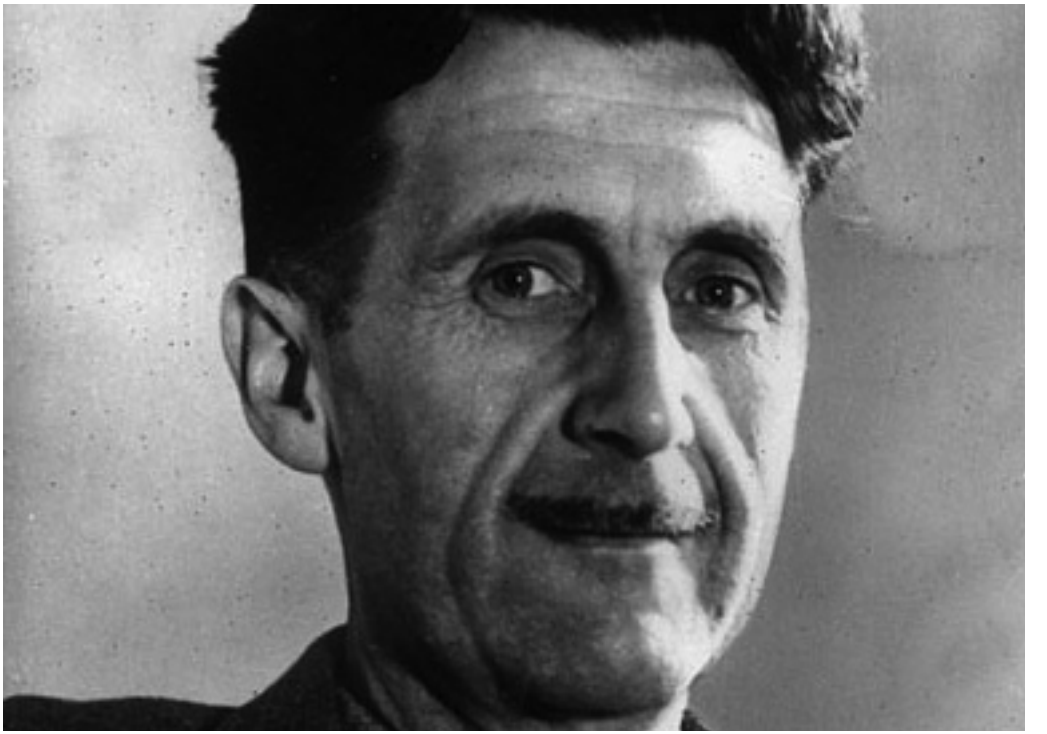
THE ORWELL SOCIETY



Newsletter Number Two

In this issue

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THE ORWELL SOCIETY

Founded in 2011, the Orwell Society is dedicated to the understanding and appreciation of the life and work of George Orwell (the pen-name of Eric Blair, 1903-1950), author of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is a society without political affiliation, based in the United Kingdom but open to members worldwide. Our intention is to embrace and understand all aspects of Orwell's life and writings, from his literary criticism to his diaries, and from his political writing to his poetry.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all, at the following rates:

Annual
UK £20, UK (joint rate) £25, Overseas £30, Student £10, Corporate £50

Life
Life Membership £300

Please see the Society's new website at www.orwellsociety.com for full details of how to join, or contact the Membership Secretary at:

The Orwell Society, PO Box 735, Chichester,
West Sussex, PO19 9QD, United Kingdom

email:membership@orwellsociety.com

Please note that we only take membership dues in sterling, but credit cards are accepted.

Welcome to the second edition of the Orwell Society Newsletter. Again, I am indebted to a fine selection of contributors, who have submitted their work free of charge for the benefit of members who are invited to respond or comment on the work via the society website. I am particularly pleased to publish a first essay from a student member, a fine piece of work from 17-year-old Harry Bark. We are also indebted to Peter Cordwell who has set in motion a pilot competition to encourage students to write about Orwell and to also think about how relevant today are the issues that provided the motivation for his most famous work. We hope you enjoy this edition and please do share your thoughts via the society website.

Ron Bateman
Editor (rnbateman1@gmail.com)

The Orwell Society held its first Annual General Meeting at Senate House, University of London, on 28 April 2012. It was indeed a bright cold day in April: so far as I am aware none of the clocks- struck thirteen at the appropriate time – but it was a matter of some amusement that a room close by did in fact have the legend '101' on its door. We were lucky enough to be addressed by two distinguished and interesting speakers: Michael Sayeau, recently appointed to University College London and specialising in Orwell; and Stephen Armstrong, author of a powerful new book, *The Road to Wigan Pier Revisited* (2012). There were some discussions among members about the Society's proposed Constitution, and other matters, and these continued over lunch, which was kindly provided by two generous members of the Committee.

We continue to seek ways to bring together those interested in Orwell. In May several members joined in a visit to Barcelona to see the places which he knew, in particular where he was wounded, where he was taken after being shot in the neck, and even the place from which the sniper who shot him probably fired. This was a fascinating tour, which we hope to repeat next year: if anyone is interested, please contact Quentin Kopp to let him know (his email address is quentin@aqkchangemanagement.com). We also welcome more suggestions for tours, talks, debates and other possible events that the Society could usefully organise: it has been suggested that a trip to Jura, to see Barnhill, might be arranged, although this would be only for those able and willing to walk a fair distance. Any of the committee would be glad to hear from you.

Christopher Edwards
Chairman(chr.edwards@which.net)

About Our Contributors

Quentin Kopp – *My Father George Kopp.* Quentin is the son of George Kopp, Orwell's Platoon Commander during his time spent fighting with the POUM, a Trotskyist organisation fighting on the side of the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. One of two new members recently added to the committee of the Orwell Society, Quentin provides an interesting and valuable memoir of his father.

Peter Davison – *Dickens - First and Last.* Many of you will be aware that 2012 marked the bicentenary of the birth of one of the England's greatest and most famous writers, Charles Dickens, also the subject of arguably one of Orwell's greatest essays, published in March 1940. We are delighted to present another exclusive article by the Editor of The Complete Works of George Orwell.

Harry Bark – *How Relevant is Orwell Today?* A key aim of the society is to encourage students to read, think and write about the life and work of George Orwell. With this in mind, we were delighted to receive an essay from 17-year-old Harry Bark. Harry is into his second year at Henley College, studying for his A Levels, with a view to studying English Literature at university. He first became interested in Orwell while reading *Homage to Catalonia* last summer.

Tom Miller – *Revolt in Dystopia.* Tom Miller had the privilege of enjoying several conversations with the late Sir Kingsley Amis (pictured alongside him on the right) who became a significant influence on him. In *Revolt in Dystopia*, Tom offers his own interesting take on this particular genre of fiction.

Professor Richard Keeble – *George Orwell, Journalist, and Me.* Professor of Journalism at the University of Lincoln, Richard was also voted onto the committee of the Orwell Society earlier this year. In his essay, Richard introduces himself and offers an insight into his own fascination with the man and his work.

Peter Burness-Smith – *A Fugitive's Progress.* Pete has recently launched the George Orwell Henley Project at a disused chapel just outside Henley, where the young Eric Blair spent much of his childhood. Since the early days of the society, Pete has been the one of the most enthusiastic contributors, always with a penchant for provoking intense debate. *A Fugitive's Progress* was written in response to previous claims in the Society Newsletter that Orwell might have been an atheist.

My Father George Kopp

Quentin Kopp

George Kopp was my father: I am the second son of his marriage to Doreen Hunton. Doreen's sister Gwen married Eric O'Shaughnessy FRCS and was therefore George Orwell's sister-in-law. Unfortunately, I did not get to know my father because he died when I was very young. He came to the attention of a wide audience thanks to Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*. George Kopp was the commanding officer of the POUM unit, which Orwell joined. Since then in recent decades he has been the subject of impassioned debate in Belgium, the country where his family settled after leaving their native Russia. The debate is fuelled by the lack of clear evidence on some of the events and stories he related. I believe that he created that confusion to stay clear of the attentions of the Gestapo and the Russians, for he had the distinction of being sought by both the Russian Secret Police and the Gestapo. He also operated as an agent for British Naval Intelligence carrying out sabotage in France during the Second World War. He was flown back to England by Lysander when the Gestapo were too close for comfort. Anthony Blunt was his case officer.

George Kopp has fascinated some of Orwell's biographers for different reasons. Jeffrey Meyers was interested in the sexual speculation about his relationship with Eileen Blair. The speculation related to a time when he was between his marriages. Gordon Bowker had more substantial reasons for being interested, arising out of George Kopp's jailing as a member of the POUM. As is related in *Homage to Catalonia*, the POUM was treated as a Trotskyite Party by Moscow. Bowker traced the paperwork back to Moscow, where he looked at their archives. He also talked to the person they planted in his cell in order to get him to "confess" to the crimes he had not committed, who confirmed that he could find no evidence of "Trotskyite sins". He also interested Geert Mak, the distinguished Dutch journalist and author, who included George Kopp's Spanish Civil War exploits in his great sweeping review of the 20th Century *In Europe*, which was published at the turn of the millennium. He drew heavily on *Homage to Catalonia* in this essay. This intrigued a Belgian author Marc Wildemeersch who initially wanted to

write a biography of him because he thought that he was a Belgian. Marc subsequently published *The Man who would be Belgian* in October 2010, which he wrote in his native Flemish. Alan Warren is going to publish an extended version in English in 2012. The controversy is fuelled by lots of speculation, because the facts are hard to find and since George Kopp would now be 110 years old, there are clearly no peers of his alive to talk to. I would like to give some personal reflections on him and his connections with Orwell and the English part of my family.

So what do we know about his origins? He was born in St Petersburg in 1902. His parents were Alexander Kopp and his wife Henrietta Neuman. Alexander came from Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia just north of the Sea of Azov which feeds into the Black Sea. He was a doctor by profession. Henrietta was almost certainly Jewish in view of her name and her place of birth, which was Odessa. Many Jewish people in the town were not practising their religion but were very involved in the social and commercial life of city. Odessa was part of the official Zone of Settlement, which had been designated by the Tsars. Nonetheless, being Jewish was not something they would have drawn attention to when they moved to the capital city of St Petersburg, or subsequently in Western Europe with the emergence of the Nazis. George Kopp was educated partly in Lausanne and partly in Brussels after they settled in Uccle, a suburb of the city. He married and subsequently divorced Germaine Warnotte with whom he had five children in Brussels. Three of these children are happily still with us and live in France and Brussels. After his divorce George Kopp left Brussels and like many people of his generation including Orwell (and incidentally also my father-in-law Jan Posner from Czechoslovakia) went to Spain to fight against Fascism in what was a local struggle which became a proxy war between Hitler and Stalin. This part of his life is well documented in *Homage to Catalonia*. One of the incidents, described in the book, is Orwell's neck wound, which my father drew to provide guidance for the doctors. The anniversary of this incident was commemorated at the end of May this year. Alan Warren had arranged for a plaque to be made by the students of the International School based in the former Sanatori Maurin, where the wounded Orwell was sent to in Barcelona. This was unveiled by Richard Blair during the weekend of the 26th/27th May.

Homage to Catalonia was written while George Kopp was in prison, and therefore gives the impression that like many others he died there, but I am living proof that he was eventually freed! The sad thing, as Orwell's book relates, is that having gone to fight fascism, he was imprisoned on the orders of the Communist Party in Moscow. Orwell advised my father that if he could get to London then he should try and get to

his brother-in-law's home, that is Eric and Gwen O'Shaughnessy at Crooms Hill, which runs up to Blackheath from Greenwich Park. It was there that he met my mother and subsequently married in 1944 and had three children. My elder brother Stephen sadly died of kidney disease when he was nineteen. My sister Mary is married with two children and lives near Birmingham.

George and Doreen

At the beginning of the Second World War, because of the way my father left Belgium, the only way he could guarantee action against the Germans was to join the French Foreign Legion. He was wounded and hospitalised, but managed to escape and came to England. After an exhaustive vetting process, which threw up some of the unresolved issues, which subsequently have caused controversy, he was recruited by British Naval Intelligence and with two colleagues operated between Vichy and Occupied France. He rode under trains in order to make the crossing between them undetected. After the war he returned to his profession as a consulting engineer/inventor.

I have a number of his blueprints for designs of various machines, which show that he was extremely capable and was in many ways a visionary. He designed a machine for the efficient cutting of coal using the long wall approach, which subsequently was the standard used by the National Coal Board (NCB). He offered it to the NCB in the late 1940s but at that stage they could not afford to be involved in its development. This was sadly a feature of the stressful end of his highly stressed life, since the failure to sell his designs put him and our family under great financial pressure. He died of a combination of the stress and heart and kidney disease at a similar time to Orwell. He was an excellent designer but was not a good commercial manager. To illustrate his versatility, we also have a design for a top loading washing machine, which is almost identical to a design sold by Phillips from the early 1970s. We also have a design for a child's buggy, which the makers of the Maclaren buggy would recognise as being very similar to their

own. All of these designs were created decades before similar concepts were commercialised by others.

What of George Kopp the man? There is no doubt from reading *Homage to Catalonia* that he was a brave and charismatic leader, who showed real concern for those around him. While there is plenty of correspondence for example from and to Eileen to suggest that he was also no saint, he was clearly loved by both his wives. I know from meeting Germaine Warnotte when I was in my early twenties that she still had deep affection for his memory. When she welcomed me to her flat, she said that seeing me was like seeing George come home. The children from his first marriage, who knew him as teenagers, have good memories of him, in a way his untimely death denied Mary and me. Some of the incidental information included in this article has come from talks I had with my mother. It is also clear, from talks I had with older family members, that he was somebody who created strong views both for and against him. This is common with people who are capable of extraordinary feats at extraordinary times, for example the incidents in the street fighting in Barcelona related by Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia.*

Peter Cordwell's 'One Georgie Orwell'

Reviewed by Dione Venables

Attending a First Night of a new musical play is exciting enough, but being there for the Last Night has more poignancy because it has either been a success or a failure. It was, on that particular last evening, immediately apparent from both the cast and the audience at the Greenwich Theatre that this three-night musical production has been an unqualified success – and will be travelling onwards. As an OS member whose devotion to George Orwell caused him to tread a completely unknown road, journalist Peter Cordwell might have discovered just how painful life can be when you stick your neck out and attempt to go public without a jot of previous experience. Pete is a scrivener, not a playwright. He pens articles and news for a living, so it was a pretty dangerous exercise for him to put Orwell to music, and the great man's words into the mouths of inexperienced but enthusiastic performers. But it worked beautifully. With the support and belief of musician Carl Picton, who wrote and sang the music, and James Haddrell who is the Artistic Director of Greenwich Theatre, Pete wrote the musical lyrics as well as the book for this melodious, thoughtful and humorous two-act mini-revue. It flows with the edge and sometimes dark humour of a typical Footlights Revue which would

make it a perfect vehicle for the Edinburgh Festival. It explores Orwell's life (Southwold Walk) and his concerns for the world that he lived in, for the Britain that he loved. It touched on *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, of course, but also P.G. Wodehouse, whose humour is deliciously reflected alongside the Marx brothers, and *Coming Up for Air,* the novel which best describes the Henley area where Orwell grew up. The four main actors, Hugh Barnett, Bill Crow, Christopher Knott and Alex Mugnaioni – apart from gifted actor/musician Carl Picton, responsible for all the spirited and sometimes poignant music – had musical skills of their own and made zestful contributions with harmonica as well as guitar and wind instruments. The rest of the enchanting cast were drawn from a local Sixth Form College and obviously enjoyed the experience as much as did their audience. There is more than a hint that this delightful musical pastiche might next be seen as far afield as Brighton, Dublin and even New York.

'Georgie Orwell' live on stage at the Greenwich Theatre 2012

Dickens – First and Last

Peter Davison

Orwell's regard for Dickens is well recognised. What is perhaps not also appreciated is that Dickens was the first writer to whom Orwell gave extended attention in his professional writing and that Dickens was also the last author about whom he wrote. When Orwell went to Paris to try to become a novelist, he published several essays in minor Parisian journals. Curiously, though not outstanding in themselves, they serve as an epitome of his future critical interests: poverty, censorship, popular culture, politics. Even before his long essay on Galsworthy in this sequence, he concentrated on Dickens in his first essay, 'Censorship'. This appeared in *Monde* (not to be confused with the post-war *Le Monde*) on 6 October 1928. Orwell's last professional writing was also on Dickens: a review, published in the *New York Review of Books*, 15 May 1949, of Hesketh Pearson's *Dickens: His Character, Comedy and Career.* Every volume of the Complete Works devoted to his essays and letters has index references to Dickens and he refers specifically to fifteen of his books. At Orwell's death he owned five volumes of an 1890 edition of Dickens's work, and, as the list of his books states, 'Another 10 vols., to make a complete set; various publishers'. In the last twelve months of his life he listed 144 books he read; 27 he had read previously, amongst them *Little Dorrit,* read again in May 1949.

Even in his early years as a writer – say, from 1928 to 1936, the period covered by Volume X of The Complete Works – Orwell, admiring Dickens profoundly as he does, is not slow to criticise him. In his essay on censorship, Orwell argues that 'Dickens shocks the cultivated Englishman of today' ('today' is, of course, the 1920s) and he argues that Dickens (and other authors of his period) had 'a taste for the macabre and lugubrious' and 'a fondness for deathbed scenes, corpses and funerals. Dickens wrote an account of a case of spontaneous combustion which is nauseating to read today'. Whether in our age, when horror seems to be a staple of popular delight, Krook's death is quite so nauseating may be a reflection more on today's taste than Dickens's. In that same essay, Orwell claims that in Dickens, Thackeray, Reade and Trollope, 'there is no trace of coarseness, and almost none of sexuality'. Two years later, reviewing J.B. Priestley's *Angel Pavement,* he complains that Priestley, a blatantly second-rate novelist, has been absurdly likened to Dickens, 'the great master of prose, psychology and wit'. Poor Priestley's book is no more than 'an excellent holiday novel'. Then in June 1931, Dickens is again the master against whom contemporary writers should be judged. Thus,

F.O. Mann's Albert Grope 'is Dickens – rather diluted'. On the other hand he is not uncritical of Dickens but it is in his remarks on *David Copperfield* in his review of G.K. Chesterton's *Criticism and Opinions of the Works of Charles Dickens*, December 1933, that Orwell is at his most severe: 'towards the end Dickens begins telling lies'. Dickens 'wrenches the book out of its natural channel and gives it a conventional happy ending, which is not only unconvincing but also abominably priggish . . . The result is a disaster . . . Dickens temporarily loses not only his comic genius but even his sense of decency' and to cap it all, 'the prison scene in the last chapter is really disgusting'.

However, Dickens has an unsuspected value. In his essay, 'Bookshop Memories' (November 1936), Orwell takes a rather jaundiced view of the bookshop life – well, its customers at least. In London 'there are always plenty of not quite certifiable lunatics walking the streets, and they tend to gravitate towards bookshops, because a bookshop is one of the few places where you can hang about for a long time without spending any money'. In this situation he assesses Dickens quite differently: 'it is always fairly easy to sell Dickens, just as it is always easy to sell Shakespeare. Dickens is one of those authors who people are "always meaning to" read, and, like the Bible, he is widely known at second hand'.

By the time Orwell's long essay on Dickens was published on 11 March 1940 he had been engaged in reading and commenting upon him for some time so it is not surprising that the result is one of Orwell's best-regarded critiques. There is not space here for a detailed analysis – it will, in any case, be well-known to members of the Orwell Society – so I shall restrict myself to one or two aspects. Orwell had a gift for attention-catching openings to essays and chapters. Among my favourites are 'In peacetime, it is unusual for foreign visitors to this country [England] to notice the existence of the English people' and, 'As I write, highly civilized human beings are flying overhead, trying to kill me'. 'Charles Dickens' is of a piece. Its first short paragraph reads 'Dickens is one of those writers who are well worth stealing. Even the burial of his body in Westminster Abbey was a species of theft, if you come to think of it'. And notice how 'if you come to think of it' invites in the reader to what Orwell goes on to say. To Orwell, Dickens was, in his writing (whatever his personal character) 'certainly a subversive writer, a radical, one might truthfully say a rebel. . . . In *Oliver Twist, Hard Times, Bleak House, Little Dorrit,* Dickens attacked English institutions with a ferocity that had never since been approached'. What was remarkable to Orwell (and perhaps might be applied to him himself), Dickens 'managed to do it without making himself hated . . . the very people he attacked have swallowed him so completely that he has become a national

institution himself' – using an accolade that is now a cliché. Whereas he finds Dickens's 'lack of vulgar nationalism' to be part of a largeness of his mind, he is not in every sense, as in his attitude to servants, ahead of his age – indeed his sympathetic servants are positively 'feudal types'. It is in this essay that we have one of Orwell's most famous apothegms: 'All art is propaganda . . [but] not all propaganda is art'. Dickens's radicalism is of the vaguest kind, yet one always knows it is there. He loathes the Catholic Church – but as soon as Catholics are persecuted, as in *Barnaby Rudge*, he is on their side. And as he famously concludes, his face is that of a man 'generously angry . . . a type hated . . . by all the smelly little orthodoxies . . . contending for our souls'.

On 13 February 1944 Orwell reviewed *Martin Chuzzlewit* for the *Observer*. Referring to its 'American interlude' he compares it with the way travellers of his time reported – all favourably or all adversely – after visiting the USSR. Dickens's novel was, he thought, the 1844 equivalent of André Gide's *Retour de l'URSS*, but 'Dickens's attack, so much more violent and unfair than Gide's, could be so easily forgiven'. And he concludes that this novel was 'his last completely disorderly book'.

In addition to reading Dickens's novels, Orwell was aware of what others were writing about him. In his 1940 essay he mentions Bechhofer Roberts's attack on Dickens in *This Side Idolatry* (1928), especially Dickens's treatment of his wife. In his review of Una Pope-Hennessy's biography (2 September 1945) he finds her 'less successful as a critic than as a biographer' and that she underrates 'the morbid streak which had been in Dickens from the beginning'. He concludes his rather longer review of Hesketh Pearson's biography by claiming that 'There has never been a completely satisfactory life of Dickens'. 'Forster's "official" biography is unreadable', Dame Una is 'very full and fair-minded' but spoilt by unsuccessful attempts at plot summaries; Hugh Kingsmill's *The Sentimental Journey: A Life of Charles Dickens* (1934) is 'the most brilliant ever written on Dickens' but 'is so unremittingly "against" that it might give a misleading impression'; Pearson's book, though 'fairly successful in relating the changes in Dickens's work to the changing circumstances of his life' is less reliable as criticism than as biography. Later studies made – by Edgar Johnson, Fred Kaplan, Peter Ackroyd, Lucinda Hawkesley, and Claire Tomalin, among others – all seek in their individual ways to make good those perceived faults but build on those of Orwell's time.

One interesting sidelight on Orwell and Dickens is that when Orwell's *Critical Essays* was published in the United States by Reynal & Hitchcock on 29 April 1946 it was titled *Dickens, Dali & Others: Studies in Popular Culture*. Although this was not the first use of the term 'popular culture' (an important, but again, not the first usage, was by John

Morley for his lecture on working-class education, 'On Popular Culture', given in Birmingham in 1876), it accurately drew attention to the primacy of Orwell's critical interest in the mid-twentieth century of such topics as seaside postcards and boys' weeklies. The subtitle was dropped from the paperback edition.

How Relevant is Orwell Today?

Harry Bark

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* the methods and aims of the media are shown to be the achievement of ultimate totalitarian control. Language is a key element to the presentation of what Orwell feels may come at the time of his writing from dictators in Europe and the spread of this threat to Britain. Whether the control of language by a regime leads to the manipulation of words and ideas or whether the power allows for reduction and effective loss of perceived universal concepts such as 'freedom', it is clear that Orwell fears the decimation of language as a consequence of totalitarianism. The methods and processes of control demonstrated by Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*, as well as what he learned in *Homage to Catalonia*, portray the way in which people or groups in power gain control of the masses through the media. However, the legacy of Orwell is uncertain. Does his writing about a time in which the threat of totalitarianism was a far more prominent feature of society, still have relevance today?

I suggest so; many of Orwell's social concepts have become cultural currency. Terms such as 'Room 101' and 'Big Brother' are commonplace as well as the notion of 'BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU' being symbolic of the CCTV culture of modern society. The existence of the phrase 'Orwellian' to suggest anything which connotes a controlling and repressive regime further adds to Orwell's common cultural use; exemplified by a recent *Guardian* article commenting, 'a devastating criticism accusing him of creating an Orwellian regime of fear and sycophancy'. Additionally, the reality television revolution stems from Orwell's work; Channel 5's (previously Channel 4's) Big Brother addresses the inescapable authority of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and provides a social experiment into the application of Orwell's dystopian vision. Although it may appear in this sense that Orwell's legacy is accurately portrayed through mainstream media, there are suggestions that although his work has been used as a foundation for modern ideas, it has been tainted through the application of concepts not coherent

with Orwell. The development of Channel 5's Celebrity Big Brother appears immediately problematic. The term 'Celebrity Big Brother' seems to be an oxymoron, 'celebrity' arguably not being apparent in *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* However, the glorification of individuals through the media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, such as that of the fabricated, model citizen 'Comrade Ogilvy' does in fact suggest a media creation of a 'celebrity' to some extent. Thus, similarities can be drawn between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Celebrity Big Brother as both can be seen to incorporate the idea of 'celebrity', whether through the pre-existing standards of society where Celebrity Big Brother embraces the already publicised individual, or through the media of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* creating a 'celebrity' to be aspired to. It can also be argued, therefore, that Orwell in some part portrays the existence of 'celebrity' to be a component of a dystopian society. The potential negative 'celebrity' image, apparent in today's society, can encourage behaviour or trends that do not contribute in a positive manner to an individual's wellbeing, or to the state of a society as a whole. This can be illustrated through Celebrity Big Brother, with controversy being caused by the perceived 'celebrities'. In their article 'Big Brother Racism Complaints Soar' Leigh Holmwood and Stephen Brook comment on 'controversy about alleged racism on the programme'. The examples set in Celebrity Big Brother, by people who are likely to be aspired to by the public, suggest the danger of a society in which 'celebrity' is an influential factor. The creation of a 'celebrity' image in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* acts only to encourage further adherence to the Party and causes aspiration to levels of dedication only possible by the fictional characters that the Party media creates. It is in this sense that elements of Orwell's dystopian image are evident in modern society. However, the contestants on the reality television show Celebrity Big Brother are not presented for worship, as the heroic 'Comrade Ogilvy' is by the Party. The fundamental difference between the 'celebrity' of Orwell's dystopia and the 'celebrity' of modern society is the ridicule, not worship, of a modern 'celebrity'. Although almost all trends and fashions in a modern society are set by a 'celebrity', unlike the ideological purpose of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, they are aimed at gains in wealth and prestige. Consequently, although the media presentation of 'celebrity' in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and what is apparent in modern society may appear similar, the foundationally different purpose of the creation of a 'celebrity' in a modern society distances the idea from the dystopia envisaged by Orwell.

The legacy of Orwell on the very language whose decimation he foreshadows in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is shown through his contribution to the language itself: the Oxford English Dictionary cites 5956 quotations from Orwell. Furthermore, Orwell is

credited with providing a number of 'first evidence of a particular meaning' or 'first evidence of a word' for many significant terms. Orwell's Newspeak-like creation of words such as 'Marxize', 'To form or adapt in accordance with Marxist or Marxist–Leninist theories or ideology', shows his construction of words against the ideology which he feared as somewhat ironic. By the creation of the word 'Marxise', Orwell engulfs relations to Marxism into a word which forms from an ideology opposed to the word itself – in a similar way to Newspeak swallowing terms such as 'freedom' despite Newspeak fundamentally conflicting the term it claims to represent.

Orwell can also be credited with giving words meanings which have shaped language throughout the world. The term 'cold war', presented through the definition of 'hostilities short of armed conflict, consisting in threats, violent propaganda, subversive political activities, or the like' was used by Orwell in 1945, and became the name for the political tensions between the USSR and the USA for much of the second half of the twentieth century. A phrase from Orwell being used as one of the most significant words of that era suggests the legacy of Orwell being evident almost immediately, the 'cold war' beginning around the time of his death in 1950. More significant than this, however, is the media use of Orwell before and in a modern society. Orwell's phrase of a 'cold war' in 1945 was used a year later in the *Observer* to suggest that 'After the Moscow Conference last December… Russia began to make a "cold war" on Britain and the British Empire' It is clear to see the term develop into the embodiment of the conflict through the *New York Times* article in 1947 where it is reported, 'Let us not be deceived—we are today in the midst of a cold war'; the absence of quotation marks suggesting the acceptance of the phrase as commonly known. Orwell's initial portrayal of a 'cold war' being 'A State which was… in a permanent state of "cold war" with its neighbours', had become, in the space of two years, the definition of what is known as the USSR and the USA conflict. Orwell, therefore, is not only shown to have significance through his words and the lasting influence and connotations his words carry, such as 'cold war', but through the development of his words through the media. The Oxford English Dictionary cites the *Observer* in 1946 and the *New York Times* in 1947 as forming the transition of Orwell's phrase up to the point where the phrase was used to describe the United States 'being in a midst of a cold war'. Consequently, Orwell can be seen as pioneering modern language and forming words that are used in modern society. Further examples of Orwell's words being key factors in modern language are *witch-hunt*, 'A single-minded and uncompromising campaign against a group of people with unacceptable views or behaviour' and (somewhat surprisingly) *bacon sandwich*.

George Orwell's relevance in a modern society through his motives for writing is one of question: does a political writer who focussed on the dangers of fascism and totalitarianism still have a place in today's media? These political ideologies are by no means absent in the twenty-first century: there are examples of fascism and totalitarianism in the modern world, such as North Korea and El Salvador. In this sense Orwell's cynical works on fascism and totalitarianism remains relevant and can still be applied to global affairs today. Although the development in technology, such as nuclear weaponry in North Korea, may differ from the dystopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the fundamental qualities of Orwell's presentation of such a state are still applicable and are one of the only methods of gaining an insight, through Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, into the mind-set of a totalitarian population.

Furthermore, the use of Orwell in the final edition of the *News of the World* in 2011 portrays the status which he holds in the modern media; the controversy caused by the *News of the World*'s use of Orwell adds to his influential legacy. The efficacy of the quote used by the paper, 'It is Sunday afternoon, preferably before the war. The wife is already asleep in the armchair, and the children have been sent out for a nice long walk. You put your feet up on the sofa, settle your spectacles on your nose and open the *News of the World*' is argued in the BBC article 'Was Orwell a fan of the *News of the World*?' as being 'dubious' due to Orwell's dislike of 'the power of right-wing press barons'. Orwell's vision of media misrepresentation or manipulation of facts and truths is subsequently shown by this article. Orwell's words are quoted correctly – yet they are taken out of context by the *News of the World*, as was much of what he experienced in Spain with news reports also being taken out of context, if not fabricated. Therefore, Orwell's writing and portrayal of a media that misrepresents truth, most evident in *Homage to Catalonia*, is reflected by the *News of the World*'s use of Orwell himself.

There are also examples of Orwell's linguistic theory of Newspeak, demonstrated through the media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* in modern society. In his article, 'The Japanese media and its Orwellian Nature', Ryo Takahashi comments on the growth of Orwellian Newspeak ideas in Japanese linguistics. The Japanese word 'kawaii', meaning 'cute', has become 'an all-encompassing form of expression', Takahashi suggests that the engulfing of language by such terms 'to describe, say, a dog and a man at the same time is evidence of mental laziness'. This 'mental laziness' is the exact mental state that the Party is shown to aspire to in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to allow for the indoctrination of Party ideals. Therefore it can be shown that the very basis of Orwell's vision of the media is being realised in Japanese language, as the population are being deprived of

language by popular phrases such as 'kawaii'. Although not appearing to be on the same large scale in which Newspeak is portrayed, it is the Japanese media who encourage the over-use of this word until the foundation of it is lost and it can be used to describe 'a dog and a man at the same time'. Is this not the same principle in which Newspeak flourishes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with the reduction of concepts like 'freedom'? Takahashi elaborates by commenting, 'the agenda of that of Big Brother and the Japanese media are the same in regards to peoples' vocabulary: truncate, truncate, truncate'. Thus the control of the population through reduction and manipulation of language by Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is evident in twenty-first century Japanese language.

There are also further examples of Orwell in the basis of communication in modern society. Twitter embodies the concerns of Orwell in regards to personal freedom by epitomising the limit of language that is evident through Newspeak in *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* Dominic Cavendish in the Orwell Society Newsletter comments on the 'Newspeak of Twitter', through the limit of 140 characters, causing the reduction and limitation of language that is seen in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In a society where people are forced by the constraints of social media to condense and reduce thought to fit within 140 characters, it can be argued that intellectual freedom is lost. Twitter may appear to be a liberal enabler of information and freedom, yet it embodies elements of an Orwellian dystopia. By limiting thought in any way, Orwell's image of control through the media can be realised in a modern society. The concept of Newspeak being evident in Twitter and the swallowing of linguistic concepts to fit in with the necessary basis of Twitter appears alarmingly similar to the dystopian illustration of language reduction in *Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

Additionally, Orwell's suggestion of media control of a population – shown through Squealer in *Animal Farm* and the bombardment of Party propaganda in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – can be illustrated through the philosophical argument of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which suggests that "language is a reflection of how we think". By controlling the thoughts of a population, it is impossible to oppose the Government as language derives from the controlled thought. The media, therefore, is shown to contain elements of the Sapir-Whorf theory in Orwell's work as well as Orwell's own development of Newspeak; which can be applied to the linguistic circumstances seen in Japan. The danger of a modern society containing this is the potential for unconditional control to develop and culminate into a twenty-first century Orwellian dystopia. Indications for such are clear, whether that be in the example of the Japanese word 'kawaii', by the limiting power of Twitter or by the developing twenty-four hour media – in which privacy

and individualism are lost. Orwell's work, although seemingly belonging to a past time of Hitler and Stalin, can still be seen in modern society through language reduction and control. When applying Orwell's phrases or terms to twenty-first century affairs, his work still stands as a significant position towards individual and intellectual freedom. Orwell's dystopian presentation of the media is not only still present in modern society, but still poses a threat to the freedoms for which he spent much of his life defending.

George Orwell, Journalist, and Me

Richard Keeble

Orwell has been an inspiration for me: a model of a committed, radical, intelligent, witty, wonderfully imaginative writer who deployed the tools of journalism for their best purpose – as a crucial, morally urgent intervention in politics. He had the journalistic ability to encapsulate important events and phenomena in short, snappy phrases. He was the first person to use the phrase 'Cold War'. Other phrases and words he invented which have slipped effortlessly into everyday English: they include Big Brother;Newspeak; Doublethink; even Room 101 (now the title of a TV programme of dubious quality) – all from his famous dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He was also the master of the aphorism. How about this – which I used at the start of my *Ethics for Journalists* (Routledge 2001) 'We all want to be good – but not too good and not all of the time'. Here are a few more:

- During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.
- Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper.
- Every war when it comes, or before it comes, is represented not as a war but as an act of self-defence against a homicidal maniac.
- Freedom is the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.
- 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 and hatred.
- 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.

All those aphorisms combine some of the best elements of journalism: conciseness, originality and a sense of moral and political urgency.

Orwell's positive attitude to life and wit have also always impressed me. His sunny character shines, in particular, through many of the 80 'As I Please' columns he wrote between 1943 and 1947 for the leftist journal, *Tribune*. I spent a few months reading though all these columns in preparation for writing my chapter on Orwell for the book I jointly edited, *The Journalistic Imagination: Literary Journalists from Defoe to Capote and Carter* (Routledge 2007). I have to say I enjoyed every minute. The quality of the writing, the range of subject matter, the displays of intelligence, vast reading and wit were all simply dazzling. Indeed, in these columns Orwell appears to be a man at the peak of his powers, playing with the genre, switching subject matter and tone effortlessly; one moment he is deconstructing the front page of a morning newspaper, the next he is constructing a mini-play about a family determined to drink their tea in the face of a V-bomb attack, recounting a racist conversation overheard in a Scottish hotel, campaigning for communal washing up service, or admitting a mistake over the authorship of a poem. Humour is always around the corner. For instance, on 7 January 1944, he writes:

> Looking through the photographs in the New Years Honours List I am struck (as usual) by the quite exceptional ugliness and vulgarity of the faces displayed there. It seems to be almost the rule that the kind of person who earns the right to call himself Lord Percy de Falcontowers should look at best like an overfed publican and at worst a tax-collector with a duodenal ulcer.

Orwell was, in effect, through his contributions to *Tribune* from 1943 to 1947 defining a new kind of radical politics. It involved reducing the power of the press barons, facing up to racial intolerance, defending civil liberties. Yet it also incorporated an awareness of the power of language and propaganda, a celebration of the joys of nature and an acknowledgement of the cultural power of both Christianity and Marxism. Above all, in the face of the vast political, cultural, economic factors driving history, it recognised the extraordinary richness of the individual experience – summed up in his idiosyncratic columns. In one he wrote in praise of a Woolworth's rose. Afterwards he was accused by a reader of 'bourgeois nostalgia'. In reply he simply commented: 'One of the outstanding characteristics of the working class of this country is their love of flowers.' Alongside debating the atomic bomb he pondered turned-up trouser ends and clothes snobbery. Announcing that the Board of Trade is about to remove the ban on turn-up trouser ends, a tailor's advertisement hails this as 'a first instalment of the freedom for which we are fighting'. Orwell comments: 'If we are really fighting for turned up trouser ends I

should be inclined to be pro-Axis. Turn-ups have no function except to collect dust and no virtue except that when you clean them out you occasionally find a sixpence there.'

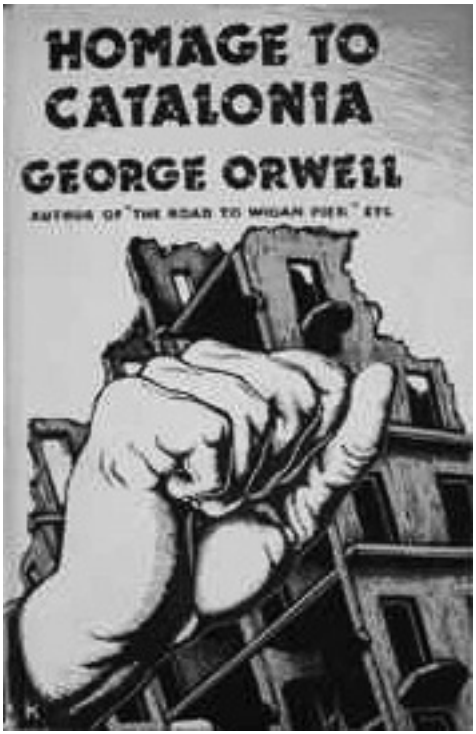
Ultimately, Orwell's journalistic genius was reflected in the wide range of genres he both utilised and, indeed, invented. In my *Newspapers Handbook* (Routledge 2005), I identified 17 genres. Orwell's journalism incorporated many of these. For instance:

- reportage – such as in *Homage to Catalonia*
- reviews: such as the film and theatre reviews he wrote for the magazine *Time and Tide* in 1940
- straight reporting – such as his war reporting in 1945 for the *Observer* and *Manchester Evening News*. Interestingly, these were the only pieces of journalism he wrote to strict and regular deadlines.

In a paper I wrote for *Journalism Studies* on these 19 fascinating eye-witness reports I concluded that the best elements of journalistic style were present: immediacy, clarity, a sense of urgency; an ability of highlight the most interesting, the paradoxical, the most tragic; a facility to both generalise and to focus on the specific, relevant detail; an economy of language even within colourful, descriptive, eye-witness reporting; a political and moral stance; and an openness to conflicting views. And I went on: 'Orwell's voice emerges as one of vitality and power but also one that is uncertain and troubled. It is a voice that points ultimately to more general questions: what precisely is a journalist? What is its authentic voice? How far is the voice addressed to a declared, implicit or idealised audience?' Moreover, in his political and cultural essays Orwell did nothing less than invent the discipline of cultural studies as he examined such everyday artefacts as boys' weekly magazines and the seaside postcards of Donald McGill in their broader political, economic and cultural contexts. All of these writings have been collected in 20 substantial volumes by Peter Davison, making up almost 2 million words. Since Orwell was writing essentially for just 21 years – from 1928 when his first article 'La censure en Angleterre', was published in the French journal, *Monde*, until 1949 when *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in the UK – this is nothing short of a fantastic achievement. All the more so since for much of this time Orwell was suffering very poor health. Another aspect of Orwell's journalism that so impresses me is the close relationship he developed quite instinctively with his readers. In his 'As I Please' columns Orwell can be seen, in many ways, as a proto-blogger, responding to letters sent to him directly or addressed to *Tribune*, inviting letters, asking readers to answer queries or point him towards a book, pamphlet or quotation he is looking for, running a competition for a

short story or giving them a quirky brain-teaser to answer.

Finally, Orwell's commitment to the alternative media has always inspired me. Realising that the mainstream newspapers were basically propaganda for their wealthy proprietors, Orwell's main objective after his experiences in the Spanish civil war was to speak for and to socialists. It was thus his deliberate choice to concentrate his journalism on small-scale, left-wing publications in both Britain and the United States – *New English Weekly, Fortnightly Review, New Leader, Left Forum, Left News, Progressive, Politics and Letters* and *Gangrel*. Some of these survived for a couple of editions and then died. Though he never failed to criticise the left press, at least socialists were for Orwell an authentic audience compared with what Stuart Allan has called the 'implied or imagined community of readers' of the mainstream media. The alternative media, to which I, too, am profoundly committed, are largely ignored by mainstream media commentators and condemned for preaching to the converted. Yet are not Orwell's extraordinary achievements in alternative journals – writings of such lasting richness and vitality – proof enough of their radical and innovative potential?



Revolt in Dystopia

Tom Miller

The composition of an article such as this has been made easier, because the writer can refer the reader to texts, and indeed to whole films, on the internet, such as the novel *We* and the film *Things to Come*. Considerations of space forbid more than the mention of *Facial Justice* by L. P. Hartley, *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand, the film *Logan's Run* and Rudyard Kipling's short story *As Easy as A. B. C.* I dislike the term 'Dystopia', because Sir Thomas More's coinage 'Utopia' means 'No Place', not 'Good Place', and an imaginary place could be bad; however, 'Dystopia' is respectable, and the word is more euphonious than 'Anti-Utopia' or 'Bad Utopia'. (A Dystopia is easier to write than a positive Utopia, because we all know a nasty place when we see one; but opinions differ about what is desirable, and Utopia-writers, including More, are reluctant to explain how their creations came about.) Science fiction may or may not be used to transfer the reader. I seek to interrelate the greatest Dystopia in the language, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, with other efforts. (The importance of the book is signalled by the fact that its notice in the file copy of the *Times Literary Supplement* in the London Library has been excised!)

The only possible plot in a Dystopian novel is of a revolt. This is so, because fiction implies a conflict, and a revolt (in which we can identify with the rebel) against an undesirable regime is obviously more dramatic than a struggle for power inside an Inner Party. There is such a struggle in H. G. Wells's *When The Sleeper Wakes* but, had Orwell given us a tussle within the Inner Party, about, say, whether Oceania's putative enemy was to be Eastasia or Eurasia, we would get a mere political novel, inferior to something by Trollope. There is a convention, giving us intellectual conflict, that a character comes on to defend the malign system, for example, O'Brien, Mustapha Mond in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Ostrog in *The Sleeper Wakes.*

Before the books of Wells, the greatest writer of science fiction, there appeared Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. This can be interpreted as a Dystopia on a very small scale, that of a single submarine, the Nautilus, whose commander, Captain Nemo, a sort of Big Brother, is politically strongly opposed to an Evil Empire; but a revolt is mounted by his hostages. We can distinguish *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, which is not a Dystopia, though it has influenced science fiction – for instance, the films *King Kong* and *Jaws* – in the sense that in both pictures non-human forces attack people. Wells, in *The Sleeper,* posited a society run by predatory Big Business that, for complicated reasons, vests the world's wealth in

a man undergoing a cataleptic trance; when the Sleeper wakes, Ostrog uses the event to discharge the Oligarchy, the White Council, but he turns out to be no less of an oppressor of the common people, who are helped in their rebellion by the Sleeper, who is quick on the uptake.

The Sleeper Wakes was an obvious influence on Jack London's *Iron Heel* and E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops*. It also influenced the Russian Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, a book presenting elaborate sexual freedom, but condemned by Kingsley Amis as 'difficult to read'. Zamyatin was also probably influenced by a sketch, *The New Utopia*, by Jerome K. Jerome. (The Jerome sketch and Orwell's review of *We* are available on the net.) *We* was followed by *Brave New World.* Orwell thought that Huxley was influenced by *We*, but Huxley denied having read it, claiming instead an attempt to parody Wells's *Men Like Gods*, in which Wells speculates about how much nicer people would be if they weren't people, together with heavy fun about Churchill and other contemporaries. (The central character and others are transported to a Utopia in another Universe, because the men like gods make a mistake when experimenting with Einsteinian physics.) Wells was hurt by *Brave New World*, and he described Huxley in *The Shape of Things to Come* as a brilliant reactionary, though *Men Like Gods* and *Brave New World* have little in common. The story line of *Brave New World* is obviously taken from *The Tempest*, like the film *Forbidden Planet*.

Another writer to take exception to *Brave New World* was Bertrand Russell, who noted resemblances to his own *The Scientific Outlook*, a muddled book that contains a history of scientific method; a deflation of the attempts by the scientists Eddington and Jeans to bring back religion by reinterpreting twentieth-century science; and a non-fictional Dystopia: Having set out the cruel World State that science dictates, with its stern class discrimination, control of thought (Shakespeare is forbidden to the ordinary reader), the employment of a hangover-free drug, scientific breeding, the stultification of the lower orders, and communal housing and feeding, Russell adds that of course he is not serious, but I wonder, because he stands behind the character Mr Scogan in Huxley's *Crome Yellow*, a brilliant talker who defends the ideas found in *The Scientific Outlook*. Harold Laski in a letter to Mr Justice Holmes of the US Supreme Court (December 8, 1921) praised Russell's powers as a conversationalist, and Huxley, who had very poor sight, probably developed his powers of hearing and memory to the point at which he could accurately reproduce talk. According to Wikipedia, Russell thought that Huxley had borrowed too much, but his publisher talked him out of taking action. However, in *Brave New World*, Mustapha Mond asks whether Autocracy or Anarchy is

preferable, and Russell in his review (*New Leader,* March 11, 1932) suggests that Autocracy is better than the prospects seen in 1932.

Wells's film *Things to Come* is a difficult case, because there are two Dystopias in Everytown: in the late 1960s, after the War has ground to a halt, the Boss, played by Ralph Richardson, runs an unpleasant community that has gone half way back to barbarism: the Boss is overthrown by a foreign invasion, encouraged and helped by disillusioned locals. Wells thinks that his Everytown of 2036 is a Utopia, but the bulk of the population does not, and a rebellion, led by a sculptor played by Cedric Hardwicke, fails. (There is a hint of human sacrifice as the Autocrat, played by Raymond Massey, sends his daughter into an uncertain future in space, following the Christian God, who sacrifices His son.)

Nineteen Eighty-Four does not need summarising, because we are all Orwellians. Though Orwell seems obsessed by the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, this concern is understandable, because decent people in the 1930s were horrified by Hitler, and hoped that the USSR would stand up to Germany; but the Pact identified Stalin as one more politician. The stress on Oceania's repeated switches in alliance is technically correct, because it dramatises the cynicism of the society. A postwar Dystopia is *Player Piano* by Kurt Vonnegut, who admitted his debt to Zamyatin, though the book is better written than *We*. There is a neat plot point – the central character, disillusioned by the system, is deputed by his superiors to infiltrate the rebellious organisation. Kingsley Amis' *The Alteration* is interesting: in an 'alternate' 1976, efforts are made to prevent the castration of a superb treble singer in order to preserve his voice: Amis delivers a surprise ending. Amis was not really a science fiction writer, but he was keenly interested in the form, and wrote a guide to the subject, *New Maps of Hell*. Amis's *Russian Hide-and-Seek* is also relevant. The Russians running England in 2035 are confronted by countrymen who want to restore to the English people their culture, but the plot fails, and anyway the English have lost their culture, that cannot be restored. (Amis is attacking the vulgarisation of standards that he noticed in the 1970s.)

The common point in *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is that in both books there are *two* revolts: in *Brave New World*, by Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson, who are treated leniently, and by the Savage, who is a romantic, and is allowed to commit suicide in private – an echo of Huxley's brother Trev's suicide in August 1914. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by the Brotherhood, that may not be a fake, and by Winston and Julia, who do nothing irregular, except to make love, and to think bad thoughts. David Bradshaw, on Melvyn Bragg's *In Our Time* on BBC Radio Four on April 9, 2009,

said that *Brave New World* is better than *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, because in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* it is all too easy to see who the baddies are, and the reader is not left with unanswered questions; but the characterisation in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is superior.

Orwell Society Essay Competition

The Orwell Society has recently teamed-up with *Greenwich Time* and Greenwich Theatre to organise an essay competition for young people aged between thirteen and seventeen. Entrants to the competition are invited to submit an essay of between 500 and 700 words on the subject of one of three great Orwell essays – 'Such, Such Were the Joys', 'Why I Write' and 'The Spike'. Organiser Peter Cordwell says that 'the idea is for students to benefit from Orwell's plain style of English. They will be asked how the essays affect them personally and how relevant they think they are to modern life.' The three judges will be Richard Blair, Quentin Kopp and Professor Richard Keeble. First, second and third placed entrants will receive book tokens and family tickets to Greenwich Theatre productions. The winning entry will be featured in the next edition of the Society newsletter.

A Fugitive's Progress

Peter Burness-Smith

Eric Arthur Blair invented George Orwell to in order to write about Eric Arthur Blair. And Eric was never an atheist, even if George may have assumed that mantle to a few blinkered eyes. Blair focused on three big things. The Empire, the Middle Class, and God. But he only ever believed in God. In order, the consideration of these the phenomena comprise the central themes of his work, chronologically. He was the inevitable product of the first, Empire; the unwilling subscriber to the second, Middle Class; and the constant fugitive from the third, God. And he certainly understood that you cannot have Empire or Middle Class without God.

The first test is to set Eric Arthur Blair within his proper intellectual context. This is how it works. All great men are exposed to the works of their celebrated primary influences. Blair immersed himself in the entire literary college. As with Albert Einstein, he was not about to claim a superior intellect to any of the others. By definition we do not therefore ever see any one of these great minds claiming to know better than the universal heroes of history and to thus deny the God-fearing platform that is the foundation of their collective muse. Eric Arthur Blair never claims to know better than Charles Dickens and his God-given morality. And if it is good enough for William Shakespeare, it's clearly good enough for Charles Dickens.

Eric went to Sunday School in Eastbourne. He gave his sweetheart, Jacintha Buddicom, a silver crucifix to protect her from the contents of his gift to her of the book, *Dracula*. At Eton he conducted a theological survey amongst his peers. The brightest of the bright are invariably interested in religion from the get-go. The first conscious thoughts of an intellectual, and Eric was certainly that, are by definition concerned with questioning existence and perception. The extraordinary developing mind always searches out the source of what is responsible for its own consciousness. Educated additions to Middle England always turn first to considerations of God and they start a dialogue, a life-long conversation and debate, with that being. Because it is the essence of their own existence. This was true for Isaac Newton, Thomas Hardy, Dylan Thomas and John Lennon. And it held good for Oscar Wilde, H.G. Wells and Eric Arthur Blair.

George Orwell accounts for the progression in thought of Eric Arthur Blair from youthful idealism to engaging realism; and on to unavoidable defeatism. This is laid out from book to book. This is why Blair demanded that there were to be no biographers. It's all in the books. George tells us all about Eric. That's his job. Crick is the first to

disgracefully break trust to gain celebrity and money. Others were to follow. None of them admit that they would fall foul of the demands of their trade – to misunderstand, to pontificate, to intrude, to trip-up and worst of all, to become judgemental. Similarly, Norman Sherry delivered an impressive account of Graham Greene's life and work, but his failure was to become rigidly authoritative and disgracefully prejudiced. Blair knew that this would happen. That the driving motive for a biographer can only be profit, professionally, culturally and financially, not enlightenment. Biographers are never disciples, ever.

The proof of Blair's pudding lies in his last, great work. Not one commentator has yet understood what *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is all about. But having decided upon this or that, they defend a burgeoning consensus that permits no other, enlightened, explanation. It is, at this point, worth noting and sufficiently conclusive to declare that *Animal Farm* had already attacked one great atheistic power, Stalinism. When Orwell turned his sights on post-war global fascism within the pages of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he was again in the vanguard of the combat against an atheistic ideology. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is Blair's last offering and it is designed as his *pièce de resistance.* This is his monumental tome. Anyone who thinks that this writer was about to dedicate a work of political and ideological analysis, or a facile predictive dystopian essay to his greatest work, is just not connected to the writer's intention. Blair's own central reference is *Hamlet. Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a development of the celebrated soliloquy. This is Orwell's metaphysical masterpiece. Herein we see Orwell finally consign Blair, in the form of Winston Smith, to a world of never ending despair, in the God forsaken world of the ever-present supernatural.

It is not that the writers lack faith. Graham Greene is the fully immersed Catholic, but his central autobiographical characters reflect his own inability to accept Salvation as his personal due or right. Heaven and Hell are very surreal and probably assured, but Pinky Brown is only destined for the one place. Greene carries with him a certain inevitability, a profound defeatism. He identified with Orwell during their lifetime. Orwell fine-tunes alienation and defeatism. It is as if, however many times he personally repeats the Psalm 23 of his Sunday School, he will himself never make it through the valley of death. Robert Bolt has Thomas More assuring us that 'God will not refuse one who is so blithe to go to him'. Greene and Orwell cannot see that such pure desire for Salvation is enough as a qualification. Neither of them believe that they are capable of possessing the combination of blind faith and good deeds that can ever deliver their souls to anything other than Satan's Hell and Big Brother, those being the same

thing, of course. This is the expression of the Principle of Infinite Regress that was first identified by Charles Dodgson, aka Lewis Carroll. Two of the finest examples of this in twentieth century literature are the final chapters of *The Power And The Glory* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* itself, alongside Joseph Heller's astonishing non-chronological *Catch 22,* which studies aleatoricism, the incorporation of chance into the process of creation. Put simply, the idea is that if logic is applied to an analysis of mortality there will be a 'Groundhog effect', a constant repetition of the existing circumstance. We may assume that a 'leap of faith' is necessary in order to break the vicious circle. The 'whisky priest' and Winston Smith both fail to attain such a level of personal confidence, despite their ability to recognise the existence of perfect Love. Whether safe haven is guaranteed only to those who take the required altruistic step of complete belief is another matter, which will be addressed further down this essay. Suffice to say here that the rules governing Salvation are not that simplistic. No one is happier than Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka when Charlie finally fesses up in the spirit of selflessness and thus gets to break the glass ceiling and transcend. He discovers that Slugworth works for Wonka. Has done, all along. It's all a test. In our current deliberations we may say that Big Brother works for God in the lobbies of the Division Bell. Always has, always will. Stephen King's *11/22/63* is awash with Orwell references and covers time dimensionality in a sophisticated manner that owes much to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Catch 22.*

After Spain, Blair met Hemingway in Paris. Hemingway and Koestler both carried the sense of alienation with them. Dylan Thomas conveyed the same spirit during the BBC wartime days spent with Blair in Fitzrovia. That is the constant challenging struggle against the force of the maker. God was never in doubt, but God was never in reach. This is not atheism. This is alienation. Blair will have read Remarque's *All Quiet On The Western Front* and identified with the generation lost for purpose so brilliantly described within it. The Great War had done this. A managed social order would soon take over at the wheel. Aldous Huxley, one of Blair's teachers at Eton College, was to layout the sociology. Once Blair had read James Burnham's *What Is Happening In The World* his mind was made up. There was no way out. God was there, distressingly out of reach. Big Brother was in the way. There could be no escape from the mortal coil described in Shakespeare. Einstein was welding physics to metaphysics and philosophy. A preliminary understanding of dimensionality was developing. Suddenly the vision of Lewis Carroll was revealed. Blair was immersed in Carroll. Carroll had first invented the alter ego to write about the subject. Charles Dodgson had invented Lewis Carroll. Eric Arthur Blair had invented George Orwell. It liberated them both as a device. They could

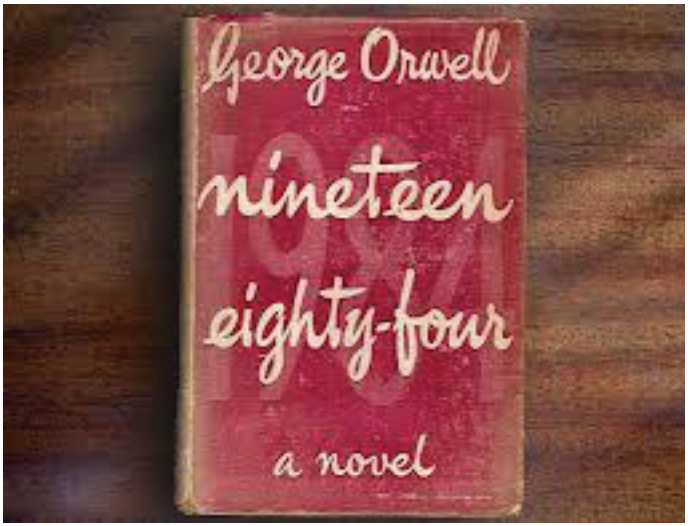
create the unauthorised autobiography and expound in a way that removed the need for the Fifth Amendment. They could say what they liked without self-incrimination.

With *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell takes us through the looking glass. The key is in the first line. I recently gave a talk at the invitation of the Eton College Orwell Society. As I explained that evening, standing under the bust of Gladstone in Upper School, the trick is in the first line. I recited it and then stopped. I did it again. I then asked the forum to tell me where we were. The clock was striking thirteen. Where could this possibly be? In a future development of the real world that we know? Impossible, unlikely. It could only be in a world of chaos. Some other dimension, through the looking glass, where unseen metaphysical parameters apply. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, like *Through The Looking Glass* before it, is a work of Quantum Reality. This is the natural development of Einstein's thesis. We are all now familiar with parallel dimension theory, String Theory and The Butterfly Effect. Orwell's big book is about all of this. And, as we are all finding out in the early twenty-first century, therein lies the definition of our mortal, earthly perception. Time is not linear. It is not even, as Orwell suggested, cyclical. Time belongs within a spherical dimensional field. Linear time and causality concepts are redundant. The genius mathematician, philosopher and theologist, Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), had realised this. Orwell took this perspective into a sociological realm and context, using the same existential device. God has the whole thing wrapped up in a spherical totality. Within that phenomenon lie time, events, and perception. Shakespeare was probably the first to get it. It flows across most of his work. *Hamlet* especially. Charles Dickens gets it in *A Christmas Carol*. William Blake gets nothing but this existential landscape of the collective mind. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is Orwell's contribution to the theme, to the school of thought. He's not concerned with the possible defaults of political action and control. That's all too elementary and naïve. All too worldly. Orwell is laying down his metaphysical fantasy in order to leave us with a better understanding of the mortal coil itself. But it is Eric Arthur Blair who pays the price. Winston Smith is lost for eternity. This is the most terrible consequence that can be.

So where does that literally leave our hero? There are twenty-two places in the land where the clock can go to thirteen. All Saints in Sutton Courtenay is one of them. It is one of twenty-two clocks that we know to have only one hand. So, at one o'clock it is thirteen. Blair knew and had seen only this one. He starts his story with this phenomenon as he had seen it at All Saints. He would have stood with his mentor, David Astor, in the churchyard there. The church of All Saints is his starting point. And today the two of them, Astor and Blair, lie together in that churchyard, courtesy of Astor's

commanding power in the parish. This is not Atheist's Corner. I know few places that contain such a sense, such a definite atmosphere, of other-world reality. There lies Eric Arthur Blair, writer of a small book about humanity. And then a big book, about man. A man, dressed as Winston Smith, who concludes his battle with all that matters, Love, in inevitable defeat. For God is Love. The writer, like so many before and around him, never had any doubt about that. He was no atheist. His worry was that he could never find the Salvation that perfect Love, the State of Grace, can deliver. That it alone can deliver. Yet ironically, the lesson is that such self-doubt is the very key to Salvation. There's no easy way back to the Garden. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not essentially a work about collective sociology. It pays a major toll to John Bunyan and Lewis Carroll, but mostly to *Hamlet*. Existentialism, Quantum Reality, cosmic perception – these are the questions. The message is that, if you want out, if you wish to conquer your personal uncertainty and try to understand what it's all about, you have to stand up and be counted, personally, individually. That's the way to God. That's what Orwell is telling us in *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* For that reason alone he is, in this humble writer's opinion, assured of his place in Kingdom Come. This intellectual challenger and doubter may be part of a continual mortal struggle of *verstehen*, but he is never an atheist.

Eric Arthur Blair was a man of vision and he left us with a great work of metaphysical perception, following in the tradition of what he had himself read and enthused over. The spherical whole of Quantum Reality is all there is. We are progressively finding that out today. And all there is, is Love. And God is Love. There really is no way out. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the fugitive has to finally accept that the only way is in. Or all is surely lost. Hamlet said it. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is Orwell's 'to be or not to be' tour de force and it is, God knows, a very great work for that one reason alone.



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