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A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF THE NOVELS OF GEORGE ORWELL

A DISSERTATION

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A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF THE NOVELS OF GEORGE ORWELL

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A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF THE NOVELS OF GEORGE ORWELL

CHAPTER I.

POLEMICAL INTRODUCTION

George Orwell's reputation was the aberrant product of the Cold War. Animal Farm and 1984 appeared at just that moment of hysteria in relations between the Soviet Union and the West, at a time of revulsion and self-hatred on the part of liberal and left wing intellectuals, which catapulted Orwell into a prominence and pervasiveness as a watchword of the holy anti-communist struggle. His very name in its association with 1984 was turned into a cliche of political propaganda. Subsequently, those very same Trotskyite or socialist or Soviet-baiting liberal critics, who professed to see him as the virtuous and uncompromised political prophet, later turned to a second reading of his novels and found them journalistic, shallow, and hysterical; and recently, the deeper and psychological third reading of the novels has led the critics of left wing little magazines like Partisan Review to dismiss Orwell as neurotic.

These responses have been as paradoxical as Orwell

and his body of serious work themselves. Orwell is indeed a political writer, and the social criticism of his work occupies all the foreground of plot, setting, diction and characterization in the five novels as well as the explicitly political and radical essays, The Road to Wigan Pier, Down and Out in Paris and London. But to remain at that level of the foreground, to see only the political and topical in Orwell's books, is the equivalent of relegating Dryden, Swift, or Pope to footnotes in religious and political controversy. It is to become the prisoner of one's own cliches. The charge of shallowness levelled today at Orwell is merely the reflected image of a distorted and shallow political reading of him.

As a matter of fact, when approached with psychoanalytic tools, the novels can be seen to have depth beneath depth. They are indeed "neurotic" in the best sense, for their inner subject is always the mystery of emotional conflict, of the individual divided against himself as well as at war with the social environment. This, indeed, is the real source of their power. Burmese Days, 1984, Keep the Aspidistra Flying are moving chronicles of individuals, literary characters who come alive because they are intricately conceived, because they have complex, difficult and self-destructive personalities. The reader's ultimate response to them is as psychological as it is to the work of Ford Madox Ford, Graham Greene, or D. H. Lawrence.

The political journalist who has read Orwell in his own exclusively political image blinds himself to any further depth; although the genuine emotional response may be intense, he attempts to suppress any deeper level of thought or feeling. Thus the brilliant political commentary of Richard Rovere shows itself incapable of dealing with Orwell as a novelist, indeed, denying that he is one. In his introduction to the Orwell Reader called "The Importance of George Orwell," Rovere's political focus leads him to deny that Orwell has any importance as a novelist:

> His novels were direct and fairly simple narratives in an old tradition. Their meanings are mostly on the surface. Orwell posed no riddles, elaborated no myths, and manipulated no symbols. Even 1984 offers limited possibilities for exegesis. One need only be alive in the twentieth century to grasp its significance.[1]

This may be a fair judgment of the novels as political documents, but it does nothing to account for their peculiar force, for the terror in Winston Smith's relations with O'Brien, for example, or the compelling psychological truth of Dorothy Hare's masochism. These questions, and the basic one of why the Orwell hero is invariably the opposite of heroic, appear as riddles indeed; and denying their existence in the novels leads not to their solution but to a shallow caricature of what the books in all their richness present.

A good part of the richness of the novels derives from their symbolic texture. Orwell characteristically

presents an image at the beginning or end of a chapter which by repetition, variation, and rhetorical heightening, is manipulated to convey the deepest feeling and tone and to reveal the inner core of his protagonist. Fortunately, Richard Rovere notwithstanding, ignoring the symbol will not make it go away. The paradox of Orwell's critical and popular reputation is that while readers do respond to his art and feel the symbolic action, they hesitate to acknowledge it. Literary criticism of Orwell has confined itself to the surface.

Arthur Koestler, whose own political writing derives its power from psychological conflicts similar to Orwell's, is alone in his very high estimate of Orwell's achievement: he calls Orwell "the only writer of genius among the _litterateurs_ of social revolt between the two wars."[2] He ranks him above Malraux or Dos Passos because he has stood apart, independent of party of faction; and unlike himself, Orwell has never worshipped a failed God. Of course, this is a literary judgment contaminated by an arbitrary political criterion, but it does imply the essential quality of Orwell's writing--an absolute and irrevocable ambivalence which is the source of much of its tension and complexity. The man who endowed the Commissar with love and intelligence, as well as the best arguments and wittiest lines in _Darkness at Noon_, is well qualified to appreciate the fellow ambivalent who volunteered to fight in Spain only to leave

within a few months thinking himself one step ahead of the police as an enemy of the Republic.

It is this matter of ambivalence and contradiction that most of the early critics, both laudatory and hostile, have missed in Orwell. Thus, friendly critics like Koestler and Trilling have emphasized his honesty and independence, but slight the failure to commit which is the purchase price of such apparent integrity. Trilling and V. S. Prichett make much of Orwell's virtue. "[As] the wintry conscience of a generation which in the thirties had heard the call to the rasher assumptions of political faith, he was a kind of saint."[3] Another obituary by J. Stern in the New Republic continues the eulogy: "England never produced a novelist more honest, more courageous . . . . "[4] Neither the praise nor the recent attacks, however, suggest the essential paradox which is at the bottom of Orwell's art and character. Kingsley Amis, who also reads only the surface, sees the other face of Orwell and declares, "I will never pick up a book by Orwell again until I have read a frank discussion of the dishonesty and hysteria that mar some of his best work."[5] Amis misses the double vision and intensity which not only do not mar, but on the contrary make for all the esthetic and psychological interest. Raynor "Rudy" Heppenstall and Anthony West both insist upon the pathology in Orwell's personality and biography, but neither comprehends the psychological issues of the novels.

Within a short time after his death, Orwell has become the patron saint or prophet of those who made political capital of his "virtue" or honesty; immediately following, he was exposed as a psychoneurotic. Both views, occasionally combined though not synthesized by the same critic, were equally one-sided and superficial through their failure to treat inductively the artistic evidence of the novels.

Two critics showed themselves at least cognizant of some of the more fundamental issues involved. George Elliott calls him the "failed prophet" and Richard Vorhees titles his full length study The Paradox of George Orwell, but neither one goes beneath the surface of the obvious contradictions to read the symbolic meaning of the body of novels.

As a rule, the published criticism is totally preoccupied with Orwell's supposed purity of character: Lionel Trilling's introduction to the Cold War revival of Homage to Catalonia tells us simply that "he was a virtuous man." Irving Howe, missing all the primitive and metaphoric importance of odors throughout the novels, nevertheless calls him "the best nose of his generation."[6] Koestler praises him as "the most honest writer alive."[7]

On the other side are the critics who are sensitive to the psychopathology evident in Orwell's work and life but who treat both in a casual or reductionist manner.

Isaac Deutscher, the Trotskyist historian of the Russian revolution, notes the "persecution mania" of 1984 and its sadomasochism, its obsession with cruelty and pain. He criticizes it for its borrowing from Zamiatin's We which he secretly believes superior to its "imitator" and for spreading "the convulsive fear of communism which has swept the West since the end of the Second World War."[8]

Of course, this is the sad truth: Orwell's books were used to make anti-communist propaganda; but as Deutscher is himself aware, this was far from Orwell's intention and is quite irrelevant to their literary merit. Or perhaps not so irrelevant. 1984 was in fact highly effective as propaganda once its political point that authoritarianism pervades both East and West was safely misunderstood, because of its primitive psychological powers, because of its novelistic genius in implicating the cruelty and pain, the homosexual sadism and masochism which Deutscher deplores and which Zamiatin manages without. It is precisely this emotional intensity which Orwell's political admirers with their rationalist and mechanist attitudes toward reality deplore. They are frankly disturbed by the horror Orwell evokes. I think this is the tribute to his greatness; but Richard Revere notes that he was a man "who had a good many fanatical impulses,"[9] and Anthony West points out the paranoia in 1984 and attributes it to the psychic wounds Orwell suffered at

school.[10] Samuel Yorks agrees and insists that 1984 "owes less to a conscious rational view of man's social fate than to a nightmare vision from a nightmare past--the author's childhood."[11]

It is an interesting fact that the horrors of Orwell's schooling recounted in Such Such Were the Joys were far more the product of Orwell's fantasy, even then, than the actual experience of the boys at Saint Cyprians. The testimony of Cyril Connolly, who was at school with Orwell, is emphatic on the point of Orwell's gross exaggeration of the cruelty, and in a recent personal interview A. S. F. Gow, who was Orwell's tutor at Eton and knew the headmaster Wilkes of Saint Cyprian's well, dismisses Orwell's tales out of school as nonsense. What is not nonsense is the vibrant intensity with which Orwell does handle these fantasies of sadomasochism, both in Such Such Were the Joys and 1984--and this must be our concern, rather the greater if not corresponding to objective reality.

Only Isaac Rosenfeld makes a beginning in the psychological understanding of 1984 when he points out the fact that Orwell's death wish is the key to his personality, life, and work.[12] T. R. Fyvel, Pritchett, and others show themselves aware of psychological issues, if only from the restricted biographical point of view; but there is no systematic and extensive psychological exegesis of any Orwell novel. The present dissertation is an attempt to

fill this need.

If there is one element of Orwell's work and mind which has been widely noticed, it is the prominence of contradiction. In fact, it forms the unifying thesis of the best of the superficial treatments, Vorhees' The Paradox of George Orwell. Wyndham Lewis, whose estheticism and fascism lead him to turn up his nose at Orwell, shows an uncanny insight into the political contradiction at the bottom of his social attitudes. He insists that Orwell is fundamentally "a natural Rightist [acting] the part of a Left-Winger"; and that he found himself on the militant Left because England in his time offered no other emotionally acceptable opportunity for militancy: "Had Orwell been of German nationality who can doubt that he would have been an SS man."[13] This is an extremely interesting idea, for it cuts through all the cant about Orwell's "decency" and goes to the heart of the unresolved contradictions of Orwell's biography. Orwell's tutor, Gow, in a recent personal communication, makes the point that Orwell was by nature "a rebel in everything." And perhaps Lewis's notion helps us to understand why Orwell, the avowed Socialist even when a boy at school, should leave Eton and go to Burma as a policeman in the service of the Imperial Police. His autobiographical first novel bitterly attacking the British Raj in India and Burma circumvents this difficulty by having Flory gradually wake up to the evils of

imperialism and police cruelty as a result of his experience in Burma. But Orwell himself was already a socialist when he decided to go out there as a member of His Majesty's equivalent to the German SS. Wyndham Lewis was even more right than he knew, for Orwell's ambivalence is so great that he presents the unique paradox of an English socialist who does join the SS. A similar ambivalence is clear from Orwell's attitude toward the victims of empire. As he makes clear in Burmese Days and "Shooting an Elephant," he is stuck: "I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible."[14] I think the emphasis here is on hatred, and I would agree with Lewis to the extent of asking what Orwell was doing there as a policeman in the first place. Flory is not a policeman, and as we shall see, Orwell doesn't tell the bald truth of his political attitudes when he makes Flory gradually come to his anti-imperialism as a result of his first-hand experience. Where Orwell is particularly strong, however, is in representing not the political attitude, for he is defensively disingenuous, but in making the perceptive reader feel the emotional attitudes of ambivalence toward exploitation, suffering, and cruelty. Orwell was appalled by the whipping of natives, for example, and all his life he carried guilts about the role he played in Burma.

Going a bit further than Lewis, the suggestion must

be considered that Orwell went out to Burma in order to whip. Orwell's magnificent pity is here at issue, for from the psychoanalytic point of view such intense capacity for pity, which forms so great a part of Orwell's moral armorium, is but the reverse side and defense against unconscious sadism and aggression. This dissertation will not be concerned with the psychoanalysis of Orwell the man. That effort will have to be undertaken by others, because the attempt leads to biographical speculation and the impossible requirement of hauling Orwell out of the grave and putting him on the couch. Furthermore, the biography may not be of most relevance to the novels, because it is the biographical experience as it is transformed in fantasy which becomes the substance of the art--and that is everywhere before us in the novels, if we are able to see it. The radical views of Wyndham Lewis and others are helpful if only in that they point to difficulties, or problems, or riddles which may lead to a fuller view of the novels.

John Mander is another writer on Orwell's political thought who is much struck by the contradictions inherent in them. He insists that Orwell is "supporting the status quo . . . . [His] ideas are nearly always reactionary, either in origin or in end-effect."[15] Henry Popkins, in "Orwell the Edwardian," argues convincingly that "what Orwell really wanted was 1913 and not the unlikely socialist

Utopia that might lie beyond 1984."[16] Carlyle King, too, points out that democratic socialism for Orwell was a uniquely old fashioned ideal repudiating "mechanization, industrialization, and urbanization," and that in this respect Orwell is indeed reactionary.[17] In this respect, Orwell is almost as nostalgic in his social thought as the Southern Agrarians with whom he possibly has more in common than with the Marxian Socialists. Isaac Rosenfeld, perhaps the most sensitive of all Orwell's critics to the emotional values implicit in his work, neatly ties up the contradiction by describing him as "a radical in politics and a conservative in feeling."[18] Trilling, too, sees a conservative cast to his radicalism. Dempsey, in an article in Antioch Review, says he was "almost as skeptical of progress as of reaction."[19] But the antinomies cut deeper than politics, and some critics have observed them.

Isaac Deutscher, in spite of his conviction of emotionality verging on paranoia in Orwell, asserts that he is essentially a rationalist;[20] Rahv, calling him an empiricist, insists upon an equally strong humanism.[21] Erich Fromm, the Marxian psychoanalyst, views him as the representative twentieth-century man because of his obsession with the negative utopia;[22] and Elliott, because of "the frequency and the vigor with which he strained against the rationalistic materialism he usually asserted,"[23] sees him as embodying the typical inner

contradictions of the time. Dwight MacDonald, in a review of the Lion and the Unicorn, is sensitive to Orwell's idiosyncratic radicalism. He shows that Orwell's political thought, far from the Marxian ideal of cool analysis, is "impressionistic . . . literary rather than technical" and full of difficulties in discerning which side Orwell is really on. "He reacts so violently against the admittedly great defects of the left-wing intellectual tradition of the last two decades as to deny himself as an intellectual."[24] Precisely. And sometimes it appears that Orwell denies himself in everything quite as much as he asserts himself. The fullest possible reading of these contradictions as they appear in the five novels will be the main interest of this dissertation.

