and his subsequent *guerrilla writing* - he criticizes Miller by suggesting that he is *passively intransigent*, a passive "recorder" of the world-process. The orientation which Orwell opposes to Miller's is properly characterized as *actively intransigent*, in that it involves a refusal to align oneself with the center (of doctrine, of trends, of theory, of group - a refusal which Orwell finds in Henry Miller's texts); but it *also* involves a refusal to avoid engagement with the world-process. This orientation is also predicated on the recognition that the self is radically implicated in existing ideological practices, and that consciousness of these practices is limited though not necessarily static.[84]

Furthermore, even though Orwell's preferred style of engagement is not equated with *total* identification, solidarity, alignment or agreement with a particular social movement or organization (or with a total identification of the human with what one considers as one's "self"[85]), the decentred movement referred to here as *active intransigence* is not the domain of so-called "sovereign individuals", for such a notion of sovereignty is notably absent in Orwell's works - both in this essay, with its de-priorization of consciousness, and in other texts.

To refuse *identity* with a group or with current ideological practices (whether, to use Gramscian terminology, they are "counter-hegemonic" or "hegemonic") is not, in Orwell's view, individualistic, nor does such a refusal disallow the possibility of some forms of collective activity and collaboration. Indeed, it is arguable that Orwell viewed this type of refusal as crucial to the health of community. These issues will be pursued in reference to Orwell's social ontology, and, specifically, in reference to his views on political language, political organization, and the location of power, as these views are suggested, implied, and made explicit in his texts. "Politics and the English Language" and "New Words" help to provide flesh for this skeletal reading of his political thought.

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[83] Ibid., pp. 499-500.

[84] This point is made in reference to other essays by Orwell which are dealt with at a later time.

[85] This leaves open possibilities for selfhood beyond whatever is currently articulated, lived, or viewed as selfhood.

politics and the english language

In the first essay, he discusses the "decline" of the English language, "the special connexion between politics and the debasement of language"[86], and possibilities for the renewal or renovation of political language. The central themes of this essay are: his concern that thought, and specifically political thought, has become "anaesthetized" by channelling articulation through conventional, "dead", and "prefabricated" linguistic constructions; his penchant for *clarity* and *creativity* as two routes for the regeneration of political language; his view that such regeneration should be a decentralized process, not confined to elites; and, finally, his admission of complicity with the processes he attempts to describe and undermine.

He initiates his discussion with the statement: "it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything" about the "abuse" of political language because "our civilization is decadent and our language ... must inevitably share in the general collapse."[87] This view of language is predicated, according to Orwell, on the "half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes"(ibid.). Orwell attempts to set a course between both views - one, that language is a "natural", unchangeable "growth", and two, that it is an instrument - although he believes that the former is by far the most prevalent view in modern times. But although he attempts to outline possible strategies for the regeneration of political language, the implications of the considerations he sets forth make the very possibility of regeneration highly problematic.

Foremost among these is what he terms the *anaesthetization* of thought. Following a common motif in his work, he compares current political language with the operation of a machine, or an assembly-line, in which the "human" aspect of communication is overshadowed by "prefabricated" *structures*. Orwell suggests that repetition and standardization have penetrated to the core of discourse, and have produced "gramophone minds". Language is not separated from centralized production techniques; rather, it is a carrier and a reproducer of these methods.

Orwell points to the way thought is channelled through "metaphors which

[86] "Politics and the English Language", in *Inside the Whale and other Essays*, p. 152.

[87] Ibid., p. 143,

have lost all evocative power", metaphorical structures which are "used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves."[88] He claims that prefabricated constructions - such as *"ring the changes on, take up the cudgels for, toe the line, ride roughshod over, stand shoulder to shoulder with","lay the foundations*" - "are used without knowledge of their meaning ... and incompatible metaphors are frequently mixed, a sure sign that the writer is not interested in what he is saying":

> Some metaphors now current have been twisted out of their original meaning without those who use them even being aware of the fact. For example, *toe the line* is sometimes written *tow the line.* Another example is the hammer and the anvil, now always used with the implication that the anvil gets the worst of it. In real life it is always the anvil that breaks the hammer, never the other way about: a writer who stopped to think what he was saying would be aware of this, and would avoid perverting the original phrase. (ibid.)

Implicit to Orwell's conception of language is the contention that consciousness and critical thought are not coterminus with language - the mass of symbols deployed in discourse reaches beyond the capacity of consciousness to assess them, view them, and understand them. The aspect of language which is consciously constructed and examined has become, in his view, less prominent in "modern English prose".[89] Orwell writes that modern English is markedly characterized by a "mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence", and that "as soon as certain topics are raised, the concrete melts into the abstract and no one seems able to think of turns of speech that are not hackneyed: prose consists less and less of *words* chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of *phrases* tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated hen-house." (ibid.)

Throughout his essay, he emphasizes the way language operates beyond the scope of conscious analysis - and reinforces this point by referring to his own use of language. "Look back through this essay," he writes, "and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against."[90] By stressing the limited scope of analysis, and of the conscious moulding of discourse, Orwell undermines our sense of reassurance in our ability and capacity to think about social reality. This is reinforced by his identification of rhetorical strategies - for example, the use of foreign words to "give an air of culture and elegance", or the use of words

[88] Ibid., p. 146.

[89] Ibid., p. 145.

[90] Ibid., p. 154.

such as "phenomenon", "element", "objective", and "liquidate" to allow an author to borrow from the authority of modern science - which blur the line between persuasion and communication. Orwell identifies power sources within the process of writing - sources of power which the writer taps by using the appropriate phraseology - and by doing so, casts a cynical eye on the project of communication itself.[91] But at the same time, he urges us to avoid thinking that regeneration and critical thought is impossible, due to the enormity of the task. Clarity of meaning and the creation of new metaphors and images are posited as key defenses against the "invasion of one's head by ready-made phrases" which "anaesthetize a portion of one's brain."[92]

If we link Orwell's discussion of *anaesthetization* with what has been termed his promotion of *active intransigence,* we shall see that Orwell's project of regeneration is decentralized. The assault on anaesthetization may be viewed as an assault on centers of power as they are funnelled or reproduced or reinforced through communications media. The wholesale and widespread use of metaphors and phraseology which have been fabricated by others in the past centralizes and reinforces a limited number of ways of viewing political reality. By urging each writer to be unorthodox - and at the same time emphasizing that language cannot be completely unorthodox - Orwell is making the same theoretical moves as in *Inside the Whale,* promoting the creation of disturbing, new, and multiple visions of the political which at least temporarily provide openings in the walls of our linguistic homes. He admits, however, that *complete* unorthodoxy - which would amount to the complete and conscious refashioning of language - is beyond any writer's ability. Existing rhetorico-authority formations, perpetuated through language, cannot be fully smashed because they cannot be fully identified.

In "Politics and the English Language", we find one expression of that aspect of his thought that George Woodcock identified in his characterization of Orwell as "a convinced decentralist, a hater of the metropolis."[93] What is attacked by Orwell is urbane "pretentiousness", the "putting on of airs", the sophistication of a city crowded with symbols. The tension between the urban and rural which found in his early poetry is subtly present in Orwell's writings on political language - at least if "urban" is understood loosely, as a

[91] Ibid., p. 147.

[92] Ibid., pp. 154-155.

[93] George Woodcock, *Orwell's Message: 1984 and the Present* (Harbour Publishing Co. Ltd., Madeira Park, B.C.: 1984), p. 127.

symbol of a relatively centralized form of human association that is tightly bound by linguistic, political, and economic ties - and as the centers of the industrial revolution and the machine age. But the clear air and meaning of the countryside exist side-by-side in this text with the recognition that the renovation of political language - if there is to be such a renovation - requires a determined effort at summoning new words.

new words

In an essay which sheds light upon these considerations, Orwell attempts to confront the task of breaking out of the whale of our perspectives. "New Words" is best viewed as a type of note-making, for not only does Orwell stray widely from his desire to clarify and simplify meaning, he does so in an essay that remained unpublished for two decades, which suggests that his work was nascent and exploratory. This essay parallels "Politics and the English Language", but in it Orwell deals with questions of ontology more directly, positing, for analytical purposes, a tension (and not a dichotomy) between "dream thought" and "waking reasonableness". Whereas in the previous essay Orwell raised concerns about the abstract and vague character of modern political thought, in "New Words" the modern proclivity for concreteness and precision is (primarily) viewed as a limitation on thought and creativity:

> At present the formation of new words is a slow process (I have read somewhere that English gains about six and loses about four words a year) and no new words are deliberately coined except as names for material objects. Abstract words are never coined at all, though old words (e.g. 'condition', 'reflex' etc) are sometimes twisted into new meanings for scientific purposes ... So soon as we are dealing with anything that is not concrete or visible ... we find that words are not liker to the reality than chessmen to living beings.[94]

He employs the example of dreams to illustrate the difficulty of describing "inner life", and then uses dreams as an analogy or "anecdote" for that aspect of human thought which influences and permeates the verbalization of meaning. "Dream thought", then, approximates pre- and non-verbal thought - "dream-thoughts take a hand even when we are trying to think verbally, they influence the verbal thoughts" - the latter being referred to variously as "intellectual" and "chessboard reasonableness". Orwell attacks everyday reasonableness - and the tendency in modern writing to focus upon material objects rather than relationships and processes - because he believes that it is from the realm of "feeling", "dream-thought" and the non-verbal that

[94] "New Words", CEJL, vol. 2, p. 2.

"motives", "all likes and dislikes, all aesthetic feeling, all notions of right and wrong" spring. Because dreamthinking is subtle and difficult to articulate, human desires are standardized and structured by existing linguistic constructions. "Reasonableness", therefore, entraps and centralizes.

It is consonant with Orwell's position to state that society and politics are stabilized by this process of entrapment, as human thought is homogenized and disciplined through linguistic orderings which allow for only certain types of expression. Hence there are, in Orwell's conception, huge difficulties facing anyone who attempts to "break out of the star-like isolation in which human beings live"; thoughts, experiences, and aspirations which in some sense lie *outside* of discourse and convention are isolated from the community (since they cannot be fully communicated) and, to an important extent, from one's *own* conscious, "waking" understanding.

This reading of "New Words" also helps to contextualize Orwell's frequent exhortations about "mental honesty" and "mental dishonesty". Specifically, his statement in "Politics and the English Language" that

> The 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 a cuttlefish squirting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'. All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia.[95]

is explainable as a comment, not *only* about "political conspiracy" or the "sad decline of honesty", but about the *necessary* falsification of aims and desires ("unintentional lying") due to the inadequacy of existing modes of political expression to express what is new, different, and unorthodox. He writes,

> A writer falsifies himself both intentionally and unintentionally. Intentionally, because the accidental qualities of words constantly tempt and frighten him away from his true meaning. He gets an idea, begins trying to express it, and then, in the frightful mess of words that generally results, a pattern begins to form itself more or less accidentally. It is not by any means the pattern he wants, but it is at any rate not vulgar or disagreeable; it is 'good art'. He takes it, because 'good art' is a more or less mysterious gift from heaven ... Is not anyone with any degree of mental honesty conscious of telling lies all day long ... simply because lies will fall into artistic shape when truth will not? Yet if words represented meanings as fully and accurately as height multiplied by base represents the area of a parallelogram, at least the *necessity* for lying would never exist. And in the mind of reader or hearer there are further falsifications, because, words not being a direct channel of thought, he constantly sees meanings

[95] "Politics and the English Language", p. 154.

which are not [intended to be] there.[96]

Also important is Orwell's explicit characterization of creative writing as a *political* process. Again, Orwell suggests, through his use of the use of the "cuttlefish" metaphor, that what is at stake is a quasi-instinctive defense of home or self againsts threats to their security. Communication and thought are political processes: defense, offense, lying, evasion, struggle, fear, and temptation - all issues are political issues in a "schizophrenic" world.

Of particular note is the type of metaphor which Orwell deploys to characterize "imaginative writing", or the process of articulation which seeks to *escape* existing rhetorical formations, to *explore* new self-understandings, and to *communicate* with other selves. "'Imaginative' writing," he states, "is ... a flank-attack upon positions that are impregnable from the front." By using an offensive military metaphor he makes it clear that he is not simply undertaking a "description", but positioning himself against an enemy. Furthermore, his talk of flank-attacks and his view that "primary meanings" are to be depriorized in relation to nonprimary meanings are suggestive of a "guerrilla" orientation to writing. Guerrillas cannot carry out frontal assaults; but they can out-flank regular, *primary* army units while maintaining a fluid relation (far/near) with their own primary power centres. In this way, guerrillas engage *with* the world-process and maintain their intransigence, while *decentering* power.

marrakech

I have often been struck by how easy it is to get people to take you for granted if you and they are really in the same boat, and how difficult otherwise ... When I was with the tramps, merely because they assumed that I was on the bum it didn't make a damn's worth of difference to them that I had a middle-class accent ... Where if, say, you brought a tramp into the house and tried to get him to talk to you it would just be a patron-client relationship and quite meaningless. - George Orwell, letter to Jack Common

Not far from the primary European centers of power/meaning is Marrakech, to which Orwell dedicated an essay of the same name. "When you walk through a town like this," he wrote, "... when you see how the people live and still more how easily they die, it is always difficult to believe that you are walking among human beings." He added: "All colonial empires are in reality founded upon that fact. The people have brown faces ... Do they even have names? Or are they merely undifferentiated brown stuff, about as

[96] "New Words", op. cit., p. 5.

individual as bees or coral insects? They rise out of the earth, they sweat and starve for a few years, and then they sink back into the nameless mounds of the graveyard and nobody notices that they are gone."[97]

"Marrakech" is a series of encounters with the political *invisibilities* surrounding empire. The narrator's vantage point is that of a middle-class Briton; the narrator speaks about defenses which protect his home and his view of the political world; and the narrator is to lead his audience beyond these defenses on a journey outside their home-view. To do so, it is necessary for the narrator first to establish an *identity* between fellow inhabitants of the same home - a symbolic relationship of trust between kin, or between those sharing the "same boat". Then the narrator smoothly exits the home, gently pulling the "we" behind him, executing a flank attack on positions that are unbreachable from the front, decentring power and meaning by decentring what is meant by "home-base": for example, one hears statements such as "when you walk through such a town", " you can hardly believe", "when you go through the Jewish quarters you gather some idea of what the medieval ghettoes were probably like"[98] and,

> I had not been five minutes on Moroccan soil before I noticed the overloading of the donkeys and was infuriated by it ... This kind of thing makes one's blood boil, whereas - on the whole - the plight of the human beings does not. People with brown skins are next door to invisible.[99]

Each anecdote (or parable) of Marrakech follows this schema: Orwell is *of* the home, then his perspective of home transforms, expands, and loses its center in "England". But as in his review of *Zest For Life*, "England" is not a geographically discrete entity, but a blurred, ideological orientation towards the political world. Such orientations (home-views, whales) help to structure political reality and to create the visible and the invisible:

> All people who work with their hands are partly invisible ... Still, a white skin is always fairly conspicuous. In northern Europe, when you see a labourer ploughing a field, you probably give him a second glance. In a hot country ... the chances are that you don't even see him ... In a tropical landscape one's eye takes in everything except the human beings. It takes in the dried-up soil, the prickly pear, the palm-tree and the distant mountain, but it always misses the peasant hoeing at his patch ... It is only because of this that the starved countries of Asia and Africa are accepted as tourist resorts. No one would think of running cheap trips to the Distressed Areas ... What does Morocco mean to a Frenchman? An orange-grove or a job in

[97] "Marrakech", p. 388.

[98] Ibid., p. 389.

[99] Ibid., p. 392.

government service. Or to an Englishman? Camels, castles, palm-trees, Foreign-Legionnaires, brass trays and bandits. One could probably live here for years without noticing that for nine-tenths of the people the reality of life is an endless, back-breaking struggle to wring a little food out of an eroded soil.[100]

Implicit to Orwell's view is that language is a way of breaking the world up into parts, and that the way those parts are broken up and ordered into bundles of meaning is an intensely political process. What does "Morocco" *mean* to an Englishman? A certain bundle of meanings: camels, castles, palm-trees, bandits. These meanings are not wholly based upon a lack of experience outside the *territorial* confines of England, but also upon his experience inside its *politico-linguistic* confines.

"Morocco" is a tourist resort, and not East London, partly because "Morocco" inhabits a particular place in a complex meaning-network which screens and selects (and depoliticizes) features of its political landscape. A tourist or agent of Empire can travel to Morocco and *find* "Morocco", the "Morocco" of camels, donkeys, and prickly pears; but he or she may not *see* broken-down, brown-skinned old women carrying wood. Or rather, as Orwell writes, "though they had registered themselves on my eyeballs I cannot truly say that I had seen them. Firewood was passing - that was how I saw it."[101] Political vision, in Orwell's texts, is as much a matter of *political priorization* - in this case with the commodity as first priority - as it is *political selection* of the features of political reality. But the highest priority is the *home*, the political base of human meaning.

not counting niggers

Empire defends itself through meaning-networks, within which political battles occur. In "Not Counting Niggers", Orwell attacks a proposal by Clarence Streit for the unification of Western Europe, America, and the "self-governing dominions of the British Empire", by arguing that it is predicated on the massive exploitation of the empires' inhabitants. Orwell *re-codes* Streit's proposal as follows:

...there are references [in the book] to the 'dependencies' of the democratic states. 'Dependencies' means subject races. It is explained that they are to go on being dependencies, that their resources are to be pooled among the states of the Union ... [India,] which contains more inhabitants than the whole of the 'fifteen democracies' ... gets just a page and a half ...

[100] Ibid., p. 390.

[101] Ibid., p. 391.

and that merely to explain that as India is not yet fit for self-government the *status quo* must continue ... The British and French empires, with their six hundred million disenfranchised human beings, would simply be receiving fresh police forces; the huge strength of the USA would be behind the robbery of India and Africa ... All phrases like 'Peace Bloc' ... imply a tightening-up of the existing structure. The unspoken clause is always 'not counting niggers'. For how can we make a 'firm stand' against Hitler if we are simultaneously weakening ourselves at home? ... What we always forget is that the overwhelming bulk of the British proletariat does not live in Britain, but in Asia and Africa.[102]

Linguistic categories and signposts of unity (such as 'Peace Bloc', 'dependency') delineate political boundaries. Although Orwell unavoidably engages in categorizations - such as "British proletariat", "subject races", "middle-class", etc. - his view of their role in political language is that they function to demarcate the political world in such a way as to provide clean lines of battle between political goods and political evils; they serve, that is, to gloss over differences, dynamics, and indefiniteness.

As a result of these ontological assumptions, social change is limited to frontal assaults which *reinforce* and *invent* opposing identities, because ideology and power are seen as operating within and emerging from atom-like individuals are groups. As he wrote in his review of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Portrait of the Antisemite*:

Part of what is wrong with M. Sartre's approach is indicated by his title. 'The' antisemite, he seems to imply all through the book, is always the same kind of person, recognizable at a glance and, so to speak, in action the whole time. Actually... antisemitism is extremely widespread, is not confined to any one class, and, above all, is intermittent. But these facts would not square with M. Sartre's atomised vision of society. There is, he comes near to saying, no such thing as a human being, there are only different categories of men, such as 'the' worker and 'the' bourgeois, all classifiable in much the same way as insects.[103]

shooting an elephant

Orwell's view of the human being finds a potent expression in "Shooting an Elephant", a text which can be regarded, if viewed from the vantage-point provided by his other essays, as an attack on atomism and as an exposition of what he sees as the main weaknesses of universal categorizations. Pre-dating Marrakech, "Shooting an Elephant" also takes the form of a series of discoveries in which the narrator begins to grasp the difficulties of acting and thinking on the fringes of the empire's meaning-networks. "In Moulmein,

[102] "Not Counting Niggers", CEJL, vol. 1, pp. 396-397.

[103] "Review: *Portrait of the Antisemite* by Jean-Paul Sartre", Observer, Nov. 1948.

in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people - the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen," the narrator explains, "... Theoretically - and secretly, of course - I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British..." -

> [but] I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, *in saecula saeculorum*, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-product of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.[104]

Orwell's chief symbolic props include the above narrator and an elephant who, though tame, has "gone into must" (temporarily gone wild), "inflicting violence" on valuable "property", including a Dravidian coolie and a municipal rubbish van. But the "reason" the narrator ultimately and secretly, after much vacillation, gives for shooting the elephant is outlined in the following passage:

> ...at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing ... I looked at the sea of yellow faces ... and suddenly I realised that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly ... I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalised figure of a sahib.[105]

Apparently, what is at stake is a struggle for power over personal identity, but the fact that a struggle takes place reveals the fragmented nature of the person, the multiplicity of the political actor. Moreover, the boundaries of the "person" are *blurred*, as the narrator is a participant *within* (but potentially a disrupter of) networks of symbolism and power. Orwell's narrator is not one whose autonomy is a given; what *are* given are relations of force, tensions, and authorities. The narrator's personal identity is viewed as not purely personal, but social and political: he becomes a "hollow", "conventionalised figure of a sahib", for

> it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the 'natives' and so in every crisis he has got to do what the 'natives' expect of him. He wears a mask, and his

[104] "Shooting an Elephant", CEJL, vol. 1, pp. 235-236.

[105] Ibid., p. 239.

face grows to fit it ... A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. (ibid)

What appears in the beginning as a struggle solely over personal identity, later appears as a battle between contending social, political, *and* personal identities, a battle whose lines intersperse, overlap, and intertwine, in the fashion of guerrilla warfare. The separate, atom-like individual is problematized; society is within and without, imbedded in the individual and the non-individual. At the same time, however, the individual is *not* completely collapsed into a category, for example, the category of "middle class British policeman".

The social ontology which informs the text may be encapsulated as follows: individuals cannot be located on a neatly defined social grid which maps out the for and against of political life; individuals are not mere place-holders on a theoretical edifice, but neither are they autonomous and asocial; possibilities for change and difference exist, though often they are like quiet voices, sometimes issuing from the vocal chords of the most unlikely persons, in this case a "middle class colonial policeman".

In this instance the mask of the tyrant, of the empire's defender and proto-polizei, of the *Anglo-Indian* sahib, muffles the narrator's other, quieter voice and covers his other face: for it is the rule of this particular political mask that one must appear resolute, that *one must know one's own mind and do definite things* - the home/sahib cannot appear divided, and multiplicity must be purged to make way for a strictly enforced identity. A splintered *one* must become an undifferentiated *we*; and we must have homogeneous, total control of the person, for the person is a locus for change (read: threats to present *we*ness and power). But, as indicated earlier, the mask - whether imperial or antisemitic - is *intermittent*.

Thus the guerrilla-writer transgresses boundaries that would otherwise be responded to with either of two orientations: *despair* ending in quietism (which is one version of passive intransigence), or *frontal assault* ending in reaction, the hardening of the *other*, or brutal tyranny and "social reconstruction" (the total elimination of homesickness). Although "Shooting an Elephant" ends with the narrator's (final?) capitulation to the mask of the sahib, the text as a whole is not an example of capitulation, but of political struggle between rival possibilities. The final words of "Not

Counting Niggers" are fitting in this regard, for non-capitulation, like a Orwell's hope for a "real mass party whose first pledges are to refuse war and to right imperial injustice", exists "as a possibility, in a few tiny germs lying here and there in unwatered soil."

notes on nationalism

Orwell's transgression of the boundary of the nation-state is a theme which flows through his texts. In "Notes on Nationalism", for example, he offers a recodification of the symbol "nationalism" which is predicated both upon the wide application of the term to "movements", "tendencies", "habits of mind", and rigid classification schemes of the political world, *and* upon a distinction between "love of place and way of life" and the projection of these onto others.

First, it is important to recognize that Orwell is using the term in an "extended" sense: "there is a habit of mind," he writes, "which is now so widespread that it affects our thinking on nearly every subject, but which has not yet been given a name. As the nearest existing equivalent I have chosen the word 'nationalism', but it will be seen in a moment that I am not using it in quite the ordinary sense, if only because the emotion I am speaking about does not always attach itself to what is called a nation - that is, a single race or a geographical area. It can attach itself to a church or a class, or it may work in a merely negative sense, *against* something or other and without the need for any positive object of loyalty."

Prefiguring his comments, previously mentioned, on Jean-Paul Sartre's *Portrait*, Orwell identifies the following as "nationalism":

> I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labelled 'good' or 'bad'. But secondly - and this is much more important - I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognising no other duty than that of advancing its interests ... Nationalism ... is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unity in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality.[106]

"Patriotism" Orwell defines as "devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to

[106] "Notes on Nationalism", CEJL, vol. 3, p. 362.

force upon other people." Orwell redefines the politics of place by refusing to view the attachment to the nation-state as different in kind from the attachment to any given unit of political meaning; he also refuses, however, to place beyond the pale of his endorsement love of place and love of a "particular way of life". By drawing distinctions between his own codification of "patriotism" and his own codification of "nationalism", he attempts to "make space" for an orientation characterized by a more *nomadic* practice of attachment and home-leaving.

subconclusion: guerrilla warfare

It this nomadic practice which surfaces in *Writers and Leviathan*, in his statement that a writer should not engage in *institutional* politics as a writer, but "as a citizen, as a human being". He clearly states that this does *not* mean that a writer should not write politically, for such a statement, as he recognized, would be ludicrous. Instead, Orwell posits a bifurcation or a multiplication of the political: institutional (party, organizational) politics and non-institutional politics. The writer's relationship with the institution is that of "an individual, an outsider, at the most an unwelcome guerrilla" even though the institution in question is symbolized as a "regular army", to which a certain degree of allegiance is expected and reluctantly condoned.

Orwell also responds to possible objections to this view of the guerrilla-writer. Though he does characterize such an orientation as individualistic, it is important to take note that his ontology does not support a view of the individual as "sovereign" or as non-social. Furthermore, he does not dispute the importance of social or collective action. What is at stake is a decentering of power, away from ossified units of political allegiance. This decentering also extends to his view of the writer, who is more often viewed as a *mediator* within political meaning networks, than an *originator* of novel ideas. Since mediation is always between centers, and not a self-contained unit, Orwell's practice (i.e., the practice that is present in Orwell's texts), may be viewed as a crossing of boundaries, a movement, a *guerrilla war* of active intransigence.

The guerrilla orientation of Orwell's political thought does not refuse to engage in the politics of place, but it does refuse the transformation of place into prison; *movement* is privileged over *stasis*. It admits the unavoidability, and, in fact, the love of a home, but it struggles to escape the

finality and the drive for security which has found such a place in the hearths of Modern Homes, and in the hearts of their highly politicized inhabitants. To hazard a tentative code for *1984*, it might be ventured that the costs and benefits of such an orientation are what is at stake in Orwell's myth of the modern community.

chapter four: *1984*

One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns ... It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations and, more generally, to establish a zone of rights over the entire 'exterior', over all of the flows traversing the ecumenon ... There is still a need for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects. That is why Paul Virilio's thesis is important, when he shows that 'the political power of the State is *polis*, police, that is, management of the public ways,' and that 'the gates of the city, its levies and duties, are barriers, filters against the fluidity of the masses.[107]

synopsis

Now that an overview (or, rather, a *particular* codification) has been provided of Orwell's political thought prior to the publication of *1984*, this text may be more forcefully interrogated. *1984* addresses two key problematiques: power/knowledge and identity/difference. Together, these frame Orwell's image of the modern community. The orientation of guerrilla warfare found in his earlier works is also present in *1984*, and may be read as his "answer" or "response" to these problems. It is argued here that the practice of guerrilla warfare points in the direction of a postfoundational conception of self and society.

After pursuing this by a close reading of the text (and by decentring the text in accordance with a strategy that is attentive to his other writings), possible "connections" between Orwell and Camus will be considered. Camus' "Myth of Sisyphus" will be deployed as a "looking glass" through which certain features of *1984* will be viewed and magnified. This will be done in order to reinforce this reading of Orwell's texts by *provoking* thought about his intellectual genealogy, and, more generally, to provoke thought about the significance of his orientation to political life.

1984: the transgression of modern boundaries

Orwell's chief textual tool is the *boundary*. Boundaries are present in his deployment of the symbol "doublethink", but also in his portrayals: of a world divided into the superstates of Oceania, Eastasia, Eurasia, and a peripheral area contested by each; of Oceania's inhabitants, who are divided

[107] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Treatise on Nomadology-The War Machine", *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit., p. 385.

into "inner-party members", "outer-party members", "proles", and "thoughtcriminals"; of the relations between Winston and O'Brien, Winston and the thought police, Winston and Julia, and Winston and previous thoughtcriminals; of Winston as a subject who straddles and moves through three different times (pre-revolutionary, revolutionary, and post-revolutionary); of Winston Smith as heroic *and* common; and of the struggle between Winston and Julia, who are the makers of "unofficial history"[108] and O'Brien and the thought police, who are the enforcers of "official history".

The opening pages of *1984* underline the importance of the symbol of the boundary. The first words, "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen", indicate the end of winter, the advent of spring, and the juxtaposition of a seasonal framework with a machine-governed one. Following Samuel Macey, it is noted that the phrase "the clocks were striking thirteen" may also symbolize the boundary between the twelve-hour clock and the twenty-four hour clock, another juxtaposition which suggests that Orwell is drawing attention to a more complete rationalization of time. In the next sentence, another boundary appears: Winston Smith. The name "Winston Smith" is a juxtaposition of two symbols, the heroic (Winston Churchill, for whom Orwell had qualified admiration) and the common (Smith being a common English name). On the second page appear the boundaries between Winston Smith and the police patrol, and between the police patrol and the Thought Police.

Winston Smith's role as a subject who is subjected to boundaries are interpreted here as having important significance. At this point between renewal and death, heroic and common, watched and watcher, the novel begins with the sickly Winston Smith's *movement*. He moves into a filthy Victory Mansion, itself a symbol juxtaposing progress and decay,

[108] "Unofficial history" is a term which will be used often in this text, even though it does not appear in *1984*. It appears in Orwell's essay on Arthur Koestler. There, he describes Koestler as a writer of "*unofficial* history, the kind that is ignored in the text-books and lied about in the newspapers" and notes that "England is lacking .. in what one might call concentration-camp literature". Despite the relatively clear demarcation between England and the Soviet Union in *this* essay, one must take into account Orwell's comment that "to understand such things [as concentration-camps] one has to be able to imagine 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*." One might conclude from this either that *1984* is not a novel of the type "Darkness at Noon", or that their similarities show that England and other totalitarian countries had and have far more in common than Orwell, in this essay, was prepared to admit. But even in this essay, Orwell's stance on this issue shifts from that of demarcation to that of commonality, as evidenced by his comments on revolution (discussed later in this chapter). His general comments about this indicate, in fact, that it is a matter of a difference in degree, not kind. See "Arthur Koestler", CEJL, vol. 3.

walks past the elevator - an inoperative machine - and enters "his" room, a room that is not *his*, for it is commanded, like (almost) every location in Oceania, by telescreens and portraits of Big Brother. Then he commits a crime by beginning to write a diary, but Winston states that he had *already* committed a crime - a thoughtcrime - by virtue of *thinking* about writing a diary. What is the nature of this crime? To answer this *1984* must be read in the context of Orwell's earlier texts (including those written during the same period as *1984*) and in the context of the ideological battles within which *1984* was conceived and composed. By proceeding in this fashion, the boundaries of Orwell's statement, made elsewhere, that one of the characteristics of modernity is that thought itself is a special type of crime, may be examined.[109]

Oceania could, of course, be viewed as a futuristic super-state in which technologies of discipline have been developed to the extent that thought may be detected by police agencies. Given Orwell's views concerning the difficulties of the thought-enterprise itself - difficulties expressed in "New Words" and in "Politics and the English Language" - it is equally plausible to believe that he is drawing attention to the dangers of critically and imaginatively thinking against the grain of *everyday*, machine-governed, gramophone "reasonableness".[110] Consequently, the question might be asked: if *1984* is not only about such a techno-state, what comprises the juridico-political institutions which have jurisdiction over thoughtcrime? Who are the police, the judges, and the executioners of thoughtcrime? If one is to avoid the comfort of framing Orwell's work in the context of distant futures and distant police states, how can it be framed? "New Words", for example, was not written about the Soviet Union, National

[109] Namely, in "Pleasure Spots", where he writes that the radio is sometimes employed to "prevent thought and conversation" and "to shut out any natural sound, such as the song of birds or the whistling of the wind, that might otherwise intrude ... In very many English homes the radio is literally never turned off, thought it is manipulated from time to time so as to make sure that only light music will come out of it." This is one technique of preventing "the onset of that dreaded thing, thought", for "The lights must never go out./The music must always play,/Lest we should see where we are;/Lost in a haunted wood,/Children afraid of the dark/Who have never been happy or good." It is difficult not to identify Orwell's view as Freudian, especially given the comment which immediately follows: "It is difficult not to feel that the unconscious aim in the most typical modern pleasure resorts is a return to the womb. For there, too, one was never alone, one never saw daylight, the temperature was always regulated, one did not have to worry about work or food, and one's thoughts, if any, were drowned by a continuous rhythmic throbbing." CEJL, vol. 4, p. 80.

[110] I recognize that I am drawing a distinction between types of disciplinary technologies - namely, those which are associated with surveillance devices used by (for example) the FBI and those which are associated with attitudes, ways of thought, habits, methods, etc. - and that such a distinction may be unacceptable to some social theorists. I do not think that such a distinction is inherently problematic, and I do not offer it as an airtight dichotomy.

Socialist Germany, or a future political system - and neither was "Shooting an Elephant", "Politics and the English Language", or *Burmese Days*, in which the main character, Flory, attempts to think/act outside the politico-cultural norms of Imperial, middle-class Britain. Thoughtcrime is a subversive process subject to a special sort of police. As noted, Orwell draws a distinction between the "police patrol" and the "thought police":

> In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.[111]

The distinction between the police patrol and the Thought Police[112] carries with it a symbolism which is relayed (whether consciously or unconsciously) from Orwell's earlier texts, a symbolism which alerts us, again, of the connections between the Thought Police as deeper-than-conscious defenders of existing constructions of language, symbols, meaning, and reason, and *thoughtcriminals*, as the offenders of such constructions. Furthermore, the capitalized symbol "Thought Police" is multivocal: it suggests a connection with another text, but it also focusses the reader's attention on a particular type of disciplinary agency that is something other than a conventional "police patrol".

Arguably, the Thought Police are the police of the "mind": they are the disciplinary forces within and without the subject. That Winston identifies

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[111] *1984*, p. 8.

[112] In the symbolic codes of Orwell's texts, the use of capital letters mark the presence of rhetorical strategies which seek to subdue the reader without the reader's conscious awareness; they are, in a sense, subliminal authorities, forces which assist in the suppression of critical thought. As he wrote: "I do not think it is fanciful to suggest that the unnecessary capital letters with which this passage [of Burnham's] is loaded are intended to have a hypnotic effect on the reader. Burnham is trying to build up a picture of terrifying, irresistible power, and to turn a normal political manoeuvre like infiltration into Infiltration adds to the general portentousness ... Although it is not the kind of tribute that the average russophile would consider acceptable, and although Burnham himself would probably claim that he is being strictly objective, he is in effect performing an act of homage, and even of self-abasement", "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution", CEJL, vol. 4, p. 170. Orwell exposes rhetorical strategies in Burnham's (self-described) "objective" work, just as other commentators expose such strategies in, for example, Plato's texts. As one such commentator states: "If rhetoric is used [in Plato's *Apology*] to draw the reader toward philosophy the reader must not be aware of the techniques that are being used. Plato's purpose requires that we readers remain unaware that we are being manipulated ... [The] effective use of rhetoric implies one mind knowingly controlling another mind which is unaware of what is happening." Thomas J. Lewis, "Rhetoric in the Apology: Parody or Persuasion", paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, May 1990. "Control", however, may be too strong: perhaps "persuasion" is a better choice. Regardless, the Burnham example again alerts us to Orwell's awareness and sensitivity to such strategies.

them as a force external to himself does not force us to reject this possibility, because the ontology which informs Orwell's texts does not necessitate tight boundaries between subject and society. It is, in fact, possible that Winston symbolizes that aspect of the human condition which has not yet been ordered, although it has been supervised. It is appropriate, therefore, to view the Thought Police as a force operating within *and* without the subject. By positing the distinction between types of police, Orwell is able to give *1984* a double-edge: he is able to draw attention to both "conventional" police forces and those of a more unconventional nature which are little-noticed because of the tendency to focus on things, instead of processes. He is following his own advice from "New Words": the deliberate invention of words which name the "abstract" because "so soon as we are dealing with anything that is not concrete or visible" modern language is inadequate.

In addition to drawing attention to the social nature of the "individual" subject - and to processes which police the subject - Orwell's deployment of this particular boundary-symbol frames *1984* within the *interrelated* problems of power and knowledge. Thought is *tied* to discipline; the police of existing political formations patrol the thinking process. By deploying the symbol of the Thought Police in this manner, he makes problematic the project of locating power in discrete institutions: state power is diffuse, and spread amongst (and spreading amongst, for the Thought Police are not stationary, but active) human subjects; the State patrols the boundaries of thought. The ubiquity of the Thought Police, and of present power formations, is a prominent feature of *1984*. Besides the decentered, diffuse, yet formidable army of the Thought Police, these formations are defended by five main tool-systems: the *telescreen, newspeak, hatred, puritanism, and history*. These tools are employed to fix the boundaries of the present by penetrating and reinforcing the boundaries of Oceania's inhabitants, and by ensuring that all difference is submerged within the superwhale of identity. Immediately after writing that "only the Thought Police mattered", Orwell wrote:

> The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it...[and] so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live - did live, from habit that became instinct - in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.[113]

One channel of the Thought Police is the *telescreen*, or, if Orwell's note on Zamyatin's *We* is taken into consideration, the television (this does not mean that the television exhausts the symbol of the telescreen, but only that it is viewed here as one aspect of its meaning).[114] Again, the fact that the telescreen in *1984* transmits *and* receives, and most televisions (today or in Orwell's day) are not regarded as being capable of receiving information, should not obscure an important aspect of the telescreen's symbolism: as a channel of socialization, it transmits that which becomes integrated by the subject who is subjected to the discipline of information; those who receive become *extensions* of the Thought Police, and thus may be regarded as the "receivers" of the telescreen. The television is symbolized in *1984* as an *active* and aggressively *expansionist* agent of the state, as the watchful eyes, attentive ears, and loud mouths of the Thought Police. The television is not a separate "entity" - separate from society - unless viewed through the freeze-frame of an analytical lens; it is a moment in a political flow.[115]

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[113] *1984*, p. 8.

[114] George Orwell, "Review: *We* by E.I. Zamyatin", CEJL, vol. 4, pp. 72-75. "They live in glass houses (this was written before television was invented), which enables the political police, known as the 'Guardians', to supervise them more easily." (p. 73). Also of note: "It may well be, however, that Zamyatin did not intend the Soviet regime to be the special target of his satire. Writing at about the time of Lenin's death, he cannot have had the Stalin dictatorship in mind, and conditions in Russia in 1923 were not such that anyone would revolt against them on the ground that life was becoming too safe and comfortable. What Zamyatin seems to be aiming at is not any particular country but the implied aims of industrial civilisation ... It is in effect a study of the Machine, the genie that man has thoughtlessly let out of its bottle and cannot put back again." (p. 75). Again, Orwell has in mind cross-linkages between the Soviet and Western machine-civilizations. The study of the Machine is also not merely a study of capitalism, a point which Orwell makes in the following comment on *We* elsewhere: "such books as Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes* (1900), Zamyatin's *We* (1923), and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1930), all described imaginary worlds in which the special problems of capitalism had been solved without bringing liberty, equality, or true happiness any nearer"; in the same essay, he comments that "It will be seen that Burnham's theory is not, strictly speaking, a new one. Many earlier writers have foreseen the emergence of a new kind of society, neither capitalist nor Socialist, and probably based upon slavery: though most of them have differed from Burnham in not assuming this development to be *inevitable*." "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution", CEJL, vol. 4, p. 163.

[115] The distinction made here between "analytical" and "nonanalytical" is meant to be suggestive rather than precise; I have in mind ontological moves made by Heraklitos, Bergson, Nietzsche, Gramsci, and, later, Deleuze (and perhaps those made in the *Tao te Ching* and the *Chuang Tzu*, although in the latter texts they are "more" implicit than explicit) which move thinking toward the fluid and away from static representational logic. Of course, it may be objected that such a distinction, even of the kind above, should be regarded, loosely, as "analytic". One is left only with tools which suggest, hint, offer gradations of difference, and "point towards", rather than tools which (claim to) demarcate with precision (such as, for instance, formal deductive logic and representational schemas which posit analytic-synthetic dichotomies). Among the works that could be cited, examples are Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, "Treatise on Nomadology" and "Micropolitics and Segmentarity" by Deleuze and Guattari, and Deleuze's *Bergsonism*. For the *Tao te Ching* and the *Chuang Tzu*, a most suggestive text is Graham Parkes' "The Wandering

Therefore, the telescreen may be said to *expand* to include society at large: a "telescreen society". As the last words of the paragraph intimate, this telescreen tool-system is not wholly "one-way", for what is received is internalized, taken into the home of the self, and a response is made: "You had to live - did live, from habit that became instinct". The earlier statement, "There was no way of knowing whether you were being watched", also suggests that one voice of this multivocal symbol speaks to the "instinctive" response through a change in behaviour and thought that becomes firmly imbedded as instinct, regardless of the "real" presence or absence of telescreen-supervision.

Through the telescreen/television, modern human beings are "plugged into" a complex network of power relations. The telescreen, to refine a previous metaphor, is a communications network linking/ordering a diffuse modern army whose power centres may be described only in relative terms (as in "relatively centralized") for in this telescreen society the Thought Police carry out their disciplinary activities inside and outside the boundaries of the subject, and power is a flow which ignores distinctions such as telescreen/subject.[116] Although it may be seen as divided and conquered, this army is also permeated by a resilient and sophisticated command-and-control network which infuses society with a martial intimacy and a violent communalism - an intimacy between oppressor and oppressed.

If Winston Smith, to an extent that is difficult to determine, symbolizes that aspect of "free thought" or "difference" which is outside the complete control of the Thought Police, one can tease out of *1984* an evocative metaphor for thought and difference. "Any sound," Orwell writes, "that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by [the telescreen], moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard ... every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized."[117] The reversal noted in reference to "Politics and the English Language" (a text which privileged clarity of expression) and "New Words" (a text which paid more attention to the

Dance: Chuang Tzu and Zarathustra", op. cit.; but one could, I think, arrive at the above by following the distinction made in the *Tao te Ching* between masculine and feminine. This point is made at some length because it recurs as a sub-text throughout the thesis.

[116] A similar, yet more sophisticated, position is taken by Mark Poster in his *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[117] *1984*, p. 8.

obscure and the peripheral) is highlighted in *1984*: one may view the references to "very low whispers" and "darkness" as metaphors for imagination and "dreamthought", or, perhaps more straightforwardly, as symbols of the type of thinking which transgresses the boundary-zones erected by the order of Reason (in modified Kuhnian language: paradigm-insiders defend clarity, outsiders seek the obscure and the dark; in neo-Cartesian language: methodologists seek the "clear and distinct", malicious demons seek the deceptive darkness).[118]

"Newspeak", introduced on the third page, is the second tool of discipline. The official language of Oceania, it is notable for its rigid boundaries, within which (the State hopes) thought will be channelled. At the "point in time" dealt with here (circa 1984), Newspeak is not (yet) the "sole means of communication, either in speech or in writing" - and in the appendix to *1984*, entitled *The Principles of Newspeak*, it is written that "the leading articles of The Times were written in [Newspeak], but this was a *tour de force* which could only be carried out by a specialist." Newspeak is familiar to the specialist, but its boundaries are expanding to include nonspecialists as well - "it gained ground steadily, all Party members tending to use Newspeak words and grammatical constructions more and more in their everyday speech".[119] 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. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought ... should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. Its vocabulary was so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods.[120]

Newspeak, then, is constructed with the aim of excluding guerrilla warfare, as such warfare is described in "New Words", namely, as an art of expressing the unexpressible, the novel, and the different through the imaginative "flank-attack". Communication and expression within the limits and through the channels of the Party are allowed; but all movement away from primary meanings and meaning-networks is not. This was being accomplished "partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by

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[118] I also have in mind Sheldon Wolin's well-known essay "Political Theory as a Vocation", in *The American Political Science Review* (1969), especially his discussion of method, philosophy, and (what I view as) the rhetorical strategies of Bacon and Descartes.

[119] *1984*, p. 257.

[120] Ibid.

eliminating undesirable words and by stripping such words as remained of unorthodox meanings, and so far as possible of all secondary meanings whatever ... Newspeak was designed not to extend but to *diminish* the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum."[121]

"Newspeak" reinforces power structures by the elimination of ambiguity and misunderstanding - by the creation of a language of unhindered and precise communicative *efficiency* within carefully prescribed *limits*, by, in other words, *speed* of communication through rigidly controlled, pre-fabricated channels. Controlled speed of communication may best be understood as a fusion of elements from *1984*, "New Words", and "Politics and the English Language". In *1984*, the writer of the appendix, in reference to Newspeak, states that euphony "outweighed every consideration other than exactitude of meaning".[122] Of course, euphonic considerations are not straightforward, and cannot be subsumed within a simple "eupho-calculus", for the question, what produces "agreeableness of sound", "a pleasing effect" to the ear, or "an ease of utterance"?, is one whose answer would necessitate an investigation of rhetoric, and especially of complex ideological/cultural forces which are brought to bear upon/through the subject (listener). In other words, this question interfaces with questions of rhetorical strategy and audience-receptivity. But this is more of an excursion than an exegesis. Orwell, by placing an emphasis on euphony in Newspeak, is satirically drawing our attention to the underside of *efficient* communicative systems: speed through channelled/striated linguistic constructions in Newspeak privileges *immediate* assent and agreeableness; *lingering* over meanings, contemplating secondary possibilities - these are sacrificed to precision, to communicative agreement, and to Big Brother's idea of an ideal speech situation.

Sound is employed in a way that minimizes consciousness: "the intention was to make speech .. as nearly as possible independent of consciousness"[123] by using "short clipped words of unmistakable meaning which could be uttered rapidly and which roused the minimum of echoes in the speaker's mind".[124] Words of only two or three syllables were predominant, with "the stress distributed equally between the first syllable and the last" in order to produce a form of speech "at once staccato and monotonous"[125], and

[121] Ibid., p. 258.

[122] Ibid., p. 264.

[123] Ibid., p. 265.

[124] Ibid., p. 264.

easily replicated regardless of one's location within Oceania (center/periphery considerations). Newspeak is identified in *1984* as a tool of the Party; but since our investigation of Orwell's previous texts has shown parallel considerations in reference to political thought and political language generally, *outside* of "political parties" in the conventional sense, "Party" must become a suspect term, most plausibly being a counterpart to other symbols of containment (the whale, the home, the school, the nation, culture, etc.) within his texts. Newspeak is not only diametrically opposed to Orwell's "New Words" project, but also to his orientation against pre-fabrication in "Politics and the English Language". Although the former essay shares with Newspeak a focus on the creation of new words, the new words of Newspeak are non-abstract, "thing-oriented", while in "New Words", they are abstract and process-oriented.[126] And in the latter essay, his focus upon euphemisms which soothe a political audience ("elimination of undesirable elements", "rectification of frontiers", etc.) may be said to prefigure, though not to replicate entirely, crucial processes within Newspeak.

But the Newspeak-as-container theme emerges prominently in another symbol of *1984*, that of *the book* of Emmanuel Goldstein. Goldstein, the leader of a revolutionary group which may or may not be an invention (*un agent provocateur*) of the Party, is the author (or invented author) of "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism", a treatise on history, politics, and power. Winston Smith, struggling from the beginning of the novel to discover "history", to understand the power structures of his society, and to make his own history, is given the book by O'Brien, who is identified at a later point as a high official of the Thought Police. Winston hurriedly reads sections of this text, which he regards with reverential awe, repeatedly referring to it as *the book*. It begins with: "Throughout recorded time, and probably since the end of the Neolithic Age, there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low ... The aims of these groups are entirely irreconciliable..." - is this Orwell's view of history and power, spoken through a textual *provocateur*? Has he suddenly committed a *volte face*, turning away from his critique of James Burnham's *realism*, a critique which centered on Burnham's mistaken belief that "politics is essentially the same in all ages", places, and cultures? Without totally discounting the possibility of such discontinuity, it is nevertheless possible to read *the book* of Goldstein as an image of thought

[125] Ibid., p. 265.

[126] Ibid., p. 259.

(an exercise in *noology*), in this case of *political* thought focussing on Oceania/History, which organizes, explains, and selects elements/processes of political reality. It is the Bible of the Oceanic Revolutionary, the Model which places boundaries around history and power, which then *forgets* the boundaries, reifies them, makes them invisible and transparent.

At least, this is *plausible* if cohesion and continuity are temporarily privileged over breakage and discontinuity. Within the text, however, the exchange (discussed in chapter two) between Winston and Julia would seem to support the view that *the book* is a symbol of containment, a striated space along which Winston's (and possibly, given the source of the book, Oceania's) political and social thought is channelled. And, as such, it is a variety of Newspeak, and another tool of the Thought Police.

Hatred, puritanism, and history are also tool-systems: hatred is channelled through social grooves formed by good/evil and inside/outside distinctions; puritanism channels and reinforces these by focussing sexual energy on Party activities and by forestalling the development of non-Party relations;[127] and history is the domain of the Party, changing according to the dictates of the centre. Through "Hate Week", "The Two-Minute Hate", and "the Anti-Sex League", collective and personal identity are continually reaffirmed, and energies are continually managed. The object of hatred is, of course, an externalized enemy, whether that enemy has penetrated into Oceania, or whether the enemy exists in far-off Eastasia or Eurasia. Goldstein symbolizes the "perfect" enemy: a former inner-party member who betrayed the Party/Oceania (i.e., Party=Oceania). The following passage illustrates the foregoing:

> A new poster had suddenly appeared all over London. It had no caption, and represented simply the monstrous figure of a Eurasian soldier, three or four metres high, striking forward with expressionless Mongolian face and enormous boots, a submachine gun pointed from his hip. From whatever angle you looked at the poster, the muzzle of the gun, magnified by the foreshortening, seemed to be pointed straight at you ... The proles, normally apathetic about the war, were being lashed into one of their periodical frenzies of patriotism. As though to harmonize with the general mood, the rocket bombs had been killing larger numbers of people than usual ... Goldstein was burned in effigy, hundreds of copies of the poster ... were torn down and added to the flames, and a number of shops were looted ... then a rumour flew round that spies were directing the rocket bombs by means of wireless waves, and an old couple who were suspected of being of foreign extraction had their house set on fire.[128]

[127] Orwell also suggests, through Winston Smith's commentary on sex, that the Party controls sex in the way that it does in order to emphasize instrumental relations between human beings.

[128] Ibid., pp. 132-133.

The similarities with Franz Kafka's writings, especially "The Great Wall of China" and "The Burrow", but also *The Castle,* deserve mention. In the first, Kafka deploys the imagery of wall-building to identify what is perhaps the key social activity of human beings:

> they were sent far, far away, saw on their journey finished sections of the wall rising here and there, came past the quarters of the high command and were presented with badges of honor, ... saw forests being cut down to become supports for the wall, saw mountains being hewn into stones for the wall, heard at the holy shrines hymns rising in which the pious prayed for the completion of the wall ... Every fellow-countryman was a brother for whom one was building a wall of protection ... Unity! Unity! Shoulder to shoulder, a ring of brothers, a current of blood no longer confined within the narrow circulation of one body, but sweetly rolling and yet ever returning throughout the endless leagues of China.[129]

In the second, Kafka raises the issue of the interpenetration of social forces, and thus the related question of the integrity or autonomy of "individual" selfhood and consciousness. His burrowing animal says, "And it is not only by external enemies that I am threatened. There are also enemies in the bowels of the earth. I have never seen them, but legend tells of them and I firmly believe in them"[130] - and constantly plans, counter-plans, and counter-counter-plans defenses against these enemies, building a great burrow of mazes, cul-de-sacs, channels and storage areas, at the center of which is the formidable "Castle Keep". But he is thwarted by a near-omnipresent whistling sound whose source cannot be located, only theorized as either external or internal, as either emitting from a known or an unknown animal, etc.

As Michael Shapiro has argued, Kafka's burrowing creature "cannot tell whether its consciousness is a curse imposed wholly from the outside ... or something it is projecting on the outside. As the creature muses on the 'dangers' it is unclear whether it is itself that makes articulate what is outside or the outside is penetrating the burrow. Eventually there is a whistling in the walls of the burrow, and the creature infers disparate conclusions from the noise, trying hard to separate it from the noise coming from its own interpretive activity".[131] Shapiro suggests that "the ambiguity in which the creature resides therefore seems to bear on the issue of whether consciousness is a defense against meaning and value imposed

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[129] Franz Kafka, "The Great Wall of China", *The Penguin Complete Short Stories of Franz Kafka* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), pp. 132-133.

[130] Franz Kafka, "The Burrow", *The Penguin Complete Short Stories of Franz Kafka,* ibid., p. 258.

[131] Michael Shapiro, "Politicizing Ulysses: Rationalistic, Critical, and Genealogical Commentaries", op. cit., p. 27.

from the outside or rather its unwitting ally, a mechanism for simply reinforcing a system of meaning." As noted in the preceding discussion of "New Words", Orwell does not view consciousness as an *identity* existing in opposition to non-conscious thought, but rather as one aspect of an interpenetrating tension or dynamic, one expressed in his use of the terms/anecdotes "dream-thought" and "waking reasonableness".

But as in the social commentaries put forth by Shapiro and Kafka, it is the very deep-seated (modern?) *refusal* to view social/political/theoretical identities as extremely prone to reification, isolation, and ossification which Orwell focusses on in *1984*. Winston is a creature of boundaries, and Oceania is a society thoroughly impregnated with boundaries; Winston, however, moves and challenges boundaries, while the State defends and reinforces boundaries with its set of power-tools. At the same time, the boundaries themselves are blurred, since they are the "locus" of transgression and the interplay of social forces - and despite the presence of boundaries, power and knowledge are transgressive and fluid processes which are *treated* as objects because, in part, of a modern propensity to create and to privilege object-oriented terms of reference for the political world. But Winston, as his Saul-like experience shows, is also prone to create new boundaries, or new social identification-kits, within which to cram difference.

Let us consider the role of utopian thought and hedonism in *1984*. To repeat, Winston begins with a profound uncertainty about his "location" or "place" in reality - is it 1984? He lacks a secure identity in the political world, and sets out in search of one. He has recurring visions of a "Golden Country", and the hideaway he and Julia "discover" (or create) parallels his Saulist reading of *The Theory of Oligarchical Collectivism* by Emmanuel Goldstein. His health had improved and "the process of life had ceased to be intolerable". "He had no longer any impulse to make faces at the telescreen or shout curses at the top of his voice":

> Now that they had a secure hiding-place, almost a home, it did not even seem a hardship that they could only meet infrequently ... What mattered was that the room over the junk-shop should exist. To know that it was there, inviolate, was almost the same as being in it. The room was a world, a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk. Mr Charrington, thought Winston, was another extinct animal ... The old man ... led a ghostlike existence between the tiny, dark shop, and an even tinier back kitchen where he prepared his meals and which contained, among other things, an unbelievably ancient gramophone with an enormous horn.[132]

[132] *1984*, p. 133.

The antique shop metaphor contains a multiplicity of important political symbols. It contains, among others, the symbol of the gramophone, the only instance of its occurrence in the novel. This, of course, foreshadows the unmasking of Charrington's membership in the State Thought Police apparatus. The shop also symbolizes the possibility and the presence of alternative history, existing in the present alongside "official history" - an alternative history that is both present and constructed. *Present*, in that it exists in fragments, pieces of memorabilia which must be *invested* with meaning because their origin is obscure. This investment, or construction, of history is also a critical theme, because the narrative of history is, unfortunately, unavailable to Winston except as memories which arise unbidden, and as articulations which empower him and which, through their projection, *subjugate* or overpower difference. This has been noted in reference to the thrush symbolism - but it is already present in the hideaway above Mr Charrington's shop.

One way in which Orwell brings this to the fore is by his reference to the "intimacy" between Winston, the thoughtcriminal, and O'Brien, the *agent provocateur*. "He told her of the strange intimacy that existed, or seemed to exist, between himself and O'Brien, and of the impulse he sometimes felt, simply to walk into O'Brien's presence, announce that he was the enemy of the Party, and demand his help."[133] O'Brien's overture to Winston is illuminating in this regard, for it exposes the similarity and intimacy between the former, as a symbol of the identity known as the Party, and the latter, as another identity, both of whom project and subjugate political reality. Neither says anything that is "inherently" conspiratorial. "'What I had really intended to say,' O'Brien said to Winston, 'was that in your article I noticed you had used two words which have become obsolete. But they have only become so very recently. Have you seen the tenth edition of the Newspeak Dictionary?'

'No,' said Winston. 'I didn't think it had been issued yet. We are still using the ninth in the Records Department.'
'The tenth edition is not due to appear for some months, I believe. But a few advance copies have been circulated. I have one myself. It might interest you to look at it, perhaps?'
'Very much so,' said Winston, immediately seeing where this tended.
'Some of the new developments are most ingenious. The reduction in the number of verbs - that is the point that will appeal to you, I think ... Perhaps you could pick it up at my flat at some time that suited you? Wait. Let me give you my address.'

[133] Ibid., p. 135.

They were standing in front of a telescreen ... Immediately beneath the telescreen, in such a position that anyone who was watching at the other end of the instrument could read what he was writing, he scribbled an address, tore out the page and handed it to Winston... He was gone, leaving Winston holding the scrap of paper ... They had been talking to one another for a couple of minutes at the most. There was only one meaning that the episode could possibly have ... one thing was certain ... The conspiracy that he had dreamed of did exist, and he had reached the outer edges of it."[134]

But the conspiracy probably does not exist, and O'Brien is probably a loyal defender of the Party. Winston's reasoning is not deductive, nor is it inductive; it is a reduction of ambiguity, possibility, and difference into the vessel of identity - or to phrase this differently, Winston projects identity onto, and affirms power over, what is really a quite amorphous situation: he reduces the *multiple* into the *one,* fusing his desire with his attempt to understand and gain knowledge of political reality. This reduction - and to synthesize the preceding, this projection, creation, reification, and ossification - of multiple and indefinite processes into the bounded One is, arguably, the reason why Winston's world collapses. The room above the antique shop, a symbol of alternative history and alternative future, collapses because they, like the Party, and more generally (in Orwell's view) like all power formations, attempt to freeze the present: "the room itself was sanctuary. It was as when Winston had gazed into the heart of the paperweight, with the feeling that it would be possible to get inside that glassy world, and that once inside it time could be arrested."[135] Winston and Julia shift and transform: nomadic becomes State, difference becomes identity, and engagement with the indefiniteness of the political world becomes escape into the "sanctuary" of an identity, however (initially) alternative it is when compared to the State.[136] This is most graphically evident in the conversation between O'Brien, Winston, and Julia in O'Brien's office. O'Brien asks: "'In general terms what are you prepared to do?'

'Anything that we are capable of,' said Winston.
...'You are prepared to give your lives?'
'Yes.'
'You are prepared to commit murder?'

[134] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

[135] Ibid., p. 134.

[136] Orwell's own "escapism" came to the fore in his occasional references to the Hebrides, though not, however, without a degree of qualification at times. For example: "Thinking always of my island in the Hebrides, which I suppose I shall never possess nor even see ... According to Rayner Heppenstall a woman who rented an island in the Hebrides in order to avoid air raids was the first air-raid casualty of the war, the RAF dropping a bomb there by mistake. Good if true." War-time Diary: 20 June, 1940, CEJL, vol. 2, p. 350.

'Yes.'
'To commit acts of sabotage which may cause the death of hundreds of innocent people?'
'Yes.'
'To betray your country to foreign powers?'
'Yes.'
'You are prepared to cheat, to forge, to blackmail, to corrupt the minds of children, to distribute habit-forming drugs, to encourage prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases - to do anything which is likely to cause demoralization and weaken the power of the Party?'
'Yes.'
'If, for example, it would somehow serve our interests to throw sulphuric acid in a child's face - are you prepared to do that?'
'Yes.'
...'You are prepared, the two of you, to separate and never see one another again?'
'No!' broke in Julia.[137]

The conversation is notable not only for its exposure of the common ties between State identity and nomadic/alternative identity, but for also for Julia's respnse. Her relationship with Winston and the sanctuary itself are symbols of non-State thinking, one aspect of which is non-instrumental rationality. Julia's response is one of a number of anti- or non-instrumental symbols which are deployed within the text. Her "No!", like their sexual activity, is a refusal to acquiesce in the puritanism and instrumental rationality which is a prominent backdrop to their relationship. While O'Brien tempts them to submit to these particular social forces, to further extinguish means and promote particular ends, Julia forcefully, and Winston hesitatingly, refuses. Their sex itself is clearly *political*, precisely because it involves a refusal to engage in the terms provided by existing power structures: 'You like doing this?' Winston said, 'I don't mean simply me: I mean the thing in itself?' 'I adore it.' And on the same page: "Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act."

At a fundamental level, Orwell assaults the modern configuration of means-ends calculus by opposing it with zest for life in the here-and-now, and with a a reasoning-process predicated on an ontology of the decentred subject. The activity of Winston and Julia is clearly not based upon instrumental reasoning, or at least not solely upon the type of instrumental reasoning which pursues a particular course according to whether it maximizes pleasure for the calculating individual. In explanation, it is necessary to examine the way in which they define themselves, and to place this self-definition within the wider context of the novel, and within the

[137] *1984*, p. 107.

general context of Orwell's political thought.

First, they are "certain" that they will die as a result of their activities together. Second, they refuse to change their course of action. Third, the "they" involved in their "calculations" undergoes a decentering, of both an historical and a social kind. The following passage helps to illustrate this:

'In this game that we're playing, we can't win. Some kinds of failure are better than other kinds, that's all.'
He felt her shoulders give a wriggle of dissent ... She did not understand that there was no such thing as happiness, that from the moment of declaring war on the Party it was better to think of yourself as a corpse.
'We are the dead,' he said.
'We're not dead yet,' said Julia prosaically.
'Not physically. Six months, a year - five years, conceivably.[138]

Later Julia agrees with Winston's assessment that they are "the dead", but for them "to hang on from day to day and from week to week, spinning out a present that had no future, seemed an unconquerable instinct, just as one's lungs will always draw the next breath as long as there is air available."[139] But "we are the dead" is more than a recognition of their impending arrest and vaporization; it a symbol of the transgression of the boundaries of individual life. This transgression embraces the entire novel. Although the novel begins in spring and ends in late winter, Winston's thoughtcrime reaches further back than spring, and is meant to reach beyond winter. His thoughtcrime is tied to the thoughtcrime of three "conspirators", Aaronson, Rutherford, and Jones, who were arrested and confessed to "intelligence with the enemy ... embezzlement of public funds, the murder of various trusted party members, intrigues against the leadership of Big Brother ... and acts of sabotage causing the death of hundreds of thousands of people."[140] Although Winston "barely knew them", their crime has a symbolic importance for him, and Orwell's integration of their story into the novel has important cyclical connotations. Winston's only face-to-face encounter with the three took place at the Chestnut Tree Cafe in the mid-1960s, after they had confessed and been pardoned. Similarly, after Winston's arrest, he also sits in the Chestnut Tree Cafe. On both occasions, "it was the lonely hour of fifteen", and on both, a chessboard is present. This suggests that Orwell wishes us to connect

[138] Ibid., p. 120.

[139] Ibid., p. 134.

[140] Ibid., p. 69.

Winston with the previous thoughtcriminals in a way that points to the existence of a symbolic relay or cycle, one which has an opening to the future.[141]

He provides a hint of this symbolism when Winston, immediately after his statement to Julia that he hardly knew the three, say: "'I don't imagine that we can alter anything in our own lifetime. But one can imagine little knots of resistance springing up here and there - small groups of people banding themselves together, and gradually growing, and even leaving a few records behind, so that the next generation can carry on where we leave off.'"[142] And Orwell's symbolism of cycle and relay, especially as it appears in the self-description of Winston and Julia, flows from his ontology. Human beings act within symbolic networks that reach beyond the boundaries of selfhood. They are enmeshed within these networks, and through the creation of symbols, they perform *relays* - even though the symbols in question are malleable and open to interpretive alteration. By deploying the symbol of "the dead", he is pointing to connections which, though they are variable in content, transgress the boundaries of selfhood in space and time. Thus *one* aspect of Winston's and Julia's thought-process is a type of instrumental rationality, but one which refuses to calculate on the basis of bounded, autonomous individuals, and instead attempts to account for a decentred "individuality" which involves symbolic relays. They rebel and create their own history despite their view of themselves as *the dead*, an expression which captures their connection to past and future, and their willingness to *affirm* life in the presense of mortality.

Orwell's view of selfhood, therefore, resonates both with Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, and with Kropotkin in *The Conquest of Bread*. In the former, Marx writes that "men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and

[141] Especially when one examines one of the differences between the two cafe scenes. In the first, the chessboard "was on the table beside them, with the pieces set out but no game started", while in the second, the chessboard is present but Winston is *playing*, "making a tentative move" (254), putting his opponent into check. Even though "it was evidently not the right move", the difference between the two scenes is significant because it suggests a difference between passivity and engagement, however tentative and uncertain Winston's "moves" may be. Furthermore, chess symbolism is also present elsewhere in Orwell's works; for example, he wrote that, "The most depressing thing in this war is not the disasters we are bound to suffer at this stage, but the knowledge that we are being led by weaklings...It is as though your life depended on a game of chess, and you had to sit watching it, seeing the most idiotic moves being made and being powerless to prevent them." CEJL, vol. 2, p. 396. The chess symbolism in the last scene is suggestive of engagement, therefore, and empowerment.

[142] *1984*, p. 137.

transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."[143] The conditions within which Winston and Julia make history are partly constituted by the symbolic traditions and relays through which "the weight of dead generations" comes to weigh "like a nightmare" on their brains. But however onerous this weight is portrayed to be in the *Eighteenth Brumaire,* it is certainly an ambiguous weight, making possible and necessary connections spanning individual lives. "Man", Orwell had written in "Notes on the Way", "is not an individual, he is only a cell in an everlasting body, and he is dimly aware of it."[144] Winston is not a Robinson Crusoe: he is a Smith, and Smiths fill English phone books: sometimes "nightmares of dead generations" can be reassuring, if only because they show that you are still connected.

In Kropotkin's work, a similar ontological stance is present, although permeated with a greater sense of optimism:

> There is not even a thought, or an invention, which is not common property, born of the past and the present. Thousands of inventors, known and unknown, who have died in poverty, have cooperated in the invention of each of these machines which embody the genius of man ... Thousands of philosophers, of poets, of scholars, of inventors, have themselves been ... upheld and nourished through life, both physically and mentally, by legions of workers and craftsmen of all sorts. They have drawn their motive force from the environment...[145]

Winston receives a symbolic baton, one which is handed forward within the blurred confines of a counter-tradition kept alive by previous makers of unofficial history. Although he "loves Big Brother" at the end of the novel, his declaration of love takes place in the same cafe where previous thoughtcriminals had also sat defeated: defeated but also reaching toward a new beginning.

Orwell's 1946 essay, "Arthur Koestler", sheds light on the preceding discussion. Indeed, in this essay he identifies problems, raises questions, and stakes out positions which, it is argued here, are important to *1984.* He wrote that

> To take a rational political decision one must have a picture of the future. At present Koestler seems to have none, or rather to have two which cancel out. As an ultimate objective he believes in the Earthly Paradise, the Sun State ... which has haunted the imagination of

[143] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* op. cit., p. 300.

[144] "Notes on the Way", p. 17.

[145] Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London: Elephant Editions, 1985), pp. 28-29.

Socialists, Anarchists and religious heretics for hundreds of years. But his intelligence tells him that the Earthly Paradise is receding into the far distance and that what is actually ahead of us is bloodshed, tyranny and privation. Recently he described himself as a 'short-term pessimist'. Every kind of horror is blowing up over the horizon, but somehow it will all come right in the end. This outlook is probably gaining ground among thinking people: it results from the very great difficulty, once one has abandoned orthodox religious belief, of accepting life on earth as inherently miserable, and on the other hand, from the realisation that to make life liveable is a much bigger problem than it recently seemed.[146]

Winston, too, is "haunted" by the image of a golden country; he has almost no hope for the future and the hope that he does have is long-term. The novel itself resonates strongly with Orwell's statement in "Arthur Koestler" that "Since about 1930 the world has given no reason for optimism whatever. Nothing is in sight except a welter of lies, hatred, cruelty and ignorance, and beyond our present troubles loom vaster ones which are only now entering into the European consciousness."[147] Having articulated the revolutionary's utopian vision and the revolutionary's troubles, Orwell proceeds to identify the revolutionary's response or orientation to a world-situation in which there is "no reason for optimism whatever" -

So you get the quasi-mystical belief that for the present there is no remedy, all political action is useless, but that somewhere in space and time human life will cease to be the miserable brutish thing it now is. The only easy way out is that of the religious believer, who regards this life merely as a preparation for the next. But few thinking people now believe in life after death, and the number of those who do is probably diminishing.[148]

This is the now-familiar theme of passive intransigence which has been discussed in reference to Henry Miller in *Inside the Whale*. The problem, as he expresses it in this essay, which was written while he wrote *1984*, is "how to restore the religious attitude while accepting death as final."[149] "Men can only be happy," he adds, "when they do not assume that the object of life is happiness. It is most unlikely, however, that Koestler would accept this. There is a well-marked hedonistic strain in his writings, and his failure to find a political position after breaking with Stalin is a result of this." Again, the parallels between this essay, *1984*, and his previous works are striking: they include his mention of "hedonism"; the refusal of direct calculations concerning the achievement of happiness; and the development of an orientation toward political life that is critical, durable,

146 "Arthur Koestler", p. 243.

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid., p. 244.

and engaged. In his essay on Koestler, Orwell distances himself from a person he views as a defeatist-turned-hedonist, as a socialist who dreamed of a Golden Country but who was overwhelmed by the array of forces aligned against its appearance:

> The Russian Revolution, the central event in Koestler's life, started out with high hopes. We forget these things now, but a quarter of a century ago it was confidently expected that the Russian Revolution would lead to Utopia. Obviously this has not happened. Koestler is too acute not to see this, and too sensitive not to remember the original objective. Moreover, from his European angle he can see such things as purges and mass deportations for what they are ... Therefore he draws the conclusion: This is what revolutions lead to. There is nothing for it except to be a 'short-term pessimist', i.e. to keep out of politics, make a sort of oasis within which you are your friends can remain sane, and hope that somehow things will be better in a hundred years.[150]

Winston follows the same trajectory, but from his struggle over the terms of engagement/disengagement comes his "long-term rationality" which, as I have argued, is *one* element in his thought-process, a process that leads him to "transgress" the boundary of death and the individual subject. "We are the dead", therefore, is Orwell's response to Koestler's passive intransigence. Furthermore, another comment may be added about Winston's "failure" (his failure, that is, as a revolutionary - the collapse of the antique shop sanctuary, the *arrest* of himself, Julia, and of the *concept* of revolutionary vision) from Orwell's conclusion to his essay on Koestler:

> At the basis of [K.'s orientation] lies his hedonism, which leads him to think of the Earthly Paradise as desirable. Perhaps, however, whether desirable or not, it isn't possible. Perhaps some degree of suffering is ineradicable ... perhaps the choice before man is always a choice of evils [and] even the aim of Socialism is not to make the world perfect but to make it better. All revolutions are failures, but they are not all the same failure.[151]

Here Orwell, often viewed in the way he himself view Koestler - as a disheartened revolutionary or "former socialist" - departs from precisely such an orientation toward the political world. *In its place is an active intransigence that does not refuse credit to utopian visions of the future, but that does refuse to allow such visions to remain static ideals, divorced from historical change, and from the possibility of learning from and engaging with such change.* The articulation of such orientations is to Orwell a key aspect of political change and the psychology of sustained engagement, given what has already been said in reference to his views on

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[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid., pp. 243-244.

the centrality of catchphrases, encapsulations, and "pre-fabricated" phraseology.[152] Such articulations should not be left unaltered - they should not be approached from a vantage-point founded upon passive intransigence - but must be the focus of a participatory investment or engagement with the texts of the times.

How much participation is encouraged within Orwell's political thought is an important consideration. The following comment, "books like this, which ...present a genuinely working-class outlook, are exceedingly rare ... They are the voices of a normally silent multitude ... If all of them could get their thoughts on to paper they would change the whole consciousness of our race" gives voice to the anarchistic, participatory, or decentred strain of his political thought. And although in "New Words" he suggests that as small a group as "several thousand" could take on the project of the creation of new words with which political reality can be challenged and re-shaped, implicit to that essay, to "Politics and the English Language", and to *1984*, is the view that the practice of the guerrilla is not one which should be left only to *professional* writers. This suggestion is also present in the symbolism Winston's *diary*: Winston does not write a novel, treatise, or theory, but commits to a *diary*, to, that is, an informal, "poorly" written journal, his participation in unofficial history. Winston, therefore, does not acquiesce to that familiar disciplinary mechanism which certifies as legitimate only "good" and "properly" written treatises. In addition, Orwell's selection of the name "Winston Smith", as mentioned earlier, may be an allusion to the possibility of the heroic existing side-by-side with the "common", and thus to the reservoir of thought and political energy existing within what is conceived by the centre as "common" (or "inarticulate"). Similarly, Winston Smith is not a pure or perfect human being, but all-too-human, who has what are widely *viewed* as dehabilitating faults: poor health, alcoholism, and a varicose ulcer, among others. He is, perhaps, an unlikely rebel and poor exemplar, but he is also not an equally unlikely Superman.

If the Oceania Party slogan - "who controls the past ... controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" - is taken seriously, these efforts at crossing the borders of official history in multiple directions and from

[152] Orwell prefigures a contemporary theorist, Rebecca Klatch, who notes that in many ways "symbols instigate action and resistance to domination" and "serve as a means of social rebellion". More importantly, however, she argues that "symbols act as common points of reference" which "provide orientation for the individual actor at the same time that they serve as markers of meaning carried by particular social groups." Rebecca Klatch, "Of Meanings and Masters: Political Symbolism and Symbolic Action", *Polity*, vol. XXI, no. 1, Fall 1988.

multiple points of reference must also be taken seriously as a key avenue of escape from the resilient police-formation of centralized state-history. Orwell recognized that the control of mytho-history[153] is an effective tool-system which reinforces the boundaries drawn around identities of any type; but his response was neither to refuse the "search for history" nor to give in to any particular historical identity.

orwell, camus, winston, and sisyphus

The classical image of thought, and the striating of mental space it effects, aspires to universality. It in effect operates with two 'universals,' the Whole as the final ground of being or all-encompassing horizon, and the Subject as the principle that converts being into being-for-us. Imperium and republic. Between the two, all of the varieties of the real and the true find their place in a striated mental space, from the double point of view of Being and the Subject, under the direction of a 'universal method.'[154]

Camus' "Myth of Sisyphus" is useful as a "looking glass" through which *1984* may be encoded.[155] In this text, Camus informs us that "myths are made for the imagination to breathe life into them". In his imaginative portrayal of Sisyphus, we find suggestive convergences with Orwell's myth. "The Gods", wrote Camus, "had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of the mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour". Camus urges us to look beyond (what initially appears as) the unending hopelessness of Sisyphus' situation so that even in such a predicament room may be found for life, creation, and victory. He writes,

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[153] Others, such as Michael Sturmer, an advisor to the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, have recognized this as well. "The search for our lost history," he writes, "is not an abstract desire for education: it is morally legitimate and politically necessary. It is a question of the inner continuity of the German republic and its calculability in foreign affairs. In a country without memory everything is possible." To this, Sturmer adds: "In a land without history, the future is won by those who are able to harness memory, coin concepts and interpret the past." A similar sentiment is expressed in the words of Heinrich Ritter von Srbik: "Through the process of historical understanding we strengthen the feeling of togetherness, and by means of pictures of the essence of history we begin to approach the very highest national political goal: the creation of a unified German popular consciousness on the basis of a unified historical consciousness." Needless to say, the "inner continuity" of a nation, and "national political goals" were not among Orwell's priorities. Cited by Stephen Brockmann in "The Politics of German History", *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History*, vol. xxix, no. 2, 1990, p. 187.

[154] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Treatise on Nomadology-The War Machine", *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit., p. 379.

[155] For Orwell's references to Albert Camus, see his letter to Philip Rahv of 9 April 1946 (CEJL, vol. 4, p. 140; and his letter to Celia Kirwan of 20 January 1948 (CEJL, vol. 4, p. 402).

> At the very end of his long effort measured by skyless space and time without depth, the purpose is achieved. Then Sisyphus watches the stone rush down in a few moments towards that lower world whence he will have to push it up again towards the summit. He goes back down to the plain. It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step towards the torment of which he will never know the end. That hour like a breathing-space which returns as surely as his suffering, that is the hour of consciousness. At each of the moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks towards the lair of the Gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock.[156]

Pushing the rock symbolizes the drudgery of the day-to-day and the heroic struggle to achieve particular victories; Sisyphus is the "proletarian of the Gods", "the workman of today", who "works every day in his life at the same tasks"; and his struggle is symbolic of the effort to achieve particular victories for he "knows the whole extent of his wretched condition" and nonetheless is like "a blind man eager to see who knows that the night has no end." Camus tells us that once the particular victory of rolling the rock is achieved, new tasks, new "voices" rise upward which "are the necessary reverse and price of victory." They are "unconscious, secret calls, invitations from all the faces" - and these secret calls lead him to the realisation that "this universe henceforth without a master ... [is] neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart." "One must," Camus writes, "imagine Sisyphus happy."

The particular and the universal are challenged in Camus' myth: particular versus universal victories, particular versus universal perspectives, and particular versus universal struggles. History does not 'end', though histories do, but no master guides and controls it, and perspectives change as Sisyphus moves. Sisyphus does not struggle alone; he continually responds to "invitations" and engages in tasks of discovery which lead him to new worlds - "each atom ... itself forms a world" - that is, each instance of singularity is found to be fecund in its multiplicity. His struggle to push the rock requires his entire effort and becomes his world. During this struggle, nothing else "exists" outside his perspective: the outside is forgotten and the boundary of his perspective is invisible. At the moment of ascension, however, the seemingly universal collapses into multiple particularities, as "little voices" are heard, which were made inaudible by the effort of pushing the rock.

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[156] Albert Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus", *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. by J. O'Brien (Markham: Penguin, 1975), pp. 108-109.

Like Sisyphus, Winston - and later, Julia - must move into the realm of "darkness", the realm where the eyes of telescreen, state, and Big Brother (each are gods of rock-solid and striated sisyphean spaces) cannot reach. They are hypnotic and attempt to transfix those who would make history on this world, without the help and blessing of the gods: "On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move." "Big Brother is Watching You, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own."[157] But Winston discovers a space where the telescreen cannot view him - just as he and Julia later share a space of limited freedom:

> For some reason the telescreen in the living-room was in an unusual position ... By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now to do.[158]

Winston discovers an anomaly in his room's geography (all paradigms moor the ship of their state in a *sea* of anomalies) where the supervision by Big Brother lessens, and begins to create a counter-present, a counter-history, a history of the underworld. Winston's little voice - and relative to the gramophone loudspeakers of Oceanic realism, his is a quiet voice - finds expression in this moment. Like Sisyphus, Winston orients himself toward the darkness, for "every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized."[159] But in this pivot (Camus' word) toward darkness he is susceptible to the temptation of light, the comforting light of the present order's power over past, present, and future. He is susceptible to the appeal -

> 'Don't worry Winston; you are in my keeping. For seven years I have watched over you. Now the turning-point has come. I shall save you, I shall make you perfect.' He was not sure whether it was O'Brien's voice; but it was the same voice that had said to him, 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness', in that other dream, seven years ago.[160]

He was not sure whether it was O'Brien's voice: the near-constant and near-total supervisory tools within *1984* are symbols of constraints;

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[157] *1984*, p. 7.

[158] Ibid., p. 10.

[159] Ibid., p. 8.

[160] Ibid., p. 210.

constraints which derail the attempt to think outside the supervision of dominant social practices and unambiguous conceptions of political reality. Orwell deploys police state imagery to draw attention to hegemonic social structures and their relentless power. It is not the power of external - out there - disciplines, but that of complex, lived and striated (channelled) disciplines which cannot be precisely located within the familiar bounds of inside-subject/outside-society. The "point of origin" of discipline, like the origin of ideas, is blurred. From where does the order of mind and self issue? "Only the Thought Police mattered." Only the Thought Police, the hypnotic eye of past and present order which attempts to disallow difference and project its super-visionary order into the future - which tries to purify, codify, illuminate, and crush the dark recesses where different values and voices are hidden - only they mattered, not the *trappings* of discipline, but the clash and process of discipline.

Where does discipline reside? Society and self are mutually-permeating, "man is a cell in an everlasting body", "the greatest mistake is to imagine that the human being is an autonomous individual ... your thoughts are never entirely your own". He was not sure whether it was O'Brien's voice, it was a voice which spoke to him in a dream. Big Brother is not only external or internalized discipline. "He" is that aspect of human beings which yearns for, produces, and defends order. He is the intertwined identity of person and society which must be overturned in order to make geographical anomalies of transformation. This is why the Thought Police are omnipresent: they police the boundaries of the self. Pitted against the Thought Police - against existing orders of thought - are Winston and Julia. This suggests that they are also pitted against "their own" thoughts. It is, nonetheless, possible to speak of an "outside", a process of thought where thought *battles* the constant interiorization of human energies. Orwell pushes Winston, Julia, himself, and us toward a different vantage-point and asks us to see reality through a lens which allows us to think of a type of thought/practice which refuses the secure interior of a word or concept ("New Words", "Politics and the English Language", and Newspeak), or the utopian vision or home (Arthur Koestler's equation of revolution with Stalinism, his freezing of the revolutionary vision; the oasis of the antique shop). Viewed through this lens, nomadic thought is the outside, while State thought is the captured and submissive inside. Winston and Julia seek the outside, but cling to what they create, revealing and replicating Big Brother: they become submerged in the whale of identity.

The blurring of boundaries between external and internal suggests a blurring of discipline's location. Winston and Julia exist - and make history - at the blurred edge of these boundaries. It is at this location that Winston challenges the hypnotism of discipline by thinking/acting differently. Carrying this logic a bit further, it is possible to view Winston's moment of ecstacy after his illumination by *the book* as a new hypnotism *as well as* a new insight. To repeat an earlier point, his iconization of Goldstein's book and sudden revelation is followed by attunement, by a feeling that his vision is unlimited and in harmony with the universe. This small victory is met with the sound of a little voice, the little challenge, of Julia. Winston is guilty of two crimes: first, thoughtcrime, and second, the crime of being sedentary, of arresting thought. He is guilty of moulding difference and multiplicity into a solid sisyphus-rock. This does not negate the value of such rocks, it simply is a comment on their weight. Through Orwell's noological lens it is possible to see multiple Big Brothers who must be struggled against in the sisyphean future.

Orwell and Camus underline the problem of finality. Since Big Brother is the discipline of any present order and will always "return", he is like the sisyphus-rock. The boundaries that are drawn so tightly around Sisyphus that he views his rock as his entire world - a world with no outside, no future or past or present but the ones which are within the grasp of his hands - are similar to the boundaries that are found throughout Orwell's works. There is no eschatological overcoming of such a world and no Golden Country, except as a transformative vision; instead, there are eternal Big Brothers and eternal identities. Despite this, and in spite of this, Orwell and Camus gesture toward an orientation that unsettles the definite boundaries of Identity - an orientation which emerges in Orwell's texts as guerrilla warfare and in Camus' as sisyphean overcoming - and that encourages the subversion of Big Brother, whether He appears as Capital, Stalin, the Machine, Doctrine, Language, Sisyphus, or Winston Smith himself.

sub-conclusion: winston smith x 5

... how one regrets the prospect of losing what, after all, has been intense pain, the near death of one's self, punished and cauterised, stunned, and lobotomisedin body and soul. How renewing, to escape this tense, this tension, intensity, - how fearful it is, this opportunity for rebirth. But how many more deaths does it mean? How many more dyings now and alone, all pretence banished, and only now and now, second by black slow second, comes and stays, and stays intense, in tense, in tense...[161]

Five Winstons may be seen within the fluid topographical confines of *1984*. Two are commonly-identified inhabitants of the literary terrain which has emerged in the post-WWII era, but three others hide in the textual shadows. First, there is the Winston who is the defender of "objective history", a believer in a "solid" past which exists outside convention, outside the clutches of Big Brother and the Thought Police, outside power. This Winston (Winston[1]) believes in the separation of knowledge and power, and is determined, like the Dutch boy, to keep holeless the dike which protects knowledge from power. Second, there is the Winston who represents "agency", "autonomy", and "the free individual". Winston[2] faces structure, tyranny, and the forces of modernity, State, and God - and he faces them alone, with only slight assistance from Julia, who, after all, is a child of the post-revolutionary period, and like all such children, has been almost completely devoured by it (a "rebel only from the waist down", as Winston[1] calls her).

There are three others: Winston[3] is a thoughtcriminal who forms part of a relay between other such criminals; Winston[4] is a nomad who wholeheartedly accepts the fusion of power and knowledge, who exemplifies the practice of guerrilla warfare, and who is nearly invisible in *1984* yet has left traces of his passage everywhere; and Winston[5] is a textual figure who escapes the Winston-codes offered in this thesis. It is ventured here that each Winston has an important voice in *1984*, and that each speaks to (and for) ideological and/or political practices which have found prominent expression in (at least) the last century, both "inside" and "outside" the texts of George Orwell. Furthermore, each attests to Orwell's notable position as a mediator of diverse strains of European thought.

Winston[1] and Winston[2] are latter-day Platonic Benthamites, believers in calculation, objectivity, and non-participatory observation of a concrete object-world, a world which exists only in scraps of information waiting to form themselves into a universal theory so that rational individuals may make their autonomy known and maximal. "Doublethink", that "labyrinthine world"[162] populated by people who hold "two opinions which cancelled out",[163] a scary world inhabited by contradiction and thus a lack of unified knowledge, is an opponent-world for these two Winstons. Above all, they fear a situation in which "everything faded away into a shadow-

[161] Mike Doyle, "Lapis Exilis", from *Separate Fidelities* (Reference West, Victoria, B.C.: 1991), p. 4 (re-lined).

[162] 1984, p. 40.

[163] 1984, p. 40.

world in which, finally, even the date of the year had become uncertain".[164] In this shadow-world where Powerful and Malicious Demons have turned even the past to their own purposes, the two Winstons must cling to the life-raft of mathematical certainty, solid objects, and empirical evidence, and paddle towards Indubitable Truth:

> The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. His heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer. And yet he was in the right! The obvious, the silly, and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre. With the feeling that he was speaking to O'Brien, and also that he was setting forth an important axiom, he wrote: *Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.*[165]

Even *silly* axioms must be defended against the clever Thrasymacheans of the Party. Winston[1] and Winston[2] must tilt at the windmills of power, must defend silly notions about autonomous and rational calculators who have no interest in power, and must search for Blessed Isles lit by the Sun of the Real, the place "where there is no darkness", the place where, unfortunately, their tormentor O'Brien also frequents. They must emerge from their navigational malaise, from shadowy sea-caves, and find their (but not their, *the*) archimedean point of certainty. Sadly, they are "the last men in Europe" (an apt description, despite its deviation from Orwell's original title, *The Last Man in Europe*), and their beliefs, firmly captured by the equation "2 + 2 = 4", must be tortured out of them by creatures of the dark, leaving them broken and gin-sodden in the Chestnut Tree Cafe. The method of torture is notable, for it begins before the infamous rat-threat of room 101, and may be described as the *absence* of method, a negative method, or merely as negativity. Uncertainty and indefiniteness are their true inquisitors. Following their arrest the Winstons are taken somewhere...

> He did not know where he was. Presumably he was in the Ministry of Love, but there was no way of making certain. He was in a high-ceilinged windowless cell with walls of glittering white porcelain. Concealed lamps flooded it with cold light ... It might be twenty-four hours since he had eaten, it might be thirty-six. He still did not know, probably never would know, whether it had been morning or evening when they arrested him.[166]

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[164] 1984, p. 39.

[165] 1984, p. 73.

[166] 1984, p. 195.

They are inside the whale, within the centre of power. The calculator-Winston loses his power to calculate: "he tried to calculate the number of porcelain bricks in the walls of the cell. It should have been easy, but he always lost count..."[167] But he knows - "instinctively" - that "the lights would never be turned out", because he was now in "the place with no darkness".[168] The place where there is no darkness, that location with which Winston has been tempted throughout the novel, turns out to be *other* than the place of knowledge, but the very home of power. Even time falls within the grasp of power, and these two Winstons share time's fate, with Winston^2 succumbing to the enormity of the structure poised against him. Winston^2, the symbol of agency and autonomy, is considered by O'Brien to be a "flaw in the pattern", "a stain that must be wiped out". To both Winstons, O'Brien says:

> All the confessions that are uttered here are true. We make them true. And above all we do not allow the dead to rise up against us. You must stop imagining that posterity will vindicate you, Winston. Posterity will never hear of you. You will be lifted clean out from the stream of history. We shall turn you into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you, not a name in a register, not a memory in a living brain. You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future. You will never have existed.[169]

Truth and power are *fused* in the Ministry of Love: all confessions uttered there are true, or (more importantly) believed, and they are not even the creature of the Party's convention, for the convention (the boundary-line of the Party) is *forgotten* and knowledge is channelled through tool-systems of power which themselves are the Real. The Party overwhelms all attempts to oppose it through the construction of static identities: for the Party is involved in precisely that exercise, i.e. the construction of static identities which protect inside from outside through rigid boundary-drawing exercises. The two Winstons, symbols of European individual

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[167] 1984, p. 198.

[168] 1984, p. 198.

[169] 1984, p. 219. Again, to return to a tired theme, O'Brien is not merely a mouthpiece for Orwell's views on NSDAP Germany or the USSR, to which the similarity between the passage just cited and the following passage attests: "I literally have not any spare time. And yet I am doing nothing that is not futile... It seems to be the same with everyone - the most fearful feeling of frustration, of just footling round doing imbecile things ... which in fact don't help or in any way affect the war effort, but are considered necessary by the huge bureaucratic machine in which we are all caught up. Much of the stuff that goes out from the BBC is just *shot into the stratosphere*, not listened to by anybody. And round this futile stuff hundreds of skilled workers are grouped, costing the country tens of thousands per annum ... *The same everywhere, especially in the Ministries*." (italics added) p. 437. CEJL, 27 April, 1942, vol. 2, p. 423. Perhaps Winston is in the Ministry of Love after all, or perhaps Orwell is making a more general point here about modern organization and autonomy.

identity, are broken by themselves, and crash upon the rocks of super-identity. But they must be broken to make room for *others* of stronger constitution...

...Who are these others? Winston^3 is a *relay*, a thoughtcriminal passing on the crime of thinking against the State. But it is locally articulated, not a message which retains a precise, unchanging, *identifiable*, or universal content. The text of Winston^3 is not the same as the text of previous inhabitants of the relay-system. The thoughtcriminals are linked by darkly illuminated memory-traces of thoughtcrimes, glimpses and gestures; they are loosely connected through a counter-tradition that crosses boundaries of selfhood and that helps to constitute such selves. The trio is a notable example, as is the woman in the movie Winston^3 sees in the crowded theatre. In his diary, he reports:

April 4th, 1984. Last night to the flicks. All war films ... Audience much amused by shots of a great huge fat man trying to swim away with a helicopter after him ... then you saw a lifeboat full of children with a helicopter hovering over it. there was a middle-aged woman might have been a jewess sitting up in the bow with a little boy about three years old in her arms. little boy screaming with fright and hiding his head between her breasts as if he was trying to burrow right into her and the woman putting her arms round and comforting him although she was blue with fright herself, all the time covering him up as much as possible as if she thought her arms could keep the bullets off him. then the helicopter planted a 20 kilo bomb in among them...

Her gesture, locally articulated and locally ineffective, is taken up by Winston^3 and Julia, who make their own political gesture, but one that is not wholly *theirs*, for they are, after all, *the dead*. They are linked, in other words, to others within the relay-system.

Finally, Winston^4: Winston^4 is a guerrilla, and as an expert in such warfare, there are only hints of his location, direction, and allegiance. A composite portrait may be drawn when: the relationship between Winston and Julia is "consummated" by treating her voice as having great significance to *1984*; the question, "why does their oasis dry up?" is viewed as important; the downward rush of their sisyphus-rock is noted; Winston's love for Big Brother is viewed as equivocal; his "capitulation" is seen as something more than mere capitulation. Winston^4 appears during the transgression of boundaries, within his diary for the future (with all the problems that entails - will they understand then what I am writing now?; will I understand then what I am writing now?); but he appears only when one

refuses to view Winston[1], Winston[2], and Winston[3] as *one* identity which must be rejected or accepted *in toto*.

The first two are symbols of what Orwell suggests should be surpassed, while the third desires a supplement: a guerrilla who refuses the firm, the static, and the definite, and yet also refuses aimless drift in the indefinite. Although *1984* ends with the capitulation of the first two Winstons, it is an equivocal ending (end and relay) of a text that begins with an indefinite quest (relay and beginning), a quest for a looser, more fluid configuration of identity and difference - Winston[4].

conclusion:
guerrilla warfare as post-foundational

1. objectivity revisited?

History is always an imposition of form upon the past, and cannot claim to be more. It is always the comprehension and interpretation of a meaning which we look for in the past.[170]

What I did by and large was to take two famous and still altogether undetermined types by the forelock ... in order to have a couple more formulas, signs, means of expression in my hands ... It was in this way that Plato employed Socrates, as a semiotic for Plato. - Now, when I look back from a distance at the circumstances of which these essays are a witness, I would not wish to deny that fundamentally they speak only of me.[171]

Historical research cannot pretend to be dealing with objects whose ontological status is completely independent of the knower. What we know in historical research are objects as they appear to us. We cannot probe into the past to objects in themselves: we must limit ourselves to the historical appearance conditioned by our interests and our place in time.[172]

Orwell mediated diverse strains of European thought/practice, and within his texts there is a transgression of authoritative power/knowledge formations. One of these is the discursive formation of "objective knowledge", which encodes as attainable knowledge of universals untainted by power and persuasion, and unbounded by location and time. This formation may be said to stretch back as far as Plato and his anti-sophistic search for unchanging Forms, but to avoid *identifying* Plato with this particular discursive strain it is proper to designate the formation under discussion as Plato[1] in order to allow room for tensions within his texts. Orwell's own texts, including and especially *1984*, may be read as both challenging and reproducing this strain; I have referred to those aspects of his thought which reproduce it as Winston[1], and those which challenge it as Winston[4] and *guerrilla warfare*. The latter contest the operative ontological assumptions of "objectivity", as well as the more modern onto-assumptions of the "autonomous individual" and a knowable world of discrete and "neutral" objects. Guerrilla warfare is

[170] Johan Huizanga, "A Definition of the Concept of History," cited in John W. Yolton, "History and Meta-History", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (Buffalo: University of Buffalo), vol. xv, no. 4, June 1955, p. 481.

[171] Friedrich Nietzsche, commenting on his essays on Schopenhauer and Wagner. *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, trans. by Hollingdale (Markham: Penguin, 1988), p. 87.

[172] John W. Yolton, "History and Meta-History", op. cit., p. 480.

characterized by the view that power and knowledge are not separate but fused processes. A practitioner of guerrilla warfare locates power within the knowledge enterprise itself; within its defense of and search for *identities.* The guerrilla's plan of battle is to disturb identities and power/knowledge formations by promoting *thoughtcrime* and the *transgression* of boundaries. "Guerrilla warfare" is a symbol of this practice of transgression and dislocation.

Is it appropriate to couch this practice in terms of a new "objectivity", in terms, that is, of a symbol which has come under attack from numerous quarters and yet still has a place of power within scholarly and other discourses? Is guerrilla warfare a *re-definition* of objectivity, or is it, on the other hand, some variety of "post-objectivity"?

One contemporary response to these questions takes the form of a refusal to equate objectivity with neutrality, and a combination of this refusal with a defense of the term as a signifier of a particular practice of historical inquiry. Thomas Haskell provides one example of this approach: he prefers to retain the term "objectivity" while (at least claiming to) discard its long-standing connotations of neutrality and "disinterestedness".[173] As an historiographer Haskell has much with which to be concerned when it comes to assaults on "objective history". "Objectivity", in his re-definition, becomes the attempt "to come to grips with a rival's perspective", an attempt which is not wholly incongruent with the reading of Orwell's social and political thought offered here. But an interrogation of the ontological assumptions of Haskell's attempt to reclaim the authority of the "O-word" helps to locate important divergences as well as similarities between the two positions.[174]

The key divergence involves the status of "detachment". In Haskell's text, "detachment both socializes and deparochializes the work of the intellect; it is the quality that fits an individual to participate fruitfully in what is essentially a communal exercise."[175] This view assumes that individuality, or more

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[173] Thomas L. Haskell, "Objectivity is Not Neutrality: Rhetoric vs. Practice in Peter Nozick's *That Nobel Dream*", History and Theory, xxix, no. 2.

[174] "Ontological assumptions" because this allows for a distinction between the "completely" explicable assumptions which are thought by some to populate the field of formal deductive logic and the embedded assumptions which "work behind our backs" and frame perspectives. What I have in mind is the distinction made in chapter two, and in W. Connolly's *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) - a distinction which his strategy of "projectional interpretation" is designed to take into account.

specifically, "individual selves", exist prior to detachment, and that detachment is a process of ridding the individual (as he quickly makes clear) of "idiosyncratic views" in order to help "fit" difference into identity, in order, that is, to fit difference into the framework of the "communal exercise" or the "social arrangements that foster objectivity".[176] Within Orwell's texts, however, detachment may be viewed as the attempt to detach from deeply embedded processes of socialization; socialization is not the goal, but a complex set of processes which are approached with a guerrilla orientation. Orwell starts, therefore, from a different ontological assumption, namely, that the State has penetrated into all aspects of society/thought/practice and that the concept of individual identity is problematic and, indeed, an example of State thinking. Hence "objectivity" (as Haskell articulates it) is tantamount to a form of acquiescence in existing political processes of state-capture. Orwell does not begin from the assumption that difference should be purged to make way for identity; nor that identity should be purged to make way for difference; but rather that a rigid sense of identity should give way to a fluid guerrilla orientation to problems (and not resolutions) of identity/difference and power/knowledge. Why retain, as a label for this practice, the signpost and identification-mark (*birthmark*) of "objectivity"? Such a label is inappropriate unless (as Haskell admits) one's primary aim is to defend existing practices - to defend one's perceived roots in a particular community. "Objective History", then, is better viewed as a flag or as a coat of arms than as a signifier of the search for knowledge and a foundational history.

2. postfoundational practices

As long as people feel pulled between two worlds and without roots in any society they cannot have the firm sense of identity necessary for building a stable, modern national-state.[177]

Goodness knows where they will bury me - in their own grave yard I suppose, two feet deep in a painted coffin. There will be no mourners, and no rejoicers either, which seems sadder still, for the Burmese celebration of a funeral is nicer than our beastly mummeries.[178]

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[175] Haskell, op. cit., p. 134.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Lucian Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (1966), cited in WJM Mackenzie, *Political Identity* (Markham: Penguin, 1978), p. 31.

[178] An excerpt from an unpublished draft of Orwell's *Burmese Days*, entitled "My Epitaph by John Flory". Flory, a border-crosser who associates with the Burmese and admires (some) aspects of Burmese culture, perishes from social and self-inflicted wounds. It is difficult not to view the shift within this passage between "they" ("they will bury me") and "our" ("our beastly mummeries") as further evidence of Orwell's uncertain or tense (or vague) sense of identity, and

Where is Orwell's foundation, his home, his history, his base of operations? Born in Bengal, sometime-defender of a blurred and changing "England", seeker of invisibilities, attacker of Empire, fellow-traveller of the vagabonds, poorly-armed volunteer amidst an anarchist militia in Spain, inquisitor of "chessboard reasonableness" - where is his point of privilege, the place where the "essential" Eric Blair lived? Is there an objective foundation upon which we can firmly place Orwell/Blair? Could it be that this "literary" figure, like Nietzsche's philosophers since and including Plato, *lacks* something essential, and could it be that what he lacks is a foundational unity? George/Eric did not even possess a single proper name by which he could be identified; instead, he was possessed by essential tensions, by a *polyidentity*.

These questions help to forestall the construction of yet another foundational Orwell, and to puncture the coherence of the Orwell who has been portrayed here. We are left with numerous Orwells, in the same way that we are left with numerous Winstons. We are left with a movable portrait of a figure who was (and is) the site of a dynamic interplay of forces, whether these are identified as "ideological practices", as "historico-structural energies", or as "power/knowledge formations". The figure of Orwell is a blur, caught in the play of human energies, energies which inscribe multiple meanings on the slate of "his" location.

Orwell's history has been rewritten by many Big Brothers and winston-scribes, who toil away in search of an elusive objectivity. Here - they may be accused of saying - here is Orwell, bound and found, essentialized. I think Orwell is somewhat more elusive. His texts *can* be read (as I have tried to show) as the products of a writer who operated within a complex set of power/knowledge formations, *some* of which have led me to contest the prevalent image of Orwell as an "English empiricist", a defender of "objective knowledge", and a "straightman-journalist". That Orwell and his texts have been subjected to so many different inscriptions points to the futility of defending only one, to the polyvocal nature of his texts, and to his position as a mediator of diverse "European" discursive practices. Indeed, one should be hesitant (without being shy) when using the term "European" because Orwell viewed himself as one writer among many who participated in what he termed "the debunking of Western civilization"; he participated, that is, in the multiple processes of rethinking long-standing practices and invisibilities

of his position as a guerrilla.

which (according to him) reached their climax in the 1930s. These processes of re-thinking, however, are caught up inside, and help to constitute and reproduce, the political practices with which they struggle - just as Winston shares a certain "intimacy" with O'Brien, Big Brother, Julia, and the Thought Police.

Orwell and Winston may be compared to figures associated with Bentham and Plato. In both Bentham's vision of the panopticon and Plato's vision of the cave, the inhabitants have behind them a light and before them the center of social and political power, the provider of convention. Admittedly, there are different ways of encoding these metaphors, but one way is to see in the *turning away* of Plato's cave-dweller a radical and critical moment, a moment of oppositional thinking, a moment which leads to, and is a part of, a long journey. To Platonists and to those who would see in Plato a philosopher of eternal ideas and forms (in Gilles Deleuze's terms, "a State Philosopher"), an initiator and a precursor of rationalist and objectivist commentaries, this turning away and this journey are linear: they constitute a turning toward Identity and the Good. Another way of reading this myth is one which sees in the process of re-thinking an intermittent, yet recurrent, turning away, one which sees in the blurred vision that accompanies the inhabitant's departure and return from the cave Plato's recognition of the *problem* of identifying the Real - the problem, that is, of identity and difference. Bentham, however, was intent on *utilizing* and *disciplining* the inhabitants of his panopticon-cave; they were to focus their attention on the center, and were to be illuminated from behind, but uninterested in turning toward, alternative lights. Winston, like Plato's cave-dweller, and like Camus' Sisyphus, is oriented to the alternative and to the indefinite. And Winston, like Orwell and like Nietzsche's philosophers (and, turning Nietzsche's own logic upon himself, like Nietzsche) suffers from a crisis of identity: he lacks something *essential*. "He" is an "essentially contested" figure.[179]

3. afterword: guerrilla warfare as post-orwellian

Thou art about my path, and about my bed:
and spiest out all my ways
If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me,
then shall my night be turned into day.

[179] A play on words which I identify as emerging from Connolly's *The Terms of Political Discourse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). Chapter 1 is titled "Essentially Contested Concepts in Politics".

Even there also shall thy hand lead me; and thy right hand
shall hold me.[180]

The place where there is no darkness is "Room 101", a political space of knowledge and binary codes, a room where codification is in process, where truth is captured, tortured, and produced, a room where multiple rationalities are fused into One - a room where human difference is treated as a "flaw in the pattern", and lifted "clean out of the stream of history". Room 101 is a place of unlimited and unhindered vision, a panopticon, a perfect structure, a sisyphus-rock.[181] But such a place is built at the cost of losing sight of that which does not fit inside the boundaries of the essential home of power and knowledge. Discursive conclusions are also of the type "room 101", where finality is given, premisses ended, visions captured, and *quod erad demonstranda* uttered. But in that structured sleep of room 101, what dreams may come when we have produced our demonstrations of identity and warded off that which does not *fit* within the conventional format of chapter^{n} followed by conclusion (a format which is suspiciously like premise^{n} followed by conclusion, a similarity that makes one suspect that such a format is a descendant of a medieval logician's striated dream, a dream that still channels thought and dispenses power by notifying the reader that s/he is in the presence of expert knowledge)?

Is it appropriate to say that an "Orwellian" approach to social and political thought can be (or has been) clearly identified? Or should we say that we are left with only "impressions"? The term "impression" suggests something other than identity, something different from the identification of an original. Can the strict identification of a (for example) Marxian approach to society and politics be provided by comparing contemporary texts with the (known and available) texts of Karl Marx? One might argue that a "relay" of sorts connects them, but their connection does not constitute an identity in the strict sense; perhaps thought proceeds in this *relaying* of gradations of identity/difference. What impression did the texts of Karl Marx make on Antonio Gramsci? Gramsci might be viewed as a guerrilla, accidentally and

[180] Psalm cxxxix (xi, 96), used by Bentham to introduce his "Outline of the Plan of Construction of a Panopticon Penitentiary House: as designed by Jeremy Bentham, of Lincoln's Inn, Esq.", in *A Bentham Reader*, edited by Mary Peter Mack (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 194.

[181] "Panopticon" was coined by Bentham "from two Greek words, - one of which signified everything, the other a place of sight." Jeremy Bentham, "History of the War Between Jeremy Bentham and George the Third - By One of the Belligerents", in *A Bentham Reader*, op. cit., p. 196.

purposely out-flanking the textual authorities and regular armies of Marxian analysis, perpetuating thoughtcrime against and amongst thoughtcriminals, scrawling out his *quaderni* in the belly of another Ministry of Truth. "Marx", he wrote in the short essay *Our Marx*, "did not write a nice little doctrine, he is not a Messiah who left a string of parables laden with categorical imperatives, with absolute, unquestionable norms beyond the categories of time and space."[182] Marx, Gramsci tells us,

> is an individual moment in the anxious search that humanity has been conducting for centuries to acquire consciousness of its being and its becoming, to grasp the mysterious rhythm of history ... He is a necessary and integral part of our spirit, which would not be what it is if he had not lived, had not thought, had not sent sparks of light flying from the collision with his passions and his ideas, his sufferings and his ideals.

Gramsci could find a place for warfare even while writing eulogies for fatherly figures, the status of which (*our* Marx? *whose* Marx?) was far from certain within the identifiable boundaries of Marxism. To answer the earlier question, "what impression did Marx mark on Gramsci?", one might reply with another: "what impression did Gramsci make on Marx?" This afterword, like the texts of Gramsci's Marx, is meant to send sparks of light (or perhaps just sparks) flying beyond room 101. It may be read as an impressionistic foray into the topography of contemporary political thought and practice, a foray which proceeds via a series of relays, a foray which searches for (and, to confess a thoughtcrime against Truth, forges) connections between "Orwell" and other thoughtcriminals.[183]

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[182] Antonio Gramsci, "Our Marx, *Il Grido del Popolo*, 4 May 1918, in *An Antonio Gramsci Reader*, ed. by David Forgacs (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), p. 36.

[183] Although this foray immediately "touches ground" with the figure "Foucault", I hesitate to characterize its "method" as "gray, patient, and documentary", terms "he" deploys to describe (and, I hazard to claim, *legitimate* as "scholarly") his genealogical proceedings. Instead, following Deleuze, I seek *speed*, and, in accordance with the general tactics and strategies of guerrilla warfare, *multiple points of reference*. In this exercise, therefore, references are made to Deleuze, Guattari, Kuhn, Dostoevsky, Walker, Rorty, Magnusson, Bentham, Plato, Dallmayr, Nandy, Morris, J.S. Mill, and medieval logicians. Perhaps this will appear as an upsetting example of postmodern "cut and paste": I mean it to be. It is meant to (at least partly) avoid academic/state apparatuses by drawing on as many discursive power-sources as possible.

relay 1: foucault

Did Foucault read Orwell?

Winston's statement, "We are the dead", is a symbol that points to those power/knowledge formations or practices which have a resilience or "staying-power", and which connect individual bodies. "Orwell" and "Foucault" recognized their embeddedness in power/knowledge formations, and both read similar "texts". Such texts include conventional works by authors like Nietzsche, Marx, Camus, and Bentham, but also what might be termed "social texts" - the formations themselves (though not formations somehow extraneous to language and symbolic modes interpretation). This makes problematic the claim (the tempting claim) that Foucault was influenced by Orwell; nonetheless, the reading presented here suggests that Orwell prefigured Foucault in some respects. Both draw attention to the difficulty of identifying an individual author or subject, albeit in slightly different ways. One might say: as the eye is situated in a complex set of relations of force known as the body (and, if we are intent on pursuing Foucault's lead, the "soul"), so is the author situated in a complex social field of power/knowledge. The notion of the spectatorial eye (coined by Rorty) captures a political practice of knowledge which is portrayed by Big Brother in *1984*, but which also surfaces as an important symbol and strategy in many of Orwell's essays (for example, the *Road to Wigan Pier*). Foucault and Orwell (and not only them) draw attention to this in many ways, provoking thought about processes of power which escape vision - processes which may be gestured at as "invisible". Discourse, Foucault tells us, "is a violence we do to things" - such a statement voices aspects of Orwell's political thought, especially in *New Words* and *1984*, as it does Foucault's. And the subjection of difference to the panopticon of identity is a theme which is prominent in both Orwell's works and *Discipline and Punish*.

relay 2: spectator politics

If the "Foucault-Orwell connection" is submerged within this discussion, and yet drawn upon allusively, it is possible to speak to forces operating in the machine age in an illuminating fashion. RBJ Walker, for instance, has spoken of "spectator politics"; on, that is, the practice of viewing politics as something that happens "out there", in distant institutions remote from everyday life.[184] In a statement that serves as a point of crystallization for a

[184] See RBJ Walker, "Politics, Ideology and Everyday Life", in *After Bennett: A new Politics for British Columbia*,

number of key themes under examination here, he writes:

> By treating politics as something "out there" we perpetuate the structures that put it beyond our control ... Of course, these structures ... may be quite immovable. But there is all the difference in the world between a society which simply capitulates to the necessities proclaimed from above and a society which is always aware of the constraints on its well-being and is constantly trying to change them. In the one case, both knowledge and power are simply delegated to some external authority. In the other, continual awareness of the politics of everyday life creates a potential for change.[185]

Writing from a vantage-point partly informed by concerns voiced earlier by Weber, Marx, and Nietzsche, his thoughts on spectatorial politics may be situated within the problematique of rationalization, bureaucratization, and the authority of experts. In a similar vein, a number of Orwell's texts also note the modern reliance on experts, and *1984* may be read as a satire on, or a reduction ad absurdum of, bureaucratization.

Big Brother is the spectatorial eye writ large, the omniscient one whose present extends in all directions. Does Big Brother symbolize freedom, agency, and movement? No: he symbolizes the static, the same, identity, the unmoved unmover. He is God, State, omniscient expert, scientist, regulator, icon. But though referred to in the text, He is always removed from participation, despite His posters, despite His eyes which hypnotize difference. He shares intimacy with Winston - it is only Winston's engagement, his active (yet intermittent) intransigence, his *guerrilla warfare,* which sets him apart. O'Brien, Big Brother's spokesman, is Reality's spokesman, and he speaks the words of the expert and the state when he tells Winton: I will take care you, we shall meet in the place where vision is unhindered and radical change (and participation) is unnecessary. Just as cricket is read by Ashis Nandy as a cultural-political "slate"[186] upon which modernity has written its

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edited by W. Magnusson (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1986). Together with Warren Magnusson, Walker assaults the reproduction of this practice in academia, in the tendency of political scientists and theorists and focus political analysis on the state, "which appears as the enclosure constitutive of politics itself" - see Magnusson and Walker, "De-centring the State: Political Theory and Canadian Political Economy", in *Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review*, xxvi, 37-71, p. 39; and Warren Magnusson, "The Reification of Political Community", in *Contending Sovereignties: Redefining Political Community*, edited by RBJ Walker and Saul Mendlovitz (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989).

[185] RBJ Walker, "Politics, Ideology and Everyday Life", op. cit. , pp. 333-334.

[186] Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games* (New York: Penguin, 1990).

dicta against play and non-instrumental rationality, and just as English football[187] has been read by Orwell as a terrain invaded by nationalism, *1984* may be read as another insight into modern sport (and as another slate upon which current and past ideological practices leave their marks), as an examination of and a satire on spectatorial politics, which in this text is seen as a mythopoeic space occupied by the eye/I that disciplines and state-izes difference and the nomadic, and that encourages a telescreen hypnosis and paralysis (as Walker writes, "the loss of community, and ... its replacement with ... the television set"[188]). The spectator of politics, pure knowledge, and the observer: *1984* links the ontologies of observation with the practice of non-engagement in the politics of community. It reveals a connection between the so-called "epistemology" of modern science and political participation (or lack thereof). Within the "iron cages" of Bureaucracy, Rationality, Identity, Structure, and Expertise, there is little room for critical opposition or engagement: let us be spectators.

relay 3: security and structure

Of course, one might question (at least momentarily) Paul Feyerabend's belief in the "value of extreme positions". After all, Hate Week and the two-minute hate may be seen as instances of intensely political engagement. On the other hand, they may also be viewed as instances of contained engagement, as (to once again deploy Deleuzean terminology) *striated*, channelled engagement. Deleuzean nomadology testifies to the capacity of the State, read alternately as "nation-state", "state-science", and "state-theory", to impose upon nomadic processes "an order of reasons" - to, that is, "appropriate this dimension of the war machine" by "submitting it to civil and metric rules that strictly limit, control, [and] localize nomad science ... keeping it from having repercussions throughout the social field."[189]

In fact, "Treatise on Nomadology" shares a common field with aspects of Orwell's political thought - and with Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, a text examined earlier in this thesis. The similarities centre

[187] George Orwell, "The Sporting Spirit", *Tribune*, 14 December 1945 (CEJL, vol. 4). Orwell comments that "the games cult did not start till the later part of the last century" and that "there cannot be much doubt that the whole thing is bound up with the rise of nationalism - that is, with the lunatic modern habit of identifying onself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige." (p. 43).

[188] RBJ Walker, "Politics, Ideology and Everyday Life", op. cit., p. 332.

[189] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "1227: Treatise on Nomadology - the War Machine", *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, op. cit., p. 363.

upon Deleuze and Guattari's description of state science, which co-opts and attempts to control nomadic science. The latter is referred to in *Nomadology* as "pure exteriority" or "pure speed", a type of thinking which is a process outside of existing containers, models, and conceptual frameworks. Throughout *Nomadology*, nomadic thinking is pointed at through the deployment of metaphors such as "speed", "exteriority", "vagabond", "foreign", "Genghis Khan", and the "desert". These are meant (one presumes) to conjure images of a process which resists the entrapment of royal science, itself a process, but a state or imperial process that aims at the control of its inside. In their view, as in Foucault's, the knowledge enterprise is intimately fused with power. Similarly, power is "diffuse" or "decentred", and both the state-ic and the nomadic are processes, not possessions or things; they may be institutional in a sense, but the institution is amorphous and serves as a relatively concentrated centre of political forces. The *purely* nomadic (and here one might be reminded of Clausewitz's notion of "absolute war") is not even institutional, but always acts at one remove from *even* Deleuze and Guattari's attempts to prompt thinking about "it". State science is not an opposite to nomad science, *per se*, for they interpenetrate: the state desires speed, just not "pure" speed.

This might sound familiar to Kuhn and to Orwell, although to the former the rhetorical strategies and poses of a Deleuze may have the scent of the unanalytic. In Kuhn's view, science proceeds via "normal" and "extraordinary" periods, by the formation of paradigms within which normal science, an essentially "puzzle-solving" activity that does not challenge the boundaries of the paradigm itself, works. Kuhn's normal science, then, resembles Deleuzean royal science. "Extraordinary science", however, challenges the domination of existing paradigms, and it is through this activity that paradigms are ushered into existence. Furthermore, Kuhn, Deleuze, and Guattari may be viewed as exploring the ties between knowledge and power (although Kuhn, it must be admitted, is often cited and deployed without any mention of the more radical aspects of this particular text, aspects which speak to the questions of power/knowledge). For instance, Kuhn's paradigms are not simply, or readily, rejected as soon as an extraordinary scientist or group of such scientists presents a new paradigm. This is seen especially in Kuhn's (qualified) rejection of "falsification", and in his suggestion that the knowledge enterprise is akin to a "religious conversion battle". Kuhn insists that "paradigm shifts" occur after such battles have resulted in the defeat of previous scientists and their paradigms.

In Kuhn's text, as in Nomadology, one is hardly in the relam of pure reason or pure rationality - paradigm shifts are likenen to "gestalt shifts", and Kuhn suggests that what is involved is a battle between rationalities, with each "side" of the shift viewing the other as irrational, or perhaps as pre-rational. On these and other matters, Deleuze, Guattari, and Kuhn are strikingly similar.

On my reading of Kuhn, Deleuze, and Guattari, there emerges a dissonant note that make problematic these considerations, and which affords a return to a more direct discussion of Orwell. What I see as a key divergence between them centres on Kuhn's attempts to internalize and institutionalize the type of challenge presented to existing power/knowledge formations by nomadic or extraordinary science. Through the lens provided by Deleuze/Guattari, it is possible to view Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* as an exemplar of that type of structuralism which attempts to enclose or capture creative human energies within a noological iron cage. To Kuhn, paradigms are a cage within which science is domiciled, but the process of challenging the bars or limits of this paradigm-cage is also fitted within a cage, the cage of "mechanism", "structure", the cage of a theory of history (normal-extraordinary-normal...) which, not incidentally, bears the trace of other modern thinkers, in particular John Stuart Mill and St. Simon (organic-transitional-organic). Orwell's "hate week" may be read as precisely this sort of channelling of human energy, a channelling and a domesticating of outside forces which might tear and challenge the political fabric of the State, which approach order from the outside and yet are forced to enter a well-policed, efficient structure controlled by the State. Sex, thought, practice, communication - these are channelled through the "tool-systems" of newspeak (a grandly modern and paradigmatic "ideal language") and through the panopticon of Big Brother's gaze.

During Hate Week energy is brought to a feverish pitch, yet the State finds for it a direction: hate Goldstein, hate treachery, hate the enemy. In Kuhn's text it is possible to sense a radical edge to his structuralism, but he recants when faced by the thoughtpolice of Science. He admits that there is progress after all - that there is "a special kind of community" endowed with the capacity to provide "good reasons" for the existence of a scientific community; extraordinary science is not so extraordinary, because it can be normalized through a structure of predictability, a "structure of scientific revolution", that provides it with a special function and a limited place within a larger community.

To this it may be said: energy transgresses the static, but there is more than one or two ways in which it does so; thus the new "micro-physics" of power. Overcoming boundaries, hitting the streets, spilling out of the streets, disobeying laws of motion, speed, and even revolution itself: these are the signposts of revolution. In *1984*, such emotional motion is generally contained motion, the *two-minute* hate, a time-capsule of ratio-nationalized energy; revolutionary energy which does not spill over the boundaries of the current paradigm-that-is. One should not forget Winston and Julia's beloved antique shop, a nostalgic place to freeze revolutionary impulses, an oasis that is quickly vaporized when the State gathers enough speed to catch up. There, a political space of subversiveness becomes a space whose *raison d'etat* and *raison d'etre* are the conservation of its borders and energies. Orwell may be read as providing both a myth and a metamyth about the conservation of mass and energy: the security principle pushes aside the nomadic, and the antique shop is transformed into a dead history, or, in John Stuart Mill's terms, into a "dead dogma": "both teachers and learners go to sleep at their post, as soon as there is no enemy in the field."[190] Mill and Orwell may be read as offering insight into the nature of thought, into, at least, a type of thought: *thought lives only alongside and within politics, movements, defenses and attacks.*

Orwell's Winston may also be paired with Dostoevsky's Ivan: Ivan creates a myth in which "Jesus" returns to earth during the Spanish Inquisition, and is jailed by the Cardinal of Seville, who first poses questions, and then condemns him to death.[191] Within Ivan's myth, Christ assumes the role of a subversive who promotes freedom and choice ("heavenly bread"), an activity which the church (state) rejects in favor of a papal strategy that promotes the subordination of the masses in return for security ("earthly bread"). As with the leadership of Oceania, the papacy is intent on creating an "harmonious ant-hill where there are no dissenting voices".[192] Similarly, the symbol "Jesus" is retained by the papacy as a weapon, just as the symbol "Ingsoc", or English Socialism, is retained by Oceania's leadership.

In Dostoevsky's text both science and Jesus[193] are opposed to the papal security

[190] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 44.

[191] Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. by Andrew H. MacAndrew (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), Book V, Chapter V, "The Grand Inquisitor".

[192] Ibid., p. 310.

apparatus. The security offered by the papal-state is not simply the security of an apparatus in the conventional sense of the term, but in a wider sense, one that refuses to draw precise lines between an apparatus considered as a "material" organization which possesses a precise location and an apparatus considered as a channel of thought embedded in language, rules, symbols, and laws: one might note, in this regard, Ivan's suggestion that the Grand Inquisitor has fell victim to an "error of identity", to an "idee fixe", to the authority of a God-symbol and an icon.[194]

As with Ivan's papal state, so with Bentham's panopticon. Ivan's Jesus symbolizes the nomadic and the indefinite - that is, it is a symbol which points to that which Camus' Sisyphus and Orwell's Winston[4] embrace, and to that which Bentham and his descendants (particularly Ogden and Richards) attempt to control/purge. "There is nothing more alluring to man," Ivan's Inquisitor informs Jesus, "than the freedom of conscience, but neither is there anything more agonizing. And yet, instead of giving them something tangible to calm their consciences forever, You came to them with words that were unfamiliar, vague, and indefinite."[195] Bentham, on the other hand, agonized over indefinite verbs and vague symbols; as Mary Jo Morris has indicated, "Bentham's thought, including his thought on language, seems to be motivated at all times by a drive for security, particularly security from 'fictitious entities', those invisible and impalpable beings that are give existence by language."[196] Bentham exemplifies the drive for definite structures which channel and secure human energies.

From the vantage-point of the State and its diffuse guardians, the Thought Police, there is a danger within this energy: it may transgress even those corridors which have been provided for its strict containment. A radical ambiguity exists in Oceania's political structure which provides an opening to the forces of change - Winston experiences, for instance, a moment when his intense hatred of Goldstein suddenly shifts and turns against Big Brother. This ambiguity refers to the ontological situation of the human being as a mediator/subject of diverse and diffuse forces and practices: the human as sybil-subject, the masked and "internally" warring policeman of "Shooting an

[193] The Cardinal accuses his prisoner: "Who was it who broke up the human herd and sent men along innumerable paths?" Ibid., p. 312.

[194] Ibid., p. 301.

[195] Ibid., p. 307.

[196] Mary Jo Morris, "Bentham and Basic English", op. cit., p. 106.

Elephant". The subject is *not* wholly of any class or molar grouping, whether oppressed or oppressor. The complex interpenetration of ruler/ruled, which has been a focus of the works of Deleuze, Guattari, and Nandy, may be read as a central motif of *1984*. A passage from Deleuze and Guattari's "Micropolitics and Segmentarity" speaks to this:

> Each power center is also molecular and exercises its power on a micrological fabric in which it exists only as diffuse, dispersed, geared down, miniaturized, perpetually displaced ... Foucault's analysis of "disciplines" or micropowers (school, army, factory, hospital, etc.) testifies to these "focuses of instability" where groupings and accumulations confront each other but also confront breakaways and escapes, and where inversions occur. What we have is no longer ... the general, but the junior officers, the noncommissioned officers, the soldier inside me, and also the malcontent: all have their own tendencies, poles, conflicts, and relations of force ... [The] molar segments are necessarily immersed in the molecular soup that nourishes them and makes their outlines waver ... Every power center has this microtexture.[197]

A focus on microtextures allows us to see what a focus on State categories and molar classification schemes do not: subjects are always subject to complex relations of force. Deleuze, Guattari, and Nandy follow similar trajectories in their attempts to map the intimate engagement of ruler/ruled, paths which disrupt a classic class analysis without annihilating it through a myopic focus on microtextures or singularities. Instead of a nomad who transgresses codes, Nandy speaks of the "shaman" who is divided, and

> whose style of negation and whose categories do not make any sense centre-stage but always seem to touch the disempowered in the wings ... The shaman has one foot in the familiar, one foot outside; one foot in the present, one in the future or, as some would put it, in the timeless.[198]

This route takes them away from the home of the bounded spectatorial subject, and toward a more *fluid* (or to use William Connolly's word, *slack*) orientation to identity, difference, power, and knowledge.

relay 4: pluralism vs. border-crossing

This may be viewed as part of a general assault on European practices of power/knowledge, as part of what Fred Dallmayr has referred to as the "decentring of the dominant position of European nation-states" and

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[197] Deleuze and Guattari, "Micropolitics and Segmentarity", *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

[198] Ashis Nandy, "Shamans, Savages, and the Wilderness: On the Inaudibility of Dissent", op. cit

philosophy.[199] Dallmayr's version of guerrilla warfare is a "grenzgänger", a practitioner within the field of political philosophy/practice who is "deprived of secure moorings". Such practitioners are "bound to be 'marginals' - not in the sense of aimless drift, but of being 'border people' ... inhabiting a peculiar margin or twilight zone in which traditional boundaries are blurred without being erased."[200] Orwell, at least the Orwell who fits within the codes offered so far, is such a border-person, a guerrilla who attempts to cross boundaries and bring difference back to a new political home, a home characterized by a new configuration of identity. In Orwell's attack on eschatology may be found an inkling of a new politics: but as quickly as this is stated, it must give way to a post-authoritarian, "post-Orwellian" direction, one that refuses new icons, gods, and exemplars. Such a refusal opens up the possibility of relaying, but not replicating in machine-style, an icon. End with a problem and a tentative stance, not a resolution: *Orwell's guerrilla warfare may be turned upon Orwell himself by following the contours of his thought, by posing tough questions - by interrogating St. George, and then leaving him (but not aspects of his thought) behind.*

Such an interrogation involves asking the question: was Orwell/Blair merely a latter-day John Stuart Mill (and thus another Bentham/Wordsworth, if we accept Mill's testimony in his autobiography, and in particular the emphasis he placed on the importance of poetry in revealing the hollowness of crude utilitarianism[201]) who provided the world with a rather bleak, post-WWII *On Liberty*, a new plea and "argument" for pluralism, yet also a new mask which hid a subtle will-to-power?[202] Furthermore: could Orwell be viewed as a replication of Mill, a twentieth century Mill who was guilty of allowing the radically different to speak, but only in the tongue of the modern European male? Afterall, it was J.S. Mill who had put forth the principle that savages must become civilized before they could engage in civilized politics, before they could partake in the grand discussion of opinions; otherwise, they existed in a previous "stage of history", a pre-revolutionary time, and (borrowing Kuhn's words) an incommensurable paradigm, wherein

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[199] Fred Dallmayr, *Margins of Political Discourse*. (New Yrok: State University of New York Press, 1989), xi.

[200] Ibid., xii.

[201] See Mill's autobiography, especially chapter five, "A Crisis in My Mental History: One Stage Onrward", in the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. 1, edited by John Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

[202] See Jeanne C. Blamey, *Savages and Civilization: References to Non-Western Societies in the Theories of John Locke and John Stuart Mill* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inter-national, 1985).

> Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement ... Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion. Until then, there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one.[203]

For those who do not deserve an Akbar or a Charlemagne, John Stuart Mill offers these words of defense: "If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind". The *second* Mill, in *1984*, writes: "Being in a minority, even a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad." And, after all, although the second Mill admonishes his audience to engage with invisibilities, and with invisible noneuropeans in particular, no noneuropean (with the exception of Gandhi in Orwell's brief essay, "Reflections on Gandhi") "speaks" in his texts, or is treated with any seriousness.

The "Orwell as Mill" question deserves a complicated response. One may, for example, read *1984* as a partial critique *and* reproduction of *On Liberty*. Such a reading would find support in Winston's status as an outsider vis-a-vis the powers-that-be in Oceania. Winston, therefore, might well be considered a symbol of the savage who in J.S. Mill's work is not allowed to speak on principle: Winston is a person from a different time and history, an inhabitant of a "pre-paradigm" time, a person who must be "educated". Nonetheless, it is important to note the silences in Orwell's texts, the *lack* of *certain* political voices. Ashis Nandy sensed this when, in *The Intimate Enemy*, he characterized Orwell as someone who had gained the "relative sense of freedom and critical morality which were the true antitheses of colonialism and which one could acquire only by working through the colonial consciousness", but did not include him among those who found "rich meaning" outside of his European heritage.[204] Although Nandy would recognize this as didactic hyperbole, his comment that Orwell had "deep empathy without total identification" for noneuropeans and non-middle-class practices might be supplemented by a qualification that takes into account the absence of sustained engagement, *without* total identification, with a noneuropean text or thinker.[205] Orwell, therefore, may be viewed as a

[203] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, op. cit., p. 16.

[204] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, op. cit., pp. 40-44.

border-crosser who pointed to and engaged with a variety of invisibilities, including one which haunts a key text of an earlier opponent (or at least modifier) of Benthamite utilitarianism, but who also pointed the way to more dynamic terms of engagement. To "recover" the emancipatory potential of Orwell's guerrilla warfare, it is crucial to reduce "Orwell" to the status of a mediator, to reduce him, as Gramsci said of Marx, to "an individual moment" in the "anxious search that humanity has been conducting for centuries to acquire consciousness of its being and becoming", to a sisyphean guerrilla who pushes toward a more active engagement with the multiplicity of the political world.

Whatever the difficulty this comparison of Mill and Orwell involves (is this *fair* to them?, have I let *them* speak?), putting it forth as a micro-afterword helps to disrupt the insularity of a theoretical resolution. This text, therefore, ends with a problematic note on the way, instead of with a sovereign dictate.

anti-q.e.d.

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[205] Ibid.

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VITA

Surname: Neufeld Given Names: Roderick Peter
Place of Birth: Minnedosa, Manitoba Date of Birth: Dec. 18, 1963

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1989 to 1991
University of Minnesota	1988
Brandon University	1988, 1981 to 1986

Degrees Awarded:

B.A. (Specialist) Brandon University 1987

Honour and Awards:

Graduate Studies Teaching Award (University of Victoria) 1990, 1991

Dr. W.N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley Scholarship (Brandon University) 1986

Helen A. Christie Memorial Scholarship (Brandon University) 1985

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