Although Dwight MacDonald, because of his own career as a political writer, is particularly acute in pointing out Orwell's political and intellectual Janus face, others have similarly noted the element of paradox in his thought. In fact, it sometimes appears that Orwell is simultaneously on both sides of every question he considers. Richard Rees's George Orwell: Fugitive from the Camp of Victory and Richard Vorhees's The Paradox of George Orwell are valuable books because they never lose sight of the contradictions obvious in the work and mind of their subject. Unlike Rovere, they at least do not deny what is in front of our noses, but honestly admit to riddles and

problems though the first step is not in itself a solution. Their criticism is full of passages like the following:

> George Orwell was perhaps the most paradoxical English writer of his time. He was an intellectual, but he continually damned intellectuals. He was a first-rate political writer in spite of his fundamental horror of politics, and a successful pamphleteer in spite of his constant warnings to his readers to beware of his bias. He was witheringly contemptuous of the majority of socialists; nevertheless, he believed that socialism was the only thing that could save England . . . . The barest facts of his life reveal startling incongruities and sharp contrasts . . . . He deplored the violence of the modern world, and yet he was nearly killed fighting in the Spanish Civil War . . . . [25]

Vorhees is acute in elucidating these paradoxes, but he does little to resolve them. Why Orwell went to Spain, and why he left under such peculiar circumstances as an avowed enemy of the Spanish Republic would be essential questions for the biographer who would analyze Homage to Catalonia in depth. Richard Rees also notes the contradictory elements without, however, attempting to resolve them or to unfold their inner meanings:

> It is easy to distinguish at least four separate and sharply contrasting strains in him. First, there is the rebel Orwell, whose rebelliousness was profound and comprehensive. It began, Prometheus-like, with defying Zeus himself. Life is unjust and tragic; the innocent suffer and the righteous are oppressed; and Orwell could neither blind himself to these facts nor be reconciled to them. The rebel Orwell was a profoundly serious and tragic pessimist; but his pessimism did not entail resignation nor prevent him from fighting injustice in every field in which he met it.
>
> The second Orwell, who at first sight contrasts surprisingly with the rebellious champion of minorities, is sympathetic to authority, at least so long as it is benign and paternal . . . . This is the Orwell who . . . defends Kipling. Thirdly, there is the rationalistic Orwell, the tenacious heir of the eighteenth

> century Eclairissement. Like the authoritarian Orwell, he is a powerful de-bunker of spurious idealism and spirituality. It is his eighteenth-century phlegm and enlightened rationality that inspire Orwell's swift and plain and serviceable prose style. The fourth Orwell is a romantic, a lover of the past, of quaint Dickensian streets and homes, of quiet fishing streams and of old-fashioned virtues, old-fashioned customs and old-fashioned people. These four heterogeneous strains were combined in him to form a well-balanced and harmonious character, which might have been a happy one, in spite of his philosophic pessimism, if the times in which he lived had been less unpropitious.[26]

This lucid statement of the "heterogeneous strains" within Orwell is accurate and useful; but, I think, marred by the conception of harmony, sweetness, and happy, happy, happiness if only poor old Orwell had not lived in the century which created him. It is, on the contrary, his very unhappiness, the miserable seriousness with which Orwell reflects the irreconcilables of our time, as well as the unconscious emotional conflicts within him that make his work electric with tension and the power to move us.

Edmund Wilson is far better in stressing the pathetic alienation of a man so divided against himself that he could not live in the world. In an essay written shortly after his death, Wilson emphasizes the inevitability of Orwell's failure to come to terms with political, social, or any other reality.

> He was a radical who hated and feared the Kremlin; a Marxist who was disgusted by the fashionable socialism of the thirties; a product of the best schools who tried to identify himself with the lower middle class. There was no place for him, and he had to die.[27]

Excellent though this is, it is not really about Orwell's

work so much as his personality and character. Strangely enough, there has been no extended discussion of the effect and meaning of paradox in the five novels.

Not only is the element of contradiction given insufficient attention, but the novels themselves have been slighted in favor of the essays; and even where they are treated they are usually summarized and then given the political treatment as if they were merely fictionalized political tracts. The crucial matter of conflict and ambiguity in the lives of Orwell's five major protagonists has received no critical attention at all, and there is no detailed exegesis of the novels dealing with image, symbol, and metaphor as well as plot and structure. The inner lives of Orwell's characters are brilliantly revealed through Orwell's use of the novelist's traditional techniques and the poet's symbolic manipulation of words and images. This is just the area of Orwell's work, by far the most interesting and permanently valuable, which has been totally ignored.

This study is based on a close reading of Orwell's five novels. It attempts to do more than merely point out contradictions and where they occur. By means of Freudian concepts the inner meaning of some of the paradoxes of character may be revealed, and the language, imagery, and symbolism, and their relation to plot and theme, may be illuminated.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I.

[1]Richard Rovere, "The Importance of George Orwell," Introd. to The Orwell Reader (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956), pp. xviii, xix.

[2]"A Rebel's Progress: To George Orwell's Death," The Trail of the Dinosaur and Other Essays (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), p. 103.

[3]V. S. Prichett, "George Orwell," New Statesman and Nation, XXXIX (January 28, 1950), 96.

[4]"George Orwell," The New Republic, CXXII (February 20, 1950), 18.

[5]"One World and Its Way," Twentieth Century, CLVIII (1955), 168.

[6]"Orwell: History as Nightmare," American Scholar, XXV (Spring, 1956), 206.

[7]Koestler, p. 102.

[8]"1984: The Mysticism of Cruelty," Russia in Transition and Other Essays (New York: Coward-McCann, 1957), pp. 230-42.

[9]Rovere, p. xv.

[10]"George Orwell," Principles and Persuasions (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1957), pp. 171-76.

[11]"George Orwell: Seer Over His Shoulder," Bucknell Review, IX (March, 1960), 33.

[12]"Decency and Death," in Orwell's 1984: Text, Sources, Criticism, ed. Irving Howe (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), p. 188 et passim.

[13]"Orwell, Or Two and Two Make Four," The Writer and the Absolute (London: Methuen & Co., 1952), pp. 183-90.

[14]A Collection of Essays (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1954), p. 188.

[15]"George Orwell's Politics: I," Contemporary Review, CXCVII (January, 1960), 35-36.

[16]*Kenyon Review*, XVI (Winter, 1954), 142.

[17]"The Politics of George Orwell," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XXVI (October, 1956), 83.

[18]Rosenfeld, p. 187.

[19]David Dempsey, "Connolly, Orwell and Others: An English Miscellany," *Antioch Review*, VII (March, 1947), 142-50.

[20]Deutscher, p. 239.

[21]Philip Rahv, "The Unfuture of Utopia," *Partisan Review*, XVI (July, 1949), 747.

[22]"Afterword," *1984* (New York: New American Library of World Literature, 1961), pp. 259-60.

[23]George P. Elliott, "George Orwell," *A Piece of Lettuce: Personal Essays on Books, Beliefs, American Places, and Growing Up In a Strange Country* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 161-70.

[24]Review of *The Lion and the Unicorn*, *Partisan Review*, IX (March-April, 1942), 166-68.

[25]Richard J. Vorhees, *The Paradox of George Orwell* (Purdue University Studies, 1961), p. 15.

[26]*George Orwell: Fugitive From the Camp of Victory* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), pp. 10-11.

[27]"Grade-A Essays: Orwell, Sartre, and Highet," *New Yorker*, XXVI (January 13, 1951), 76.

CHAPTER II.

KUBLA KHAN IN BURMA

Orwell's prototypical novel is Burmese Days.[1] It is not only the first of a series of books compounded from Orwell's characteristic outrage at social injustice and his despairing idealism typically bound up with his own emotional and intellectual conflicts; more important, Burmese Days can be taken as the psychological as well as the formal model for all the later work.

It is, first of all, a novel of character. Orwell again and again explores an interesting social or political matrix by thrusting the solitary individual into a situation and a climate which destroys him. The persona, usually a fairly shallow mask for Orwell, invariably suffers frustration, defeat, or death as he casts his light upon the hostile environment which is his undoing. By this strategy, Orwell deliberately reverses the classic legend of the Western novel. Writers like Fielding and Dickens found it impossible to register an intense social criticism while at the same time investing their heroes with enough perspicuity to undergo an equally intense individual development.

Stendhal in Le Rouge et le Noir, Balzac in Les Illusions Perdues, James in The American accept the bourgeois fable of the gifted young man from the provinces who develops, who undergoes a moral testing and education, and who progresses from innocence and immaturity to wisdom and experience. Orwell's novels are never about the growth and development of the protagonist: they invariably reverse the pattern, and in so doing, frustrate and destroy him. Although an accusing finger is pointed at the viciousness of society, the profound psychological truth of Orwell's work is that his "heroes" are their own undoing. Because they cannot grow and meet their circumstances, they die. The conventional upward curve of the Bildungsroman is, therefore, turned downward because the character is, from the outset, incapable of development. The maxim that character is destiny is given a special twist by Orwell: the inexorable doom of failure is a self-fulfilling prophecy because it is willed, desired, and provoked by the secret self within.

Flory, the first of Orwell's fictional masks, is the type of Orwellian anti-hero. Although he is well set-up, engaging, able, young and strong, all these qualities do not matter; they are all "secondary expressions," for "the first thing" about Flory is his "hideous birthmark" (BD, p. 17). This "hideousness" covering the whole of his left cheek is the primary expression of Flory's secret guilt and

shame, private excesses, and dissipation. It is the stigma of Cain which, at every crucial juncture of his life, points to a self-willed and self-fulfilling prophecy of doom; it grows like a cancer of the soul until it becomes an emblem of deformity--a motor force for his rages, his social isolation, his impotence, rebellion against authority, timidity, aggression and romantic failure.

Burmese Days, however, is not on its surface a psychological novel. Orwell is interested in the dynamic exchange between the individual and society, but the focus of criticism is always and explicitly the destructive society. Our first glimpse of Flory is highly characteristic. On the morning when we first discover him, he is raging with pain. The fierce sun beats down "with a steady, rhythmic thumping, like blows from an enormous bolster." (BD, p. 18) The rhythms of pain, of blows, of thumping, will determine the pattern of his life. Heat, the glare of tropical Burma, even the flowers, hurt Flory's eyes by their "clash of colours." (BD, p. 19) Here is the first note of a symphony of pain which by its intensity assaults the senses and mounts an agonized crescendo which crushes Flory's body as the social climate of colonial Burma destroys his soul. He flees for refuge to the Club, only to be attacked there by the "spiteful Cockney voice" of Ellis insulting Flory's native friend, Dr. Veraswami. "Dr. Very-Slimy, the nigger" is Ellis's term for Flory's best friend. The insufferable

dialogue in the English Club continues on its eternal theme of the necessity for beating natives. Mrs. Lackersteen urges "a good thrashing" for her rickshaw man because he says he is ill and she is "unequal to the quarter-mile walk between her house and the Club." (BD, p. 28) Mr. Macgregor laments the good old days when one sent a servant "to the jail with a chit saying 'Please give the bearer fifteen lashes.'" (BD, p. 29) The suffocating atmosphere within the Club oppresses Flory even more than the heat and glare without. As he jumps up and flees, "conversation veered back to the old, never-palling subject--the insolence of the natives, the dear dead days when the British Raj was the British Raj and please give the bearer fifteen lashes." (BD, p. 34) The chapter closes with the infernal vision of "glowing white sunlight . . . heat like the breath of an oven . . . flowers, oppressive to the eyes . . . a debauch of sun," (BD, p. 36) and presiding over the evil decadence of Empire "the tail-less vultures" foretelling a cosmic doom.

Flory's favorite argument with Veraswami is over the nature of British Imperial Raj in Burma and the character of the English. As he flees the heat for the Club, he now flees the Club for the soothing flattery of Veraswami's idealized views of the English. Veraswami passionately argues "that he, as an Indian, belongs to an inferior and degenerate race" and that the English "from pure public

spirit" are elevating and civilizing the Oriental character (BD, p. 40), while Orwell-Flory indicts the "Pax Britannica" as a pure swindle designed to rob and steal from the natives. As so often with Orwell's ideological debates, whether over the efficacy of flogging as part of a classical education or the virtues of Republican Spain, the point of interest is Orwell's ambivalence which lies just beneath the surface of the overly simplified arguments. It is a psychological commonplace that people who argue passionately sometimes change sides abruptly, and continue the argument. Of course, it is Flory, the Englishman, who throughout Burmese Days is "bitterly anti-English and the Indian fanatically loyal." (BD, p. 40). Beneath this rather trivial irony, however, lies a characteristic and complicated set of attitudes. At another level of consciousness Flory-Orwell makes it clear that he sympathizes with the Europeans and shares their feeling of embittered superiority while simultaneously despising them for it: "Living and working among Orientals would try the temper of a saint," he tells us. "And all of them . . . knew what it was to be baited and insulted." Orwell-Flory rages at the natives' "yellow faces--faces smooth as gold coins, full of that maddening contempt that sits so naturally on the Mongolian face." (BD, p. 34) Although much of the incidental travelogue of the novel is textured with racism--even Flory's dog, Flo, is prejudiced against the Oriental smell, "but

she liked the smell of a European" (BD, p. 82)--Flory is genuinely committed to the Burmans as underdogs; he is sincerely outraged at the injustice perpetrated on them; his best and only friend is Veraswami. It would be the grossest mistake to consider him a mere hypocrite. "In fifteen years I've never talked honestly to anyone except you," he tells Veraswami, and his talk is honest, or at least as honest as Flory can be with himself; but it is the relationship with Veraswami itself which is corrupt, and this intimate corruption of the soul accounts for Flory's inordinate sense of guilt. He compares his intimate talks with Veraswami to a Black Mass (BD, p. 43) and to the feelings of a "minister dodging up to town and going home with a tart. Such a glorious holiday from them . . . my beloved fellow Empire-builders. British prestige, the white man's burden, the pukka sahib . . . . " (BD, p. 37) Hatred and contempt for his compatriots occupy all the foreground here, but what lies in the background is Flory's suffocating hatred and contempt for Burmans, and his friend Veraswami in particular. Comparing his visits to Veraswami with a nonconformist minister's visits to a tart, reveals his deepest feelings. Such a minister need not necessarily be a shallow hypocrite, for behind the crusading mask of Puritanism hides the rebellious flesh; and if the face be true, then Flory's corrupted minister will be rotten with guilt, contempt, and self-loathing. The Puritan succumbs

to what he despises, as he hates the tart precisely because he is vulnerable to her. This is exactly Flory's situation. Behind the outrage at social injustice, Flory feeds on Veraswami's adulation of him as a pukka sahib; indeed, he despises Veraswami in just the way a tart is despised, as one who has sold himself, who is a shameless Uncle Tom. Of course, the nature of Flory's ambivalence is clear enough from the character of his friend, Veraswami. He has not chosen a dedicated nationalist revolutionary as his friend, nor even a mildly anti-imperialist liberal; but, on the contrary, the most slavish lackey that can be imagined. It is this doting Uncle Tom who is Flory's best buddy--and Flory despises him. At the climax of the plot, at the exact center of the book, Flory finally decides to propose his native friend for membership in the European Club, and thus challenge the color line and face the outrage, hostility and self-destruction which his challenge is sure to provoke. The issue is given depth and point because Verswami is under attack from the malicious intrigues of U Po Kyin, a kind of Burman Iago who is out to destroy Veraswami by fabricating the baseless lie that he is disloyal. In these matters, "prestige is everything" and if Dr. Veraswami could be elected to the Club, his reputation would be beyond assault by slander and his career saved. But there are terrible risks for Flory, letters portending ruin which he is well aware of. At this point, Flory decides

to sponsor Veraswami, either in spite of or because of the risk; but the tone of the dialogue reveals Flory's deepest feelings and the corrupted texture of his relationship with his intimate Indian friend:

> The doctor was still holding Flory's hand between his own, which were plump and damp. The tears had actually started into his eyes, and there, magnified by his spectacles, beamed upon Flory like the liquid eyes of a dog. (BD, p. 150)

At the very moment of committing himself to a dangerous struggle on behalf of personal loyalty and for a decent social principle, at this moment of identification with the oppressed and reviled, Flory's manly love is imprisoned by the "damp, plump hands" of his Oriental brother. The depth of his contempt is sounded in the liquidity of Veraswami's eyes--the eyes "of a dog."

As he despises the downtrodden Burman who is the object of his political sympathy, as he hates his own kind, the English pukka sahib, as he has contempt for his dog-like friend, Veraswami, so does Flory hate and despise his young mistress, Ma Hla May. His first and characteristic gesture is to reject her sexual overtures. "It is too hot for that kind of thing" he will say. (BD, p. 52) As always in Orwell's work, it is the olfactory imagery which reveals the most primitive level of feeling, and the odor which floats from Ma Hla May is a mixture of garlic, coco-nut oil and jasmine which fills Flory with revulsion. It is a scent that sets his teeth on edge, but he manages to stimulate his

desire with a peculiar ritual of taunting and baiting. "You only like me because I am a white man and have money" he charges; he accuses her of taking a Burmese lover. When she denies it, he flings "liar" in her face. Only then does he put his hand on her flat breast. Her passivity, the thought that his servant's brother was secretly her lover, the certainty that his own embraces "meant nothing to her"--all of this pricking the scab of his self-loathing--enables him to consumate the act of love.

> When Flory had done with her he turned away, jaded and ashamed, and lay silent with his left hand covering his birthmark. He always remembered the birthmark when he had done something to be ashamed of. He buried his face disgustedly in the pillow, which was damp and smelt of coco-nut oil. (BD, p. 54)

Now he must get her out of his sight, for she is "nauseating" to him. "Why is master always so angry with me when he has made love to me!" she asks. (BD, p. 54) His reply is to call her a whore and to push her out of his room. "He kicked her sandals after her. Their encounters often ended this way." (BD, p. 55)

Flory then walks into the jungle and surrenders himself to an anguish of loneliness mingled with an ecstatic sense of enveloping natural beauty. He longs for a single soul to share with, "one person, just one, to halve his loneliness!" (BD, p. 57) He soon loses his way in the jungle and wanders "in a maze of dead trees and tangled bushes" until he is "blocked by large ugly plants like

magnified aspidistra, whose leaves terminated in long lashes armed with thorns." (BD, p. 58) A way out of the maze soon offers itself with the arrival of the English girl, Elizabeth; rescue from his despair and loneliness are at hand, and his love for Elizabeth will point the way back into society--but the path is blocked by ugly aspidistra-like plants armed with lashes and thorns.

Flory's first encounter with the English girl, whose ambiguous feminity will save him or ruin him, is in the classic manner of romance: he comes like a shining knight in armor to rescue her from danger. He hears terrified screams from the jungle, leaps over a gate, wounding his knee in transit, rushes into the bush and discovers Elizabeth, white faced and cowering before the horns of a water-buffalo. He routs the buffalo and rescues the trembling girl as a medieval knight rescues the timorous maiden from the dragon. This is the heroic beginning of his love. He plunges into intimate conversation with her--of books and shooting; he thrills her with a description of an elephant kill he has made, and "for the moment he was almost a hero in her eyes." (BD, p. 85) Almost, but not quite, because from this point forward the plot unfolds Flory's pitifully unheroic courtship of Elizabeth. Although redemption and triumph are sustained possibilities throughout, Flory cannot or will not seize them. However, this experience with Elizabeth ends with a series of images which offer dramatic

relief from the heat, glare, and fierce beating sun of the Burman landscape: "A cool breath of wind blew up . . . one of those momentary winds that blow sometimes . . . coming from nowhere, filling one with thirst and with nostalgia for cold sea-pools, embraces of mermaids, waterfalls, caves of ice. It rustled through the wide domes of the gold mohur trees," (BD, p. 88) carrying with its heavy Coleridgean overtones the phallic promise of Kubla Khan himself "a mighty fountain momently . . . forced," a wide "pleasure dome with caves of ice" to share with this English "damsel with a dulcimer." Flory, however, is no Kubla because this same wind offering relief from his sterile life "fluttered the fragments of the anonymous letter that Flory had thrown over the gate half an hour earlier." (BD, p. 88) This anonymous letter carries the portent of Flory's destruction at the hands of U Po Kyin, "the crocodile," and yet the destruction will be self-inflicted in the double sense that Flory will shoot himself at the end, and even more important, will provoke the defeat and deprivation which must culminate in suicide.

Because Chapter VI suspends Flory in an agonizing tension between the promise of redemption through the love of Elizabeth on the one hand, and the certainty of ruin by the machinations of U Po Kyin on the other, it may be useful to consider its imagery more closely. The final paragraph of this chapter makes five explicit allusions to

"Kubla Khan," not merely by borrowing Coleridge's central images but by transposing the very words and phrases of the poem. Thus, "Kubla Khan" may be considered as more than an incidental source for Orwell's imagery. By its emphatic position and repetition it compels us to examine the theme of "Kubla Khan" and its relationship to Coleridge as a possible model for Flory's difficult and paradoxical character.

In the most superficial and general terms, both "Kubla Khan" and Burmese Days are concerned with the alienation of the man of imaginative vision from himself and from the modern environment which further isolates and deprives him. Still on the surface, the most obvious contrast the poem sets is that between the visionary speaker of the last paragraph of the poem who, deprived of power and force, longs to "revive" the "deep delight" within, and Kubla, who can decree his pleasure-dome, who has the phallic power to enter "this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething." Kubla as genital hero creates "A mighty fountain momently . . . forced," the "fragments vaulted like rebounding hail/ Or chaffy grain . . . . " Dr. Eli Marcovitz, a leading psychoanalyst and a learned Coleridgean scholar, has probed the deeper symbolic sources of Coleridge's "Lost Dream."[2] He states the wish-fulfilling nature of the speaker's fantasy in this way: "'If only I, like Kubla Khan, had the Power and the strength to translate my dream into reality, than I should have no pain.'"[3] Furthermore, the absence of pain

would be complemented by the "pleasure dome" which would fulfill all need. Kubla, who has the power to decree the magical realization of all pleasure, is thus an "ego-ideal" within the terms of the poem, and the image of Kubla Khan is "a projection of the idealized image of the self-the poet-speaker wished to be, the Tartar turned creator."[4] But the poet recognizes the danger and terror of fulfillment in mature genital love. "The deep romantic chasm" is "a savage place" and according to Dr. Marcovitz, the locus of all "the fascination, the awe, and the terror Coleridge felt for the sexuality of the female and the female genitals. The woman wailing for her demon-lover is herself a demon."[5]

In short, the speaker of the poem, like Flory, is impotent because he cannot master his terror of the savage place; for him it remains forever haunted and dreadful in its "ceaseless turmoil seething." Though susceptible to the enchantment, the speaker of Coleridge's poem--like Flory--cannot make the ascent on Mount Abora (which is in fact called Mount Amora in an earlier version). Beneath the surface of Flory's character, we discern the same fear of mature sexual love. It is Elizabeth's very eligibility for marriage--she had come out to Burma quite openly for this purpose--which precipitates Flory's unconscious fears. When Ellis and Westfield, Flory's "pals" at the Club, give him the predictable masculine ragging and teasing, his inability to deal with it suggests that they are speaking for his own

unconscious trepidation. Ellis interrogates him mercilessly:

> " . . . a stroll! And who with?"
> "With Miss Lackersteen."
> "I knew it! So you're the bloody fool who's fallen into the trap, are you? You swallowed the bait before anyone else had time to look at it . . . . You take care and don't go putting your head into the noose."
> "Damn it, you've no right to talk about people like that. After all, the girl's only a kid----."
> "My dear old ass . . . . Why do you think the girl's come out here."
> "Why? I don't know. Because she wanted to, I suppose." (BD, p. 109)

Flory's angry denials of marital realities are precisely those of the sexually "innocent" child who insists he knows nothing of forbidden adult pleasures. He shares in this child-like quality of protesting innocence as he says, "I don't know" why she has come out to "the Indian marriage market" for young girls. Although he must know, he insists he doesn't know. It is to reassure himself that he argues with such heat that "the girl's only a kid----." Beneath these conscious disclaimers, Flory is quite aware of the danger. Beneath the surface of the argument, in fact, Ellis and Westfield, with their bachelor-friendly teasing, speak for Flory's own consciousness. They never speak more truly than when they represent her, this ordinary, pretty young English girl, as a predatory beast: "She's come out to lay her claws into a husband, of course." Of course. But Flory finds this discussion repugnant just as the sensitive young boy recoils from "the facts" of the disgusting sexual act. All his argument and innocence notwithstanding, "Flory did not see much of Elizabeth that evening."

(BD, p. 110)

In the face of his conscious longing for her--a lovely young girl to "halve his loneliness"--and the intensity of the emotional conflict this precipitates, he adopts a double strategy of defense. On the one hand, he uses the tactics of disparagement of the feared object--in a primitive manner reducing the loved person to the level of a mere "paper tiger;" and this emphasis on what is "wrong" with Elizabeth is well in progress:

> "Oh, I simply adore gardening," the girl said. (BD, p. 85)

> "But of course I simply adore reading," the girl said. (BD, p. 83)

> Elizabeth lay on the sofa in the Lackensteen's drawing-room, with her feet up and a cushion behind her head, reading Michael Arlen's These Charming People. In a general way Michael Arlen was her favourite author, but she was inclined to prefer William J. Locke when she wanted something serious. (BD, p. 89)

Elizabeth is obviously a bit fatuous and shallow; but what is even more obvious is that Flory cannot admit to himself the truth of Schopenhauer's dictum that "marriage is not for intellectual conversation." Trapped by his neurotic fears, he emphasizes Elizabeth's intellectual and ideological faults (she doesn't appreciate the native culture as Flory would wish her to, and she even shares the values of the pukka sahib, for example); and by this emphasis, obscures the cardinal fact that she is the eminently right girl in the right place at the right time. Thus, Flory is in the

position of the fearful old maid who never marries "because her standards are too high"--impossibly high. That's just the point of them.

Flory's other strategem of defense against the intensity of his own desire is even more profound and devious. It consists of reducing his own eligibility. This can be accomplished by aligning himself with Veraswami against his enemy, U Po Kyin, in a series of maneuvers designed to provoke "the crocodile's" retaliation and to bring down the wrath of the entire English community upon his head. In addition, the thread of unconscious sabotage of his chances for marriage with Elizabeth can be seen in almost every episode of the courtship.

As Burmese Days is a novel of character and concerns the hero's failure to develop, so it is in the bourgeois tradition a story of romantic love. Orwell's imagination feeds on reversal, and like all his work, Burmese Days characteristically inverts the Romantic fable by examining the hero's destruction in love. That the destruction is willed by Flory himself, that it is his own manipulation of his social environment which brings it about, an examination of his peculiar courtship will reveal.

After his first success with Elizabeth, when the logic of their mutual eligibility is clear to them both, when this obvious suitability to each other is reinforced by stirrings of romantic attraction, Flory pursues his

courtship by inviting Elizabeth to a native dance. He takes her in among the natives to watch the very best of pwe dancers. There, amid the "feral reek of sweat," shin-to-shin with Burmans, "hideous" men with gleaming "betel-reddened teeth," atmosphere pungent with garlic and excrement, the conventional, middle-class, snobbish and protected Elizabeth has her confrontation with the native art form of the pwe-dance--as Flory's guest: "the pwe girl . . . like a demon . . . in that strange bent posture . . . turned round and danced with her buttocks protruded towards the audience. Her silk longyi gleamed like metal. With hands and elbows still rotating, she wagged her posterior from side to side. Then--astonishing feat, quite visible through the longyi--she began to wriggle her two buttocks independently in time with the music." (BD, p. 106) The eminently respectable, modest, bourgeois girl is, of course, horrified and humiliated by this spectacle of buttock-wiggling in her face. What Flory had represented as high art is for poor Elizabeth a "hideous and savage" spectacle. It is rather worse than a sophomore's taking a Bryn Mawr girl to the crudest of burlesque strip joints on a first date. Face flushed, the shamed Elizabeth gets up to leave, and they make their escape--but not before "two clowns hurried on to the stage and began letting off crackers and making obscene jokes." Safely away from the loathsome scene,

> Flory followed the girl abjectly up the road. She was walking quickly, her head turned away, and for some moments she would not speak. What a thing to happen, when they had been getting on so well together! He kept trying to apologize.
>
> "I'm so sorry! I'd no idea you would mind--" (BD, p. 107)

He is, of course, miserable; he has insulted her, and must now suffer her angry revulsion. What is significant and odd is that he wallows in this misery and almost seems to enjoy it, at the same time feeling innocent, the passive victim of circumstance: "What a thing to happen, when they had been getting on so well . . . . " Precisely. And, it just happened. Many more such things will "happen" in the future course of his relation with Elizabeth, and in much the same way--for the pathos of Flory is that he is indeed a victim, not of external "things that happen," but of the ravages of his own unconscious will toward self-destruction.

That this destructive will is implacable and insatiable becomes clear when we consider the next episode of Flory's courtship of Elizabeth. Pursuing his sense of the beautiful, he takes her to the native bazaar, but the experience for her proves to be bizarre. They enter a dark and stinking Chinese shop, complete with odors of opium, incense, Oriental sweat, "a naked child . . . crawling slowly about the floor like a large yellow frog." (BD, p. 129) Flory assures her that the people are "highly civilized; more civilized than we are, in my opinion. Beauty's all a matter of taste." (BD, p. 129) On his strong recommendation,

she tries a cup of special Chinese tea--Flory praises it highly because "it has orange blossoms in it." The only trouble for Elizabeth is that "it tastes exactly like earth." (BD, p. 130) Then the girls in the shop are fascinated by Elizabeth's stays:

> They had heard so many tales about them . . . they compressed a woman so tightly that she had no breasts, absolutely no breasts at all! The girls pressed their hands against their fat ribs in illustration. Would not Flory be so kind as to ask the English lady? There was a room behind the shop where she could come with them and undress. (BD, p. 131)

Finally, the naked child crawling about at Elizabeth's feet begins to make water on the floor. The pool of urine forms in front of her.

This incident, like the other "accidents" which destroy the relationship, is the stuff of fine satire, but Orwell maintains his flat journalistic tone, and the reader senses the impending disaster. Because Flory is so totally lacking in insight or self-knowledge, because the scale of these blunders is so petty, he is devoid even of the possibility of tragedy. "He only knew that at each attempt to make her share his life, his thoughts, his sense of beauty, she shied away . . . . " (BD, p. 133) It does not occur to him that the beauty he seeks to impose upon her is a Chinese baby peeing on the floor. If this is merely pathetic, the masochistic ecstacy which follows is merely pathological: "How he loved her, how he loved her! It was as though he had never truly loved her until this moment, when he walked

behind her in disgrace, not even daring to show his disfigured face." (BD, p. 133) There is an intensity here which derives from the alliterating "d's" and lends a lyricism to this epitaph of courtship. Again and again, he cannot forget his birthmark. (BD, p. 116) It is this hideous deformity which marks him from birth for a despairing early death.

Even the successful side of Flory's persistently ambiguous courtship reeks of death. In order to win the girl's love, he takes her shooting. On her very first shot, Elizabeth kills a little jungle cock; and at a beautifully rendered climax, she draws close to Flory, hands clasped, about to embrace. But, of course, the mood is shattered as is the cock itself when Flory "turned his head away . . . he had remembered his birthmark." (BD, p. 168) The tenderness itself becomes a dead bird, so there is nothing for it but to continue the hunt. Presently they track and destroy a leopard, explicitly a male, and Flory proves his manhood by sacrificing this beast to Elizabeth's blood-lust. Even here, however, at the moment of climax, when the leopard has been wounded and is in flight, Flory has misplaced his cartridges and shows himself characteristically incompetent. Finally, he somehow does manage to do it, as our sympathy extends to both figures: "The leopard writhing along on his belly, sobbing as he went," (BD, p. 172) and Flory firing with small game ammunition at almost point-blank range.

This foreshadows his own sobbing death when Flory comes to shoot his dog, Flo, and himself in the end.

What is peculiarly evident in this climatic tableau is the fusion of sexual symbolism with the shooting of the wild jungle cock and the male leopard. Flory, in the first place, takes the girl out shooting in order to win her admiration and love--to prove his manhood and virility; and this episode at the center of the book carries us back to the very first encounter at the beginning of the courtship when Flory showed his mastery by "rescuing" Elizabeth from a huge buffalo. However, a closer look at what is going on at these tensely dramatic moments reveals a deeper level of meaning. Just as Flory could achieve the "rescue" of Elizabeth only by suffering a wounded and bleeding leg, so here at the heart of the book, he achieves the destruction of the leopard only after first demonstrating his ineptitude. It is typical of him, and entirely revealing, that at the sticking point, with a wounded and dangerous beast at bay, he has the wrong kind of cartridges in his pockets. Out leopard hunting, he has given all the large-shot cartridges away--they have been left with his man-servant, Ko S'la--and he keeps for himself only the pitifully inadequate "small-shot cartridges." (BD, p. 172). His incompetence contrasts sharply with the way the girl, just a few moments before, had done her shooting: "Elizabeth raised her gun and fired. It was one of those shots where there is no

aiming . . . when one's mind seems to fly behind the charge and drive it to the mark. She knew the bird was doomed even before she pulled the trigger." (BD, p. 168) Thus, at the level of social analysis, we see the familiar picture of role reversal in which the man's impotence is complemented by the girl's masculinity. At a deeper level still, the scene evokes association with the hundreds of Renaissance puns on "dying" and "killing" and explains why this moment is the fullest intimacy Flory and Elizabeth ever experience together:

> A sudden stillness came on them both, a sense of something momentous that must happen. Flory reached across and took her other hand. It came yieldingly, willingly. For a moment they knelt with their hands clasped together. The sun blazed upon them and the warmth breathed out of their bodies; they seemed to be floating upon clouds of heat and joy. He took her by the upper arms to draw her towards him. (BD, p. 168)

The "something momentous" never does happen; the "warmth," the "floating upon clouds of heat and joy" cannot be achieved because Flory remembers his mark, as he does when he subsequently tries to kiss Elizabeth under the smooth-trunked frangipani tree. It is a tree that stinks of sickness and decay. Like his birthmark, it stultifies him and makes him remote from Elizabeth even when she is in his arms. "All that that alien tree symbolized for him, his exile, the secret, wasted years--it was like an unbridgeable gulf between them." (BD, p. 177) At this point, therefore, where the stinking frangipani stood like a decayed phallus

between them, it fuses with the birthmark as an emblem of the secret shame and wasted seed of his manhood.

The awful birthmark is only one side of Flory's Janus face; because he preserves an almost unbearable tension of ambiguity throughout, the question for him is always which face shall he turn toward the girl: to disgust her by "putting a bad face" on everything, or to win her admiration and loyalty by proofs of his manly prowess. There are, almost until the final undoing, many occasions when he stands "with his birth-marked cheek away from her . . . so splendidly manly, with his pagri-cloth shirt open at the throat, and his shorts and puttees and shooting boots!" (BD, pp. 161-62) It is at these moments that he is again and again on the verge of proposing marriage, but something--perhaps the certainty of acceptance--holds him back. Such a high point of success Flory had achieved after the shooting of the leopard. He promises to give her the skin, but the evocative force of his generosity is the queasy feeling that it is his own skin that is being offered up. But, no matter: "it is understood that Flory would ask Elizabeth to marry him . . . [and that] she would say yes." (BD, pp. 174-75) Here, the leopard skin appears glossy, sleek, and black--in a word, virile. The natives, in fact, eat the internal organs in the belief they will become "strong and swift like the leopard" itself. (BD, p. 174) Flory, too, for all his ineptitude, seems to swell with

assimilated animal vitality.

However, the beast whose sacrificial death is at the center of this man's pursuit of a girl is also invested with an elaborate paradox. Like Flory's face, it is also fraught with ambiguity: although strong and swift in life, in death "he looked rather pathetic, like a dead kitten." (BD, p. 173) At the end of the novel when Flory, having assured his rejection, having lost her to another man, does ask Elizabeth to marry him, he brings her this promised leopard skin--the token of their intimacy in the jungle. By this time, however, "the skin had been utterly ruined . . . . It also stank abominably. Instead of being cured, it had been converted [under Dr. Veraswami's direction] into a piece of rubbish." (BD, p. 217) Flory can only lament, "What a mess they've made of it," for by his self-destructive alliance with Veraswami, he will make a mess of his life and convert into rubbish his relationship with the girl. She is disgusted by the foul odor of the skin. "The piece of carrion [he had brought her] made him more ashamed every moment. He stood there almost voiceless, lumpishly ugly . . . and his birthmark like a smear of dirt." (BD, p. 219) The spectacle of this masochistic orgy is excruciating in its intensity, for this is a picture of a man not only rolling or wallowing in dung, but turning his life, all he touches, his very self, into a heap of stinking filth.

The last movement of the novel opens with Chapter XVI on the image of vultures flapping off "their dung-whitened branches" and spiraling out of the cemetery; as they blanket him with their wings, Flory walks down to the Club resolved to make a formal proposal of marriage. He is just a moment too late, however, because now a fated barrier stands between him and Elizabeth. A youth, "hard, fearless, and even brutal . . . tough and martial . . . with a long spear in his hand" (BD, p. 184) is mounted high on a white horse, cantering about and commanding Elizabeth's interest. This is Verrall, dashing young cavalryman who is to win Elizabeth from him. Verrall, perhaps a canted name, is the agent who now assures the absolute feral quality which permeates Flory's courtship of Elizabeth. Throughout, the theme of that relationship becomes progressively humiliating--and Flory wallows in it.

For openers, Flory attempts to mount and ride a pony in order to outdo his competition. Under the eyes of Elizabeth, "before the horse had taken two bounds, Flory found himself hurtling through the air, hitting the ground with a crack" (BD, p. 187); the girth had not been tightened, the saddle had slipped; once again, he is the passive victim of a Freudian "accident." Soaked in blood from a cracked shoulder, blood oozing from his cheek, sprawling on the ground "ignominiously," he sees Elizabeth coming toward him:

> My God, my God! He thought, O my God, what a fool I must look! The thought of it even drove away the pain of the fall. He clapped a hand over his birth-mark, though the other cheek was the damaged one. (BD, p. 187)

This experience is typical of the secret aim of much of Flory's behavior: although on the surface so ardent and positive, a subterranean impulse downward to humiliation and defeat breaks through again and again with monotonous regularity. What saves the plot from boredom is the tense and continual alternation between hope and despair, triumph and disaster, fulfillment and death, right up until the final undoing. The neurotic mechanism at work in Flory, as in many of Orwell's characters, is what Freud called "doing and undoing." Any victory or achievement is so fraught with guilt and fear that the character must compulsively "undo" it, and ultimately undo himself.

Elizabeth's gaze lifts from Flory "beyond the cemetery," and, like the opening image of vultures, foreshadows his death as the only possible outcome. The inner core of him is thus revealed by this image of himself as carrion, a piece of filth, unfit because of inherent ugliness for any fate other than to be devoured by the bird that feeds on death. When Elizabeth finally rejects him for "keeping a Burmese woman," he revels in his pain: "He had dirtied himself beyond redemption, and this was his just punishment . . . . For he had perceived, with the deadly self-knowledge and self-loathing that come to one at such a time, that what

had happened served him perfectly right." (BD, p. 196) Here, Flory is almost overwhelmed by his guilt. Because he once had a relationship with a Burmese woman, he feels himself to be irredeemably lost and deserving of absolute punishment. The excessive and absolute quality of these feelings suggest their origin in the unconscious sense of sexual guilt. Flory is, in fact, guilty even before the fancied offense, and is under the compulsion to manipulate his environment to "prove" his guilt and punish himself horribly.

One of the central problems of the novel and of the masochistic character of Orwell's work is the source and intensity of this unconscious need for punishment. The most acutely painful scene in the book occurs when Flory, attempting to meet the rivalry of the dashing young Verall, intrudes upon Elizabeth in order to offer her his skin. Although he knows that it has been utterly ruined, is now stiff as cardboard, stinks, "a piece of rubbish," he cannot leave it alone. He stands with it in her drawing room, but when she enters, "instead of stepping forward to meet her he actually backed away. There was a fearful crash behind him; he had upset an occasional table and sent a bowl of zinnias hurtling across the floor." (BD, p. 118) Wilhelm Reich, in his pioneer work on character analysis, singles out this typical masochistic character trait: "All masochistic characters show a specifically awkward, atactic behavior," and chronic self-damage which reflects the inner

self-depreciation.[6] Aside from the many, many physical accidents which Flory suffers in all his intercourse with Elizabeth, the atactic, awkward posture, the pain of falling, are the dual metaphors of his life. After picking up the table he has just knocked over, he unrolls the skin upon it. It looked so shabby and miserable that he wished he had never brought it . . . she too stepped back with a wince of disgust, having caught the foul odor of the skin. It shamed him horribly. It was almost as though it had been himself and not the skin that stank." (BD, p. 219) It appears that Orwell, at this moment, moves beyond mere verisimilitude to an expressionist revelation of the character's deepest feeling. The shocking truth of the matter is that in the unconscious, it is his own skin. "It made him more ashamed every moment. He stood there almost voiceless, lumpishly ugly with his face yellow and creased . . . and his birthmark like a smear of dirt." It is only now, however, when he has completed his degradation that "he wished he had never brought it."

It is, thus, the stigma of sexual guilt and self-depreciation that finds its correlative in the filthy skin and loathsome birthmark. Flory wallows in this confirmation of his degeneracy. Quite stuck in the masochistic bog, he is finally prepared for the ultimate masochistic pleasure.

When Flory leaves Elizabeth, he cannot go home. He knows that she has an engagement with his rival, Verrall, but he waits outside in order to spy on them: "He could not deny himself the pain of seeing Elizabeth and Verrall start on their ride. How vulgarly, how cruelly she had behaved to him! It is dreadful when people will not even have the decency to quarrel." His inner reproach of her is that she is vulgar because she has no interest in making him suffer more. He will attend to that, however, as he continues to hang about her garden until their horses return. The ponies return riderless. Elizabeth has dismounted then!

> for what? Ah, but he knew for what! It wasnot a question of suspecting; he knew. He could see the whole thing happening, in one of those hallucinations that are so perfect in detail, so vilely obscene, that they are past bearing. (BD, pp. 121-22)

As beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so is obscenity in the mind of the beholder. The vulgarity and ugliness here is sadly and irremediably within Flory himself. As he surrenders to the orgiastic pathology of the masochistic bog, he follows the paradigm of his notorious model, Count Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. Sacher-Masoch, whose life and work bear the same relation to masochism as the Marquis de Sade's adventures and literary career bear to sadism, dedicated himself to a monumental series of novels called The Legacy of Cain, the first part of which was published in 1870 under the title of Love. Sacher-Masoch's explorations of the connections between love and pain are most baldly

stated in the fifth of the six stories in Love, Venus in Furs. The beautiful woman is depicted reclining on "an ottoman . . . . She was nude on her dark furs. Her right hand played with a lash, while her bare foot rested carelessly on a man, lying before her like a slave, like a dog . . . . He looked up to her with the ecstatic burning eye of a martyr."[7] This scene has so many recurrences and variations in European literature, from Thomas Otway's Venice Preserved to Ford M. Ford's Parade's End, that it furnishes one of the most powerful archetypes of romantic love; but the distinctive masochistic twist is provided by subjecting the lover to the anguish of observing his mistress in the arms of another man. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, for example, sought out an impoverished young man, Count Meciszewski, and subsidized him in order that he might seduce Anna von Kottowitz, the cruel Venus of his heart. He "revelled in the idea of his own degradation," which he himself had initiated.[8] It is precisely this masochistic refinement which yields to Flory his ultimate anguish and ecstacy of humiliation.

At the point of the novel when Verrall wins out, Flory goes straight down, drinking at all hours, losing his health, suffering from the feverish heat. But above all, he torments himself with the fantasy of Elizabeth making love to his rival:

> The vision of Elizabeth in Verrall's arms haunted him like a neuralgia or an earache. At any moment it would come upon him, vivid and disgusting, scattering his thoughts, wrenching him back from the brink of sleep, turning his food to dust in his mouth . . . . What was worse than all was the detail--the always filthy detail--in which the imagined scene appeared. The very perfection of the detail seemed to prove that it was true. (BD, p. 226)

What occupies all the foreground here is, of course, the spectacle of the suffering Flory; but aside from the background of self-defeating courtship which has brought Flory to this pass, and his own conviction that he deserves to suffer, the tone and texture of his emotions reveal his secret aim: the masochistic paradox that he derives his pleasure from his pain. The central meaning of his experience at this time is the opportunity it offers for his perverted sexual fantasy.

There are a number of special qualities which differentiate Flory's masochistic torment from normal jealousy. First of all, he finds that he no longer really cares for Elizabeth: "He saw her now almost as she was--silly snobbish, heartless--" but now, for the first time, "he was tormented by the basest physical longing." (BD, p. 226) Before, when he had the possibility, he desired her sympathy rather than her sexuality; now, when he despises her fully, he is obsessed with physical desire. His earlier relationships with women come to mind, and what is revealed is the neurotic picture of a man whose fear of the woman is so great that he cannot even long for physical love unless

and until he disparages the object of that love. (His intimacy with Veraswami, posited upon his contempt for Veraswami, shows a similar fear of men.) Furthermore, he is now free to abandon himself to his inhibited sexual desire because there is no longer any danger of fulfilling that desire. Finally, Flory's sickness is evident in his flight from reality. He gives himself over to the detailed fantasy of Elizabeth making love to Verrall and to his primitive, impotent rage. "Throughout all these weeks Flory's mind held hardly a thought which was not murderous or obscene." The reality of it is that it is not at all true: it is only the intensity of his unconscious wish that makes it seem true; and at bottom, he knows it isn't true except within his own deranged fantasy. "Had Verrall really become Elizabeth's lover? . . . the chances were against it. . . . " (BD, p. 227) However, Flory's distortion of reality is more important than the objective reality. The external world is merely a stage on which he plays out his sad destiny. The plot, however, has not yet been fully played out. Central to the masochistic characters is the mechanism of "doing and undoing," for the long torturous careers of these people reveal them not merely as two-time losers, but rather twenty-two-time losers. Flory will have still another chance at fulfillment, and yet another, as the tensions of his ambiguous fate are preserved right up until the final debacle. At the end of the novel, the two

strands on which Flory has hung his life--the patronage of Dr. Veraswami and the winning of Elizabeth--have fortuitously come untangled and give every hope of support. Orwell is so fundamentally aware of this pattern of doing and undoing in the masochistic character disorder that he does not hesitate to manipulate his plots baldly in order to preserve the emotional tensions and truth of character throughout. Consequently, by Chapter XXIV Verrall has deserted Elizabeth leaving the field clear, in spite of all, for "Dear Mr. Flory!" Also, the sponsorship of Veraswami, and Flory's noble effort at integration meets with miraculous success. (A pseudo-rebellion provoked by U Po Kyin to discredit Veraswami in the eyes of the European community backfires when Veraswami is observed heroically putting it down; his fantastic loyalty to the British is thus demonstrated and the rumors of sedition which had been planted by U Po Kyin are exploded; Flory's sponsorship of his Indian friend is therefore vindicated and about to meet success.) Thus, through lucky breaks and the contrived plot, truth and virtue are almost established, with Veraswami getting into the Club and Flory getting into Elizabeth. Almost, but not quite. Everything seems to be going well toward a Hollywood happy ending, but the masochistic character type defeats it as the wheel of "Fate" gives another turn and throws him down.

The next but last chapter opens with the image of Elizabeth in Flory's arms. She clings to him, he "raised

her face to kiss her" but, "There had been no time to talk then, not even to say, 'Will you marry me?' No matter, after the service there would be time enough. Perhaps at his next visit, only six weeks hence, the padre would marry them." (BD, p. 270) There will be time, there will be time--but, of course, there won't. It is the monstrous inhibition of manly success which forces the delay, which makes the character commit any folly in order to buy time and defer the feared triumph. But for the present, Flory gives up to the fantasy of successful self-realization as before he had surrendered to the fantasies of the masochistic bog. In this instance, however, the dream is used to ward off the fear of reality and to substitute for it.

> When they were married, when they were married! What fun they would have together in this alien yet kindly land! He saw Elizabeth in his camp, greeting him as he came home tired from work . . . he saw her walking in the forest with him, . . . he saw his home as she would remake it. He saw his drawing-room sluttish and bachelor-like no longer . . . and books and water-colours and a black piano. Above all the piano! His mind lingered upon the piano--symbol, perhaps because he was unmusical, of civilised and settled life. He was delivered forever from the sub-life of the past decade--the debaucheries, the lies, the pain of exile and solitude, the dealings with whores and money-lenders . . . . (BD, p. 272)

The fantasy is magnificent in its detail and intensity. However, he does not propose marriage.

The "sub-life of the past decade," with its overtones of whores and secret debauchery cannot confer any magical release, but rather tenaciously drags him back into the

morass of sexual guilt and self-destruction of his own subconscious.

As he sits in church with Elizabeth, "still thinking, when they were married---" there is a sudden, raucous screaming. "It was Ma Hla May," sent by U Po Kyin to revenge himself on Flory.

> She was shrieking like a maniac. The people gaped at her . . . . Her face was grey with powder, her greasy hair was tumbling down, her longyi was ragged at the bottom. She looked like a screaming hag of the bazaar. Flory's bowels seemed to have turned to ice. Oh God, God! Must they know--must Elizabeth know--that that was the woman who had been his mistress? But there was not a hope, not the vestige of a hope, of any mistake. She had screamed his name over and over again . . . .
>
> "Look at me, you white men, and you women, too, look at me! Look at how he has ruined me! Look at these rags I am wearing! And he sitting there, the liar, the coward, pretending not to see me! . . . Ah, but I will shame you. Turn round and look at me! Look at this body that you have kissed a thousand times--look--look--" (BD, p. 273)

Through it all, Flory sits staring rigidly in front of him, his "birthmark glowing like a streak of blue paint." The scene is excruciating in its shame and embarrassment. Yet it is perfect in its motivation and inevitability. The reader, like Flory, has known all along that this must happen. Indeed, Flory has been specifically forewarned by anonymous notes from U Po Kyin that he was courting danger in sponsoring Veraswami for the Club. It is crucial to recall here the exact moment when Flory does decide to court disgrace and destruction at the hands of U Po Kyin and his former mistress. This pathetic denouement was set in

motion at about the middle of the novel.

> Flory could not help laughing as he walked up the hill. He was definitely committed now to proposing the doctor's election. And there would be such a row when the others heard of it--oh, such a devil of a row! But the astonishing thing was that it only made him laugh. The prospect that would have appalled him a month back now almost exhilarated him. (BD, p. 151)

There is intense anxiety here, but the deep, deep pathology lies in its power to seduce Flory into the most blatant masochistic provocativeness. The tone is positively gleeful as Flory contemplates the antagonism he is about to excite: "such a devil of a row." Because it is childish devilment that he is up to, there is no sense of the mature man fighting for an important social principle or for a close friend out of personal loyalty; on the contrary, Flory is exhilarated because he is manipulating destiny to give him the additional blows which are his secret devil's deepest desire. The paradoxical truth is that he is using his friend, Veraswami, while appearing to serve him.

> Why? And why had he given his promise at all? . . . Why, after all these years--the circumspect, pukka sahib-like years--break all the rules so suddenly?
>
> He knew why. It was because Elizabeth, by coming into his life had so changed it . . . . she had even made it possible for him to act decently. (BD, pp. 151-52)

For the level of consciousness, the support of Veraswami is simply a matter of decency; but at the level of the "sub-life of the past," it is an act of unconscious sabotage to destroy his possibilities with Elizabeth. It is at this precise moment of exhilaration at the prospect of provoking

the entire English community, and Elizabeth in particular, who not only detests the natives but has told him that "only a very low kind of man would--er--have anything to do with native women" (BD, p. 123), at this moment of thinking how Elizabeth "has changed the whole orbit of his mind," that Ma Hla May enters his house. The three issues are here beautifully juxtaposed, and by their unconscious conjunction, foreshadow Flory's dismal end.

Ma Hla May enters, reeking of garlic, coco-nut oil and the jasmine in her hair. Flory turns pale and the birthmark stands out, making him "hideously ugly. A pang like a blade of ice had gone through his entrails." (BD, p. 152) And so they quarrel, but as they quarrel, the issues uppermost in Flory's mind--his prospects with Elizabeth, her disgust for the natives, his defiance of U Po Kyin, U Po Kyin's probable influence upon his former mistress--these elements are all present by unconscious association when he irrevocably alienates Ma Hla May and converts her into the instrument of his own destruction. She reproaches him for what "he has done" to her in the "furious . . . hysterical graceless scream of the bazaar women." (BD, p. 153) and he throws her out, his act confirming her as the instrument of his damnation.

The psychological evidence for unconscious provocation on Flory's part, as well as unconscious apprehension on Orwell's and the reader's part, becomes highly dramatic

when we note that this scene early in the book (BD, pp. 151-53) is exactly reenacted at Flory's Gotterdammerung at the end of the book. Even the vocabulary is identical: Ma Hla May is represented as the screaming hag of the bazaar (BD, p. 153 and p. 273); Flory's response, the same blade of ice in the entrails (BD, p. 152 and p. 273); and of course, the same pallor and prominence of the birthmark, deforming hideous mark of sexual shame.

From an esthetic point of view the final scene evokes the earlier one; but more important, from the psychological point of view it is the early scene with its association of Elizabeth, Veraswami, U Po Kyin, and Ma Hla May which sets up and provokes the final destruction.

Flory further structures his dishonor and defeat by conditioning Elizabeth's attitude toward the shameful scene in the church. He chases her when she flees the church, and, in his great anxiety, seizes her by the wrist and blurts:

> "After what's happened, can you ever forgive me?
> . . .
> "I know I'm disgraced. It was the vilest thing to happen! . . . Do you think--not now, it was too bad, but later--do you think you can forget it?" (BD, p. 275)

Put this way, she really must reject him for good. His ultimate blunder is really here in his absolute lack of timing and tact. He knows, of course, that she can never forget, as he knows she may think differently "later," but he won't wait for later. He demands instant forgiveness or

instant damnation. His extravagant guilt simply will not permit him to wait. He must plunge headlong into disaster.

The problem which arises here is why he should view his disgrace in so absolute and irrevocable a way. Why is his guilt so excessive? Given the fact that Elizabeth is bound to disapprove this public revelation of his early illicit affair, given the public embarrassment, his own guilt feeling seems hysterically in excess of the occasion. His behavior would be more appropriate to a young virgin who had been publicly deflowered. Indeed, this is how he appears to view himself. The deeper origin of his disproportionate guilt and anxiety may be glimpsed later in his wailing adjurations: "I don't believe you've ever realized what it is that I want from you. If you like, I'd marry you and promise never even to touch you with my finger." (BD, p. 277) Just so. This scene derives its power and psychological truth from the generalized sexual guilt he feels, and he never speaks more revealingly than when he insists that it is not sex that he wants. He does feel called upon to declaim the purity of his intentions and thereby demean and unman himself. It is here, when his chances have been utterly ruined, for the first time he actually does propose: "Forgive me, forgive me! This one question. Will you--not now, but later, when this vile business is forgotten--will you marry me." But he will not wait for later; he does not give her a chance to forget.

He makes his first and only proposal at the worst time, when he can be sure of its rejection. In this context, and by this time, its real purpose is abundantly clear: this ultimate defeat will justify his self-murder.

In the final moments of his life, he still lacks even a glimmer of self-knowledge.

> He had lost her, that was certain. Like a hallucination, painfully clear, he saw again their home as he had imagined it; he saw their garden, and Elizabeth feeding . . . the pigeons on the drive . . . and the book shelves, and the black piano. The impossible, mythical piano--symbol of everything that that futile accident had wrecked! (BD, p. 278)

It is still just a matter of bad luck and silly accidents for Flory. What he refuses to see and what is horribly clear to the reader is that the piano is impossible because he doesn't know, doesn't want to know, how to play. In fact, he doesn't even like music.

Flory shoots himself through the heart. It is as if the defective organ itself had to be punished. The character Orwell has created--and we feel that this book has been written in blood--is pitiful in his inability to feel or even to perceive the truths of the heart's affection. All that is possible for him is to provoke the destruction which is his deepest desire. Karl Menninger points out that the suicidal act has two components. It is first of all a murder of the self; but it is also a murder by the self. It is thus a death in which are combined in one person the murderer and the murdered. The wish to kill joins with the

wish to be killed (or punished).[9] In the case of Flory, it is the only avenue for a warped and thwarted sexual impulse to find expression. The hunting scene in the jungle revealed Flory's ambiguous sexuality, as Elizabeth on her first time out showed herself a capable marksman where Flory was incompetent. He cannot shoot as the man is supposed to shoot: he is unable to "kill" the woman in the old sense of the word, so there is nothing for it but to kill himself. Further, his feminine identification, beneath the surface incompetence with a rifle, is symbolically represented by his female dog, Flo. It is the cringing Flo, whose very name is but the foreshortening of his own, whose skull he must blow to fragments, whose brain he must shatter a moment before he shoots himself. The fear of impotence, the hatred of his own feminity--he was driven to fury when Ellis cruelly and accurately called him a "nancy"--find surcease only in death; and only in death does the birthmark fade, "so that it was no more than a faint grey stain." (BD, p. 282) With his death, he has fully expressed the ambiguous sexuality which must play both masculine and passive roles.

The last meaning of the birthmark thus appears when its physical presence fades. It is the talisman of the cut off man, the foreshortened member which converts Flory into Flo, a man whose identity is stigmatized; the term stigma refers to a sign that there is something "bad about the moral status of the signifier . . . a blemished person,

ritually polluted."[10] Like Oedipus, Flory is fated from birth for pollution; but he loses the woman to Mr. Macgregor, the old senior officer who was certainly "a far better match than Flory." (BD, p. 287) But Flory never knows: his death like his life was calculated to avoid tragic knowledge.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II.

[1](London: Secker & Warburg, 1949). All references will refer to this edition and will be included in the text accompanied by the designation BD.

[2]"Bemoaning the Lost Dream: Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' and Addiction," The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, XLV (April-July, 1964), 411-425.

[3]Ibid., p. 413.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 414.

[6]Character Analysis (New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., 1949), p. 219.

[7]Count Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Venus in Furs (New York: Sylvan Press, 1947), p. 20.

[8]James Cleugh, The Marquis and the Chevalier (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), pp. 171-72.

[9](New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938), pp. 24-26.

[10]Erving Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 1.

CHAPTER III.

A CLERGYMAN'S DAUGHTER: ST. THERESA OF KNYPE HILL

" . . . gather grapes of thorns
or figs of thistles."
Matthew vii:16[1]

The extreme danger which masochism poses to the life of the organism is evident from the self-annihilation of Flory. Freud, in fact, called attention to the masochistic disposition to suicide when he assigned to the pleasure principle the role of guardian or "watchman over our life." In the case of masochism, "pain and pleasure are aims, the pleasure principle is paralysed," and the very life of the individual is endangered.[2] Suicide can take many forms. There is a kind of life so inhibited, frustrated, and repressed that it denies fundamental biological needs to the point where it becomes a living death.

Such a life in death is represented by Dorothy Hare, the clergyman's daughter.[3] Created one year after Flory, this feminine persona of the masochistic character (Orwell's only female protagonist) lacks entirely the active will toward self-destruction of the masculine character, but substitutes for it the passive suffering, self-depreciation,

and sacrifice by self denial which is the uniquely feminine variant of masochism.

Aging and dried up, Dorothy Hare is almost a caricature of the premature old maid literally victimized by time. "As the alarm clock . . . exploded like a horrid little bomb," Dorothy is "wrenched" from her anxiety dreams into the early morning darkness. So begins the novel. Dorothy, passive as a bomb casualty, is delivered from the hell of her nightmares into the limbo of wakefulness as she exhorts herself mercilessly to overcome exhaustion, to get up an hour and a half before the servant in order to do the servant's work of lighting the stove and boiling water. Her very awakening to this summer morning is to the feeling of pain, for not only is the clock traumatic as an exploding bomb, her very first sensations of herself are constituted of aching fatigue, and "extreme exhaustion." (ACD, p. 5)

Though it is morning, she looks into "darkness;" though she has slept, she has not rested; although it is the month of August, her feet are troubled by the cold; because she detests cold baths, she forces herself to take all her baths cold. Her conscious ruthlessly punishes her self and denies it all the possibilities of life. Her pathos is even smaller in scale than Flory's, however, for it consists of the thousand trivial frustrations epitomized by the morning bath, run drop by drop--splashing might wake her father--and emerging from the bath to the cold darkness, to

dry herself with a towel the size of a table napkin.

A towel the size of a napkin. This is Dorothy Hare's portion of life. "They could never afford decent-sized towels at the rectory." Indeed, most of Dorothy's emotional life is conditioned by the financial crises which her father's speculations with stocks inflict. But here, too, as she panics over the grocer's bill, fears to open the dunning letter from her father's tailor, or averts her eyes when she meets the butcher, in all her humiliation and penury she is the passive victim of her father's casual cruelty and folly. The more cold, vicious, or remote he is, the more her piety increases.

Above all, it is at worship that the inner tension between the thirst for punishment and religiosity comes into dramatic focus. There, Dorothy secretly drew out a long glass-headed pin and "furtively . . . pressed the point against her forearm." (ACD, p. 12) It is her rule, the moment she catches herself not paying strict attention to the prayers to prick her arm until she bleeds. "It was her chosen form of self-discipline, her guard against irreverence and sacrilegious thoughts." (ACD, p. 13) Indeed, she does have bad thoughts. She remembers

> a story her father had told her once, of how when he was a little boy, and serving the priest at the altar, the communion bell had had a screw-on clapper, which had come loose; and so the priest had said, "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Screw it up, you little fat-head screw it up!" (ACD, pp. 13-14)

and for this bad thought, of course, the inevitable punishment with the disciplinary pin.

Freud explains that "it is precisely those people who have carried saintliness furthest who reproach themselves with the worst sinfulness,"[4] and this is well supported by the experience of everyday life as well as by all the trivial occasions for Dorothy's self-castigation. The paradox of the blameless, guilt-ridden saint is that in these profound reproaches for the worst sinfulness (which flies in the face of meek and innocent external behavior), they may ultimately be right. That is to say, in the unconscious, which makes no distinction between thought and deed, the fantasy life of such a blameless saint as Dorothy Hare is full of aggression, sexuality, and sadism. It is undoubtedly just this truth of human nature which the Talmud gives insight into when it cautions us to "fear over-righteousness."

If Dorothy's fantasies during this Holy Communion are examined, they do, in fact, reveal her sadism and hostility toward her father. The central fact of this situation is that while she is on her knees to receive the sacrament, in a posture of submission, her unconscious rebels by deprecating her father, who in his function of priest, is administering it. While he performs the awesome miracle of the Mass, she thinks of him as he was as an altar boy--and a "little fat-head" altar boy at that. This posture of outward submission while inwardly defiant is central to the

sado-masochistic character type and to all of Orwell's fiction. The Burman "shiko" position of utter abasement--on the knees with forehead touching the floor--which Ma Hla May assumed preparatory to destroying Flory, and which the Burmese underdog adopts preparatory to plunging the knife into the Englishman's ribs, furnishes the metaphor for understanding all of Orwell's anti-heroes.

In addition to her disparagement and reduction of her father while in the shiko-communicant posture, Dorothy's fantasy and the language of the story she recalls are explicitly sexual in nature. This, too, provokes the guilt and need for punishment. Moreover, from a quantitative or economic point of view, the greater the sexual and aggressive feeling, the more inexorably will the conscience repress, deny, and inflict punishment. Freud sees it as a dialectical exchange between the sadistic super-ego and the masochistic ego; "the turning back of sadism against the self . . . results in a sense of guilt and . . . a person's conscience becoming more severe and more sensitive the more he refrains from aggression against others."[5] The super-ego then is unleashed in its righteousness, harshness, and cruelty against the ego. There is one further and crucial point for understanding Dorothy Hare's intense guilt at this moment in the novel. The whole defiant-submissive role is full of distorted sexual pleasure, and in addition, furnishes the pretext for sadism of the super-ego and masochism of the ego

because both are the only pleasures available to her repressed and perverted sexuality. She wields the pin unceasingly, until her arm is covered with bloody scars, because the self-torture performs many functions within her personality, one of which is the need for punishment to assuage her guilt, as well as the less obvious complementary need for the pleasures of simultaneously inflicting and receiving pain.

As she walks toward the altar, she is preceded by the repulsive Miss Mayfill, whose large slobbering mouth and yellowed teeth fill her with revulsion.

> It was not the kind of mouth that you would like to see drinking out of your cup. Suddenly, spontaneously, as though the Devil himself had put it there, the prayer slipped from Dorothy's lips: "O God, let me not have to take the chalice after Miss Mayfill!" (ACD, p. 14)

But the guilt over this natural revulsion from this disgusting slobbering mouth is so great that she once again takes the pin from her lapel and plunges it deep into her arm, and kneels down meekly on Miss Mayfill's left, "so as to make quite sure of taking the chalice after her." The turmoil of ambiguous feeling within her is too great: she cannot pray. The ritual, the prayers, she herself--all are reduced to "dead shells." (ACD, p. 15) Tossed by the welter of these ambivalent emotions, her movements, her very thoughts, are paralyzed. She cannot take the wafer. "She dared not take it. Better far better to step

down from the altar than to accept the sacrament with such chaos in her heart!" Suddenly she looks through the door and sees "a spear of sunlight" which so fills her with joy that she is released, is once more able to pray, to take the wafer and chalice "with an added joy in this small act of self-abasement, the wet imprint of Miss Mayfill's lips on its silver rim." (ACD, p. 16)

The phallic spear of sunlight is an image which recurs later in the book, and it contains the promise of deliverance. In order to be drawn "through the lightening abysses," (ACD, p. 98) in order to sip, however meekly, from the silver chalice of life, Dorothy Hare will have to take flight into amnesia and thus destroy the infantile repressed identity forever.

Dorothy is a long way from even partial release, however. What is before her at present is an endless round of petty frustration and trivial abasement. She takes flight from her anxiety into activity as she dutifully works through her daily schedule of degrading tasks:

> Bacon. Must ask father for money.
> . . . . . .
> Visiting call on Mrs. P cutting from Daily M angelica tea good for rheumatism Mrs. L's cornplaster 12 oc. Rehearsal Charles I NB. to order 1/2 lb glue 1 pot aluminum paint.
> . . . . . .
> 4.30 pm Mother's U tea don't forget 2 1/2 yards casement cloth.
> . . . . . .
> Type father's sermon what about new ribbon typewriter?
> (ACD, p. 7)

Needless to say, she will never get her new typewriter ribbon; but she goes on with it as she must: making costumes for the church play out of a constantly boiling foul smelling glue pot and cheap brown paper, begging her father for money to keep the tradesmen at bay, fawning over the few parishioners her father has not yet totally alienated, pinching and stabbing herself constantly, bicycling indefatigably to visit the sick and the poor. And always the obsession over money:

> Thirty-nine further days, with only three pounds nineteen and fourpence to provide for them, loomed up in Dorothy's imagination, sending through her a wave of self-pity which she checked almost instantly. Now then, Dorothy! No snivelling please! It all comes right somehow if you trust in God. Matthew vi. 25. The Lord will provide. Will He? Dorothy . . . felt for the glass-headed pin. (ACD, p. 37)

Forever pinching herself. In this way she forces herself, if not to actually to wash the feet of the leper, at least to massage the legs of the most disgusting of old harridans.

> Dorothy gave herself a severe pinch . . . she really did not enjoy rubbing Mrs. Pither down. She exhorted herself angrily. Come on, Dorothy! No sniffishness, please! John xiii.14" (ACD, p. 63)

So, there in a room reeking with urine and paregoric, Dorothy ministers to the loathsome sick by anointing Mrs. Pither's veined and flaccid legs.

Such visits to the working class take up fully one half of a seventeen-hour day; but she does her duty, no matter how ugly and sordid, by recourse to the pin and pinching. Her very face looked pinched (ACD, p. 56); she

pinches herself cruelly again and again; indeed, "pinched" ultimately becomes the main symbol of her life and character--until Warburton arrives and gives Dorothy a very different kind of pinch--not disciplinary or punitive or sadomasochistic, but unabashedly, primitively, and directly sexual.

She encounters him at the butcher's, by bumping right into him, "Why, Mr. Warburton! How extraordinary! Do you know, I had a feeling I was going to meet you today."

"By the pricking of your thumbs, I presume?" and he leers as he pinches her bare elbow. She is wearing a sleeveless frock, and jumps back to get out of reach. "She hated being pinched [by a man, that is] or otherwise 'mauled.'" (ACD, p. 44) Warburton is the notorious rake of Knype Hill, posing as a widower with two children until his housekeeper suddenly gave birth to a third bastard in the middle of the night. Two years earlier when Dorothy had called on him to talk about books at tea, he had sexually assaulted her on his sofa--"making love to her, violently, outrageously, even brutally." (ACD, p. 48)

The curious thing is that "in spite of this bad beginning, a sort of friendship had grown up between the two." (ACD, p. 49) He plays Faust to her Gretchen, and he will indeed ruin her; but the great pity of their relation is that the assault will remain symbolic, and Dorothy will

be ruined only by words and her neurotically reified fantasy. As the devil incarnate, as the representative of all her repressed sexuality, he exerts great fascination over her. He not only has "a hold over her," she is, in fact, genuinely fond of him. "He teased her and distressed her, and yet she got from him, without being fully aware of it, a species of sympathy and understanding which she could not get elsewhere." (ACD, p. 49) In spite of all his "vices," she finds him likeable and accepts an invitation to visit him in his home.

Warburton promises that the celebrated author of Fishpools and Concubines will be there, and even though a book with concubines in the title would normally be on her proscribed list as the sort she didn't read or "set herself heavy penances for reading," (ACD, p. 50) it "had its effect upon her." Warburton, concubines, his watered Oscar Wilde patter exert their fascination while they shock her.

No sooner has she agreed to come to see Warburton that evening than she finds herself in the clutches of the town gossip who insists that "dreadful Mr. Warburton . . . has taken up with a new woman!" Dorothy flees and once more pinches herself, ostensibly for uncharitable thoughts, really for the envious and sexual thoughts which lurk just beneath consciousness.

As she rides home, she has the disturbing thought that the gossip will certainly learn of her visit to

Warburton's that evening and will certainly magnify it to fit the notoriety she has already gained as "Mr. Warburton's friend." She has this fantasy just after punishing herself, and it sends "a vague premonition of evil through" her, as the paragraph and this section of the novel closes with the image of Jack, the town idiot, flogging the gatepost with a hazel switch.

As always in Orwell's novels, the closing image, however arbitrary or irrelevant it appears, is a meaningful signal to the future action of the plot as well as a clue to the meaning of the central character's inner life. What is painfully clear by this time is that Dorothy Hare takes a pathetic pleasure in her self-inflicted pain. The flogging of the gatepost with a hazel switch is reminiscent of case studies from Kraft-Ebbing or the passionate tales of the martyrs' self-flagellation. All her pinching and pricking, and the intense pleasure which accompanies it, bring to mind the anguished raptures of St. Theresa or Elizabeth of Genton, who as a result of whipping "passed into a state of Bacchanalian madness." As a rule, "she raved when excited by flagellation . . . . This condition was so exquisitely pleasant to her that she would frequently cry out, 'O love, O eternal love, O love . . . '"[6]

Dorothy's self-flagellation, however, consists of the destruction of her reputation as the virtuous clergyman's daughter. It is not accidental that the thought that

her visit to Mr. Warburton's house that evening will be "magnified into something scandalous by tomorrow" has been neatly sandwiched between her pinching herself the moment before and Jack, the idiot, flogging with a hazel switch the moment after. There are even more significant fantasies which accompany the pinching and flogging. It would seem that when she punishes herself in response to hearing that Warburton has "taken up with a new woman" her unconscious wish is to take her place--that is, to be the new woman herself; and because the unconscious equates wish and act, this precipitates her exaggerated guilt. The closing image of section three, the idiot flogging away at a post, simultaneously symbolizes the pain she will inflict upon herself, the fantasied sexual act, and the guilt-ridden aggression against her father, who will get his deserts when the "scandal" she has caused becomes known. In all of this, she behaves like a biological "idiot savant" who knows everything about trivia and nothing of what must be done to preserve life itself. She is the town idiot when it comes to sexual, social, and moral questions.

This becomes clear when she does, in fact, visit Warburton in his home that evening. She is terribly surprised to discover that he has lied to her. There is no author of <u>Fishpools and Concubines</u> present; there is no author at all; in fact, there are no other guests. But Dorothy does not leave. She had felt "uneasy" on finding him alone; she

reasons that it would be better for her to leave at once; but still she stays, for in her subconscious, the concubine is there indeed. This is why she stays, though it gets later and later, and though she keeps protesting that she really must be getting home, she stays and stays. The climax of the evening and of her spinster life, comes when he makes the inevitable sexual advances. He caresses her shoulders and strokes her arm. Since he has approached her chair from behind, she seems to be awfully surprised and upset; but the important thing here is that the reader cannot forget what Dorothy has so completely repressed--the fact that this episode is but a repetition of an earlier sexual assault. Surely Dorothy knows what Warburton is after, as she must know the consequences to her reputation of visiting him so late at night under the eyes of a gossiping neighbor. Even when she makes her escape from the house, even though she is genuinely distressed and angry, "she found it impossible to be angry with him any longer," (ACD, p. 89) and now, just outside the house in full sight of the malicious Mrs. Semprill, he kisses her.

Dorothy hears the bang of Mrs. Semprill's window shutting and flees, but she cannot escape the guilty stain of Warburton's lips on her cheek. With her handerchief she scrubs the place where he had kissed her hard enough to bring blood, but she cannot quiet the knocking of her heart. "I can't bear that kind of thing!" she repeats over and over

in a litany of denial. The fantasy of being kissed and fondled by a man makes her wince with terror and revulsion. "If only they would leave you alone! she thought as she walked onwards a little more slowly . . . why couldn't they leave you alone?" (ACD, p. 91) It is not that she does not like men. On the contrary, she believes them vastly superior and more interesting than women; but their mauling and the other dangerous things the mauling leads up to disgust and frighten her beyond thought.

It is at this point, at the end of the first chapter and preparatory to Dorothy's flight into amnesia, that Orwell makes explicit the crux of character. Her abnormality is sexual: a degree of coldness and a fear of "monstrous things ('all that' was her name for them)" (ACD, p. 92) which renders her incapable of accepting her femininity. Just as Flory and Orwell's other protagonists cannot accept their masculinity, so Dorothy Hare, too, cannot reconcile herself to her natural biological function. There is consequently "a deep, secret wound in her mind." As a child, she has been frightened by some steel engravings of nymphs and satyrs. She had been terrified of the "sinister . . . horned creatures" and they are forever associated in her mind with ideas of pursuit, danger and harm. But this is, as Freud tells us, merely the screen of memory which masks the deeper traumatic scar. Behind the screen of nymphs menaced by horribly horned satyrs lurks the classically Freudian vision

of the primal scene. And Dorothy does have the vivid recollection of "certain dreadful scenes between her father and her mother--scenes that she had witnessed when she was no more than nine years old." (ACD, p. 93) Orwell thus makes quite explicit the origin of her fear and revulsion of normal sexuality. It is interesting that Freud, too, identifies this experience of witnessing the primal scene enacted between the parents as the focus of the childhood neurosis. Psychoanalytic theory goes still farther in explaining the dynamics of the consequent "deep secret wound" of the mind. The child understands the scene only as an assault; he thinks that the father injures his mother by the sexual act; people who are sensitized to trauma and fixated at this level of development, therefore, carry about this unconscious notion of injury through sex all their lives. The child within, the child that observed, is always present in the unconscious and contaminates their entire lives.

This theory helps us to understand Dorothy's deep disparagement of women and her fear of accepting the feminine role. Woman for her is someone who is pursued and attacked and hurt. Her recurrent bouts with Warburton can thus be understood as a repetition compulsion to come to terms with the traumatic event, as Orwell's characters, along with other neurotic characters, flee into the thing they most fear. Finally, Dorothy's sadism and masochism are fed by the contamination of her behavior, by these archaic

confusions of pleasure and pain from the unconscious. To the nine year old child, the moment of greatest intimacy (permeated with notions of the shameful and forbidden) is also dreadful and horrible because it hurts. The persistence of this connection between love and pain warps her whole life.

The only way out of the infantile prison is by a renunciation of the old identity. Dorothy awakens in the second chapter: "Out of a black, dreamless sleep, with the sense of being drawn upwards through enormous and gradually lightening abysses, Dorothy awoke to a species of consciousness." (ACD, p. 96) She does not know who she is. There has been an interval of eight days in her life, and she has somehow got from Suffolk to London, out of the nightdress in which she was last seen and into a disheveled black satin dress complete with shabby black satin shoes with high heels and a pair of "flesh-coloured artificial silk stockings." (ACD, p. 98) She is dressed in the costume of a prostitute, and she is immediately taken for one. Orwell never deals with this gap in her life. He never explains how Dorothy Hare, the inhibited spinster, gets from Knype Hill to London; nor does he account for the even more intriguing mystery of the change of clothes and the events of the eight days. Instead, he insists upon the ambiguity as a formal correlative of the experience of his character: Dorothy Hare has no notion of it at all, and neither shall the reader; but

after this insistence upon the essential ambiguity of her experience in the gap of eight days, certain physical and psychic details emerge quite clearly.

First of all, her flight into amnesia is an obvious repudition of the old identity. The system of defenses which had served for a lifetime of repression and denial of sexuality now will no longer work. Why they have suddenly become inadequate is a question which leads to the second established fact: the experience of Warburton's sexual attempt upon her virginity culminating in the kiss, is the precipitating action which forces the dam to break. One minute she is being kissed and dreading "the stamp of hooves in the lonely wood, the lean, furry thighs of the satyr," (ACD, p. 94) and on the next page she is in London eight days later dressed like a tart. Thirdly, Orwell makes it explicit that she is objectively considered to be a prostitute, for the first words addressed to her in her new identity are, "That tart looks ill." And finally, her flight into amnesia is not only a flight in space, but downward in social class as well. For Orwell, this can only mean freedom from sexual restraints. As he says again and again in Down and Out in Paris and London, the poor are liberated from ordinary (i.e., middle class) moral controls: " . . . people . . . have fallen into . . . half-mad grooves of life and given up trying to be normal and decent. Poverty frees them from ordinary standards of behavior,"[7] and sexually, at least,

liberates them. In this regard, Orwell's ambivalent attitudes toward the poor are reminiscent of the Southern bigot's attitudes toward Negroes--they smell bad (Down and Out and Wigan Pier are full of their odors), but they are virile and licentious. Consequently, Dorothy's flight seems to be equally a liberation of sexuality. We may not make explicit what Orwell deliberately left ambiguous, but the connotation of her new and confused identity are unmistakably sexual and force her into a confrontation with reality which she has never before experienced.

On the assumption that she is a tart, three cockney types take her up and she is soon plunged into "the strange, dirty sub-world" (ACD, p. 106) of the lower class. She starves, begs, lives in a brothel, has her bottom pinched by a lecherous Jew tailor, goes to jail--and through it all, no doubt, keeps her literal virginity intact. Like de Sade's Justine, though, she is psychologically violated by the thrust of life, and she will never again be the same. As Warburton puts it at the end of the book in his final interview with her, "now . . . you aren't quite such a good Girl Guide as you used to be." (ACD, p. 300) Technical virginity or no, the girl scout mentality has vanished forever.

The effect upon her of that kiss and attempted seduction by Warburton cannot be exaggerated. Very small objective things, when they act upon a sensitive neurotic with a rich fantasy life, may have terribly large psychic consequences.

From the point of view of the unconscious, the kiss and near seduction may easily be reified into an actual loss of virtue. Because the unconscious does not, can not, distinguish between thought and action, between fantasy and deed, the rumors which Mrs. Semprill spreads which Dorothy knows she will spread, have the effect of truth. In the same way, all the newspaper accounts of her elopement with Warburton to Paris, about the "PASSION DRAMA IN COUNTRY RECTORY," while malicious lies on a literal level, represent a truth of Dorothy's inner and unconscious fantasy. The moment after kissing her, Warburton told her he would be off to Paris the next day: Dorothy goes into amnesia and wakes up in London eight days later: the tabloids magnifying Mrs. Semprill's tales and "putting two and two together" so they add up to five blare "Rector's Daughter. Now believed in Paris." (ACD, p. 99) This suggests that the unconscious motive of the amnesia is to break out of the old impossible life and journey in search of her seducer. It is pathetic that her fear and dread are so great that she will never, even in the end, permit herself more than this (she will finally refuse Warburton's offer of marriage); and even to go as far as she has requires the complete repression of who she is.

When she goes off with her cockney friend, Nobby, a good-natured amoral counterpart of Warburton, her furious virtue comes into brilliant ironic focus. The gang are lying about in the hop fields reading about "the missing

girl . . . 'Secret Love Life of Rector's Daughter. Startling Revelations! . . . 'She's a bit of hot stuff,' says Nobby. 'Wish she was here now! I'd know what to do with her, all right, I would.'" (ACD, p. 115) The rather crude surface irony is that she is lying right there next to him, and that he does not know "what to do with her"--she is too fanatical a virgin for their relationship to be anything but Platonic. The deeper and unconscious irony is that this escapade in itself, the flight and wind-up--lying in hop fields with characters like Nobby--this is the metaphoric equivalent of "hot stuff" for her, and is the "secret love life" of Dorothy's neurotically reified fantasy. As we have learned from Pope, even so small a thing as a lock of hair may symbolically represent so great a thing as a maiden's chastity. Within her own mind, as a result of her secret yearning, she is as deflowered as ever Gretchen was, and rather more than Belinda was.

It is sadly the opposite of heroic or tragic that she never discovers her own deep needs or desires; the fear is too great ever to admit them to consciousness, but they are there. The famous psychoanalyst Wilhelm Stekel explains the consequences of sexual paralysis due to guilt and fear:

> The impossibility of realizing their sexual fantasies compels parapathetics to mask, to conceal, to reverse, symbolically to distort their sexual guiding line. Behind this dramatic conduct the unfulfilled wish hides itself . . . . The more a person shrinks from the realization of his inmost thoughts, so much more will the hidden yearning strive toward [expression] . . . .

> He [a miraculous deliverer] shall compel me to become happy. He shall force me to sin.[8]

But poor Warburton, or his cockney equivalent in Nobby, is no Faust; and Dorothy will not even let herself be compelled to happiness. The guilt, repression, sadism and masochism are too great. She returns from her amnesia with all the stigma of a fallen woman, and suffers all the pains of infamy; but, quite characteristically, she has none of the pleasure. As has been abundantly demonstrated, this is because pleasure is not her aim--only pain and humiliation. As Warburton tells her at the end, "What you're trying to do, apparently . . . is to make the worst of both worlds." (ACD, p. 299)

Dorothy will have many opportunities for self-degradation in her exile from Knype Hill, and unlike the sensual opportunities, she will make the most of them. After Nobby is arrested, Dorothy comes back from amnesia, recognizes her photograph on the cover of Pippin's Weekly, and reads the tabloid version of her "elopement." It is interesting that a week earlier she had read the headline and seen the photograph of herself on the front page, but was totally without recognition at that time. She fell asleep "with Pippin's Weekly across her knees." (ACD, p. 137) Now that she is psychologically prepared, by Nobby's arrest and her other comrades's defection, she is ready for recognition and the recall of her identity. She reads the vicious account which Mrs. Semprill has given to the newspapers; she learns that the worst possible

construction has been put on "her clandestine visits to Mr. Warburton's house." (ACD, p. 143) She dwells on the shameful phrases: "Embraces of a passionate nature--in scanty attire." As she recalls each one, she feels "such a pang that she wanted to cry out as though in physical pain." (ACD, p. 144) She imagines what it will be like to return to Knype Hill with the mark of scandal upon her: "The prying eyes following you . . . the knots of youths . . . lewdy discussing you!" (ACD, p. 147) These fantasies are obsessive, and they are bipolar in their function. First of all, they are deliciously, excruciatingly painful; they are the more so for their hidden wish-fulfilling erotic content. At the very moment that the spinster blushes with outrage at a sexual reference to herself, at the height of embarrassment and outrage, she thrills with inner excitement which is secret even, especially, from herself.

She composes a letter to her father that reeks with guilt, and which would be difficult to believe even if her father were a trusting loving soul. She asks him to write to her under an assumed name, Ellen Millborough.[9] When he fails to respond, she suffers agonies which literally paralyze her breathing. She naturally assumes the worst, that "he was too angry and disgusted to write to her. All he wanted was to get rid of her, drop all communication with her; get her out of sight and out of mind, as a mere scandal to be covered up and forgotten." (ACD, p. 151) This

mechanism of first provoking punishment by exaggerated guilt and then anticipating the worst in "the imagination of disaster"--as Henry James calls it--and so bringing about the worst in a self-fulfilling prophecy is characteristic of the masochistic process. It is a familiar device of all of Orwell's characters, from Flory's making Elizabeth into the instrument of his destruction at the horrible scene which ends Burmese Days to Winston Smith's exposing his seditious notebook in 1984.

After fruitless wandering about London in search of a job or a roof over her head, Dorothy finds herself in Trafalgar Square in company with a dozen other outcasts. Most of Chapter Three is devoted to a scene for voices there, as if the homeless tramps had been divested of all corporeal form. The most significant of these disembodied voices, is that of Mr. Tallboys, the defrocked priest, who celebrates a sexual black mass for his depraved communicants. He is ignored by everyone, but Dorothy's response to his reference to "immoral theology . . . " is to suffer: "This cold, this cold." It seems to go right through you!" (ACD, p. 169) Tallboys expresses by his incoherent diatribe a running satire against the organized church and the hypocrisy of clergy life. The biting satire gains added force as a commentary on the life Dorothy had, and will return to, with her father, who is the respectable mirror-image of Tallboys. As Tallboys intones, "If any of you know cause or just impediment why these

two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony . . . . " (ACD, p. 170) the point of ironic comment on Dorothy's pitiful failure may be lost on her, but not to the reader. As he chants, " . . . curse ye the Lord, curse Him and vilify Him for ever," (ACD, p. 172) we remember Dorothy's own definition of her tragedy is that she has lost her faith and ability to pray. In addition, Tallboys serves as a parallel to Dorothy in that he too has been unfrocked because of some sexual transgression. Furthermore, he identifies himself with the girl vilified by Pippin's Weekly: "Pippin's Weekly made quite a feature of the case . . . . And also an Open Letter in John Bull: 'To a Skunk in Shepherd's Clothing.' A pity--I was marked out for preferment." (ACD, p. 176) He, too, is a fellow-masochist, who is no sooner in danger of success or "preferment" than he must spoil it and destroy himself by scandal. "What potions have I drunk of siren's tears,/ Distilled from limbecs foul as Hell within!" (ACD, p. 177) Mrs. Wayne, a petit-bourgeois among the derelicts, responds to Tallboys' despairing cynicism by continuing her discussion of tea, its preparation, purchase, and quality. Ginger, the cockney, chimes in by singing, "There they go--in their joy--/ 'Appy girl--lucky boy--"; but Tallboys counters with his own song to the tune of "Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles," the richly prophetic, "Keep the aspidistra flying--" (ACD, p. 178)

This extended section of impressionistic writing is the most ambitious experimental effort Orwell undertook until 1984, and it is not wholly successful, though in company with parts of Ulysses and The Sound and the Fury, it is occasionally boring. It reaches its crescendo with the Black Mass and Tallboys's harangue at Dorothy, "If we had a black he-goat you would come in useful." (ACD, p. 191) Apart from the highly effective satire, all this section is delivered from mere virtuosity by the organic appropriateness of Dorothy's character and feelings. At the point where she is threatened by a he-goat, we recall her terror of the emblematic hooved satyrs. Finally, the whole scene is ambiguously incorporated into her troubled dreams:

> Dorothy's feet are very cold. Monstrous winged shapes of Demons and Archdemons are dimly visible, moving to and fro. Something, beak or claw, closes upon Dorothy's shoulder, reminding her that her feet and hands are aching with cold. (ACD, p. 192)

It is the hand of a policeman upon her shoulder, shaking her awake, as the whole Black Mass dissolves into the reality of consciousness. That Orwell can do this trick is testimony to the organic relevance of the voices of this dialogue to Dorothy's mind and emotional state.

Dorothy is arrested and trundled off in a Black Maria. However, she no sooner comes out of the police court cells than she is "rescued" by an aristocratic London relation, who intercedes on behalf of her father. The baronet sends "his man" for her: "So, after an absence of something over

six weeks, Dorothy returned to respectable society, by the rear door." (ACD, p. 210) Through his solicitor, the baronet manages to obtain for Dorothy a respectable teaching job as assistant in a girls's day school. "So, just ten days after her arrest for begging, Dorothy set out for Ringwood House Academy." (ACD, p. 213)

The arrest by the police is linked in the plot with her return to society; later, her losing her job at Ringwood House Academy will be simultaneous with her rehabilitation and return to her father in Knype Hill. Orwell's characters again and again experience these simultaneous salvations and defeats. His plots often seem constructed on the principle of reversal. From a psychological point of view, the mechanism behind such a paradox is the "doing and undoing" of anxiety neurosis. In a more specific sense, the need of the ego for punishment is really determined by the "need for forgiveness;" and a kind of bargain is struck whereby punishment and suffering are accepted as a necessary means of placating the guilts from the intensely forbidding superego. "In general, a need for punishment is but a symptom of a more general need for absolution."[10]

Dorothy's need for suffering is abundantly fulfilled in her new job. Her employer, Mrs. Creevy, is so "mean" that she will not even permit Dorothy a spoonful of marmalade at breakfast. (ACD, p. 221) In every way, the environment repeats the penury of her life at the rectory. There

she had to take cold baths and attempt to dry herself with a napkin; here, she is forever tortured by pangs of physical hunger; "the dish of marmalade remained forever sacrosanct." (ACD, p. 233) The hypocritical Mrs. Creevy, it soon becomes apparent, is completely ignorant and vicious, interested only in working the school racket for all she can get. But Dorothy's fortitude under the most abysmal conditions is saintlike. "She saw quite clearly that Mrs. Creevy was an odious woman and that her own position was virtually that of a slave; but it did not greatly worry her;" (ACD, p. 237) she is used to slavery and used to placating her odious father. She plunges into the work of educating the children, and overcoming enormous obstacles, begins to make some headway and derive some satisfactions: " . . . how well everything went during those first few weeks! How ominously well indeed!" (ACD, p. 244)

"But of course, it could not last." (ACD, p. 245) The parents descend and Dorothy is given a humiliating "talking to" in front of them. She is mortified, vilified, punished like a child before them. For her crime is, of course, sexual. She has attempted to teach Shakespeare's Macbeth and explained the meaning of the word "womb" to the children of these hardy Nonconformist ignoramuses. She is accused of teaching the "facts of Life" and destroying the purity of mind of the little angels. Mrs. Creevy duly rebukes her for her sin of bringing these "dirty books" into the house. The

satire here is effective and no doubt reflects Orwell's difficulties in teaching at third-rate private schools after he returned from Burma. The irony of Dorothy Hare's again being accused of sexual transgression is the real point here. She seems never to be able to keep out of it. Of all people, Dorothy, to be accused of too great a frankness about the facts of life! Her guilt and pain are unbearable "as the stream of mean, cruel, reprimand went on and on." (ACD, p. 253) Red-faced and miserable, she is about to burst into tears, and only manages to prevent it by digging her nails into her palms until the blood comes.

Dorothy has had her riot of suffering at the "Academy" and now nothing remains but for her to be fired. As soon as this happens and an "evil time . . . of uncertainty and . . . hunger" (ACD, p. 286) looms up ahead of her, Orwell evokes the God from the Machine to rescue her. As she is leaving the gate of Ringwood House forever, a telegram from Warburton arrives informing her of the discrediting of the gossip, Mrs. Semprill, and of her own complete vindication. The inherent implausibility of this final twist of the plot is less interesting than its psychological truth and what it reveals about Orwell's themes. The final aim in the fantasy of masochists is rehabilitation for the crimes of the unconscious. After sufficient suffering, the moral masochist feels that she has earned forgiveness. This is why "the true masochist always turns his cheek whenever he has

a chance of receiving a blow."[11] It is not only that the blows of fate give pleasure; they additionally expiate the fancied guilt. Dorothy has paid and paid; she is now entitled to a prodigal's return, and Deus, which permits it, is eminently "right" because it expresses a truth of the unconscious (the same truth, incidentally, which the parable of Christ suggests). She has had her imaginary transgression and has fulfilled her inner need for forgiveness. What she has endured is of small matter to her so long as the inner demons have been placated.

"' . . . things don't really matter,'" she tells Warburton. "'I mean, things like having no money and not having enough to eat. Even when you're practically starving--it doesn't change anything inside you.' 'Doesn't it? I'll take your word for it. I should be very sorry to try.'" responds Warburton out of his commonsense hedonism; but he is dumbfounded by her neurotic idealism, and can never understand her. For the masochist, psychic reality is the only one that counts and he lives the "real" only within fantasy; for Dorothy, "all real happenings are in the mind," (ACD, p. 294) and objective circumstances, acts, deeds, are almost irrelevant.

This is why Dorothy rejects Warburton's offer of marriage, in favor of a return to the old pattern. She, in company with the other Orwell protagonists, has really learned nothing from her experience. Although Warburton gives her a

vivid picture of what her life will be like as a derelict parson's daughter of forty with no prospects or resources, she still refuses the escape he offers. "As her mind took in the prospect of that forbidding future, whose emptiness she was far better able to appreciate than he . . . if she had spoken at all, it would have been to say, 'Yes, I will marry you.'" (ACD, p. 305) He puts his arm about her, " . . . as though he were protecting her, sheltering her, drawing her away from the brink of grey, deadly poverty and back to the world of friendly and desirable things--to security and ease, to comely houses and good clothes, to books and friends and flowers, to summer days . . . . " (ACD, p. 305) This passage with its lyric heightening is reminiscent of Flory's fantasies of marriage; but though they have lovely fantasies, the masochists are simply too inhibited to fulfill them. As Warburton pulls her toward him, it breaks the spell.

> The visions that had held her helpless--visions of poverty and escape from poverty--suddenly vanished and left only a shocked realization of what was happening to her. She was in the arms of a man--a fattish, oldish man! A wave of disgust and deadly fear went through her, and her entrails seemed to shrink and freeze. His thick male body was pressing her . . . . The harsh odor of maleness forced itself into her nostrils. She recoiled. Furry thighs of satyrs! (ACD, p. 306)

Her fear and aversion will continue to force her to take "her fun . . . in perverted forms." As Warburton puts it, "your notion of fun seems to be massaging Mrs. Pither's

legs." (ACD, p. 308)

With this image of infantile sexuality, of sordid duties and an impoverished life, of disease, penury, and emotional suffocation, we can be sure that Dorothy will continue to suffer.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III.

[1]Epigraph to Fox's Book of Martyrs (Philadelphia: J. J. Woodward, 1830).

[2]"The Economic Problem of Masochism," The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1959), XIX, 157-70.

[3]A Clergyman's Daughter (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960). Further references will refer to this edition and will be included in the text accompanied by the designation ACD.

[4]"Civilization and Its Discontents," The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, XXI, 126.

[5]"The Economic Problem of Masochism," p. 170.

[6]Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis (New York: Pioneer Publications, 1941), pp. 35-36.

[7](New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950), p. 7.

[8]Sadism and Masochism: The Psychology of Hatred and Cruelty, trans. Louise Brink (New York: Liverwright Publishing Corp., 1953), II, 55-56.

[9]"Ellen" is the name of her father's servant.

[10]Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1945), p. 293.

[11]"The Economic Problem of Masochism," p. 165.

CHAPTER IV.

"POVERTY TAKES THE GUILT OFF"[1]

Orwell graduated from preparatory school with not one but two scholarships to the best Public Schools in his pocket. He was only thirteen with entry and financial support at Eton assured when, he tells us, "the future closed in" on him forever.[2] It should have been a day of triumph. He had justified his family's hopes and the school's intense pressure. He had won the history prize; he had every expectation of a secure if not brilliant future. And yet, he anticipated " . . . ruin. What kind of ruin I did not know: perhaps the colonies or an office stool, perhaps prison or an early death." (KAF, p. 49) He did not know, but what was certain was that "the future was dark. Failure, failure, failure--failure behind me, failure ahead of me--that was by far the deepest conviction that I carried away." (KAF, p. 50)

This fantasy of disaster, of nameless dread and anxiety, with a concomitant sense of estrangement (he tells us that whatever school he went to would be "equally alien") is at the center of Orwell's approach to his experience. His

painterly style is set to work on a canvas of despair--frustration, suffering, defeat; these are its materials--and the signature of his imagination is the paradoxical belief that ruin must come with victory, disaster with every triumph. Although he is writing of his graduation from "Crossgates" some thirty years after the event, his words bleed with the immediacy of adolescent despair. Although he does not know what kind of ruin lies ahead, in his fantasy he prophesies exile to the colonies, the spiritual death of demeaning and trivial work, or an actual early death.

These four variations on the theme of failure adumbrate the plots of the four books he published between 1933 and 1936:

Flory, exile and isolate of Burmese Days, is Orwell's prototypical hero as shlemiel. He is a frightened and timid rebel who is as ineffectual in his revolt against the caste system of the British Raj as he is impotent to win the English girl he loves. Torn by ambivalence, he despises the Burmans who are the object of his sympathy and loathes the native girl who is the object of his desire. The central thread which unifies the sub-plots and machinations with the Burmans is a story of Romantic love for the English girl, Elizabeth. More precisely, it is an anguished chronicle of the frustration and defeat of Romantic love and the consequent self-destruction of the lover. More characteristic

even than the suicide of Flory is the self-defeating and provocative strategy of the courtship: every success is immediately undone by some action which disgusts or repels the girl. The only possible outcome is suicide.

Orwell's second novel, A Clergyman's Daughter, has a feminine persona whose annihilation of the self takes the form of amnesia and endless suffering. Dorothy Hare does all the humiliating and sordid work of the parish while enduring with the patience of a Christian martyr the coldness, cruelty, and indifference of her father. After an older man tries to make love to her, she takes flight into amnesia and has a series of degrading adventures reminiscent of de Sade's Justine. The typically Orwellian texture, however, is that they are quite sexless, ugly and humiliating, and reach their climax when Dorothy goes to jail. Ultimately, she is rehabilitated and returns to the dreary round of tedious duties in her father's church, having learned nothing from her experiences and trials, having lost not her virginity, but her faith. At the end of the novel, she refuses her chance of escape, of sexual liberation, of maturity and marriage because she is overwhelmed by sexual fear and guilt. Her frigidity is absolute. Perhaps the most dramatic action of Dorothy Hare's secret life is the continual, furtive pricking of her arm with a sharp pin. Whenever she needs punishment, she inflicts it upon herself with the disciplinary pin until the blood runs. Why she should do this, why she should

permit herself no pleasure and seem to exult in pain, why the Orwell protagonist should be remorselessly self-defeating and ultimately self-destructive is the central problem of his life and work.

In the posthumous essay, "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . ", Orwell writes the story of a whipping he received for wetting his bed. After being publicly shamed, he is ordered, "REPORT YOURSELF to the headmaster." After being beaten on the behind with a bone-handled riding crop, he emerges into the ante-room and loudly announces, "It didn't hurt." After being ordered in for another licking for daring "to say a thing like that," he has the riding crop broken over his bottom, and still he assures us, "the second beating had not hurt very much either." (SSJ, p. 12) Why did this beating, inflicted by an enraged adult upon an eight year old boy, whipping for five minutes, "ending up by breaking the riding crop;" how could this second beating "not hurt"? This is the problem which Orwell's work presents. That it is not trivial or speculative, but has on the contrary profound literary consequences is indicated by the problematic nature of the theme of this essay itself.

After recounting the horror of this episode and the victimization of the little boy, Orwell's final remark is, "one more thing . . . I did not wet my bed again . . . the trouble stopped . . . . So perhaps this barbarous remedy does work." (SSJ, p. 14) While railing against cruelty and

injustice, Orwell turns around and insists that they do work. Vividly evoking the "whack, whack, whack whack" of the rattan cane, the red weals and smarts, Orwell concludes equivocally, "it is a mistake to think such methods do not work . . . . Indeed, I doubt whether classical education ever has been or can be successfully carried on without corporal punishment." (SSJ, p. 18)

Thus, an essay which is ostensibly against the barbarous cruelty of English Public School methods, turns out to be an equivocal apologia for them. The contradiction is as deep as it is irreconcilable, as Orwell comes down hard for both extremes. In his conclusion about the awful humiliating punishments he received, he insists that they are indispensable to the success of classical education. This ambivalent split-vision is at the heart of all of Orwell's best work and informs its multiple ironies. It is a far deeper matter than mere contradiction or even paradox, for what it reveals is a fathomless depth of motive and emotional conflict beneath the level of surface consciousness. While "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " has an obvious surface irony, its tone and equivocation suggest a double irony. Though on the surface a recounting of experiences which were the opposite of joy, at another and unconscious level, the ordeals fulfilled some function for the little boy equivalent to the pricking of Dorothy Hare's disciplinary pin. Why she should do that, why the licking did not hurt, why

Orwell's characters destroy themselves are problems that suggest a shocking answer: it must give pleasure.

At some level of consciousness, the whipping scene which is the central image of "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " gave a masochistic joy simultaneous with the pain that we must take as the paradigm for most of Orwell's work. Furthermore, the fantasies of failure which provide the plots of the early books--"colonies . . . office stool . . . prison . . . early death"--represent the ambivalently feared and desired blows of fate.

Gordon Comstock, the protagonist of Orwell's third novel, Keep the Aspidistra Flying, is a benighted victim of "the money God" who defies the cash nexus only to become deeply imprisoned by it. In fact, his apparent posture of angry rebellion serves to humiliate, emasculate, and degrade him. The epigraph to Keep the Aspidistra Flying announces its surface theme. It is an adaptation of I Corinthians xiii with the word "money" substituted for the Biblical "charity." "And now abideth faith, hope, money, these three; but the greatest of these is money." It is this perversion of the spiritual and human decencies that Gordon Comstock sets out to fight. Like Orwell, who at school was "a rebel in all things,"[3] Gordon was a revolutionary at his public school. At an early age he reached the conclusion that "all modern commerce is a swindle." (KAF, p. 43) Not only is business a swindle, it is elevated to the status of religion--"the only

really felt religion--that is left to us. Money is what God used to be." Consequently, all moral values have lost their meaning and been submerged in the ethos of naked materialism. Good and evil are subordinated to what really matters in the cash nexus: failure and success. Gordon despises the impulse "to make good." Like Orwell in "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " his masters at school have drummed it into him that he is a worthless little bother, unable to make money and the least likely to succeed in life. Very well. Gordon resolves to make virtue out of incapacity: "he would make it his especial purpose not to succeed." (KAF, p. 45)

Thus, from the outset, Gordon Comstock's rebellion has its origin in petty spite, sour grapes, self-disparagement and degradation. Already at sixteen he is a Socialist, against "the money-god and all its swinish priesthood." (KAF, p. 45) He despises it and decides to make war on money. Like a passive resistor, he becomes a drop-out from the economic system, a conscientious objector to money and its demands; the problem, the conflict, and the psychological interest, however, is that in posturing as a drop-out from economics, Gordon becomes a drop-out from life itself.

Gordon realizes quite early that for him, "the one fatal thing is to worship money and fail to get it." (KAF, p. 44) Yet, strange to say, he does seem obsessed with the idea of money. From the beginning of the novel to the end,

his plunge downward out of the system seems to make him not independent of money, but, on the contrary, totally preoccupied with it. From the outset, his "heart sickened to think that he had only fivepence halfpenny in the world, threepence of which couldn't even be spent." (KAF, p. 4) Why can't it be spent? It is a Joey. Gordon is so painfully sensitive to anything having to do with money that he feels the mere possession of this beastly threepenny bit to be an unendurable humiliation. He didn't dare to refuse it when the shopgirl said, "'Don't mind a three-penny bit, do you, Sir?'" (KAF, p. 3) Naturally, his overweening false pride would not let him refuse it; now, a third of the way into the novel, Orwell makes it clear that the same pride will not permit him to spend it. Though he longs for tea and cakes--he's had nothing to eat, of course--he cannot bring himself to spend the Joey: "The girl at the cash desk would titter. In a vivid vision he saw the girl at the cash desk, as she handled his threepenny bit, grin sidelong at the girl behind the cake counter. They'd know it was your last threepence." (KAF, p. 71) This must be avoided at all costs. But, of course they would not know anything of the kind; it is only Gordon's fanatic self-consciousness that makes him imagine everyone will know. After reifying the Joey in fantasy, he is ashamed of the poverty he imagines it reveals. Indeed, the pathos of his revolt is precisely that nothing characterizes it more than the feeling of shame--at

not having money!

Standing outside of a teashop, or later, of a pub, he longs to go in, to eat and drink and talk and partake--but he cannot. Standing with his hand on the door, his "heart sickens" with yearning for people, warmth, beer, a girl to talk to; but he cannot go in. (KAF, pp. 74-75) It is not money but his acute sensitivity to the lack of it that makes him furiously hurl the Joey away into the darkness. This is the nature of his response to life itself. In his rage, there is, of course, immense suffering, but somehow, it seems a self-provoked, a willed and desired suffering.

Gordon's whole emotional life seems constituted of petty humiliations, trivial conflicts, and provocations. He is invited to a literary tea party, and spends over an hour in preparing: a painful shave in cold water, trousers pressed under the mattress, collar turned inside out to conceal the tear, socks darned, empty cigarette packet prepared so that people will assume it has once been full. (KAF, pp. 62-63) This is the quality of his revolt--so concerned over what people will think! Stalin was supposed to have said that the German people would never make a revolution because they would not walk on the grass: Gordon Comstock cannot rebel because a shopgirl might think him poor! So he looks forward to his tea party. When he arrives, he is surprised to find no cars outside. It has been postponed, as if on purpose to humiliate him. "He took it for granted that people would

snub him . . . . He had no money. When you have no money your life is one long series of snubs." (KAF, p. 67) He sneaks up to the door, rings the bell, and comes under the scrutiny of the servant next door. This sets off a riot of masochistic fantasies:

> . . . suddenly it came to him that the girl knew all about him--knew that the party had been put off and that everyone except Gordon had been told about it--knew that it was because he had no money that he was wasn't worth the trouble of telling . . . . He grasped the rusty gate-bar so hard that he hurt his hand and almost tore it. The physical pain did him good. It counteracted the agony at his heart. It was not merely that he had been cheated of an evening spent in human company, though that was much. It was the feeling of helplessness, of insignificance, of being set aside, ignored--a creature not worth bothering about. They'd changed the day and hadn't even bothered to tell him. Told everybody else, but not him. That's how people treat you when you've no money! . . . Of course they had done it on purpose! . . . because he had no money . . . . (KAF, pp. 68-69)

All on account of a tea party? But this isn't all, for we later find out that he was, indeed, told of the changed date. His host sends him a cordial note regretting his failure to turn up at the right date, and inviting him to another party. "'Won't you come then?'" he almost implores. "'Don't forget the date this time.'" (KAF, p. 100) But Gordon prefers to stick to his delusion: they had insulted him on purpose. He writes a vicious reply and drives another valued friend out of his life.

Why does he behave in these provocative and self-defeating ways? Why does he so hang on to the pain in his breast, to the sense of impotence and helpless rage? It

must give him perverse pleasure and expiate his hidden guilt. The meaning of poverty must somehow touch deeper symbolic levels of personality.

As Gordon sees it, a man's "personality is his income." (KAF, p. 94) Furthermore, the effects of poverty, far from spiritually ennobling or purifying, only serve to ruin him: "Poverty is spiritual halitosis," he declaims to his wealthy and therefore glamorous friend, Ravelston. (KAF, p. 92) His over-valuation of money leads him into a kind of economic determinism of all social and emotional relations. "All human relationships must be purchased with money . . . . For, moneyless, you are unlovable." (KAF, p. 14) Working out this equation, money equals love, the paradoxical conclusion seems inescapable: Gordon is in flight from what he most desires. Certainly he equates the renunciation of a good job and respectable future with sexual deprivation. In spite of the obvious love which his girl, Rosemary, bears for him, he insists that no woman ever judges a man "by anything except his income." (KAF, p. 93) Again and again, he thinks of his cold "womanless" bed with the certainty that his frustration and loneliness are caused by his lack of money; "because he had no money Rosemary wouldn't sleep with him;" (KAF, p. 78) because he has no money, he feels "a weakling, a sort of half-man" (KAF, p. 114) unworthy of the love of a woman.

Part of the unconscious genius of this novel is the fusion of its two obsessive themes, money and sex, in the central symbol of the aspidistra plant, "shaped like Agamemnon's sword." (KAF, p. 36) But for Gordon, it is a "sort of symbol" of the command of the money-god to "make good." (KAF, pp. 43-44) The aspidistra, on display like the flag of middle-class respectability everywhere, represents for Gordon submission to an office job, "to settle down, . . . to sell your soul for a villa . . . a supper of cottage pie . . . and then perhaps a spot of licit sexual intercourse . . . . " (KAF, p. 48) Instead of this unendurable prospect, he quits his job and looks to a future outside "the money-world--that was what he wanted . . . some kind of moneyless, anchorite existence." (KAF, p. 49) He soon finds, however, that he cannot break free in this way. He feels that poverty kills his literary creativity, that instead of liberating him, the lack of money only makes him its helpless slave. (KAF, p. 50) He knuckles under and returns to the respectable world. It is here that his life reaches its turning point, for it is here that his imagination and poetic gift secure him promotion to copywriter in the New Albion advertising agency. "It was an unmistakable chance to Make Good;" (KAF, p. 53) his gift for words is, for the first time in his life, used successfully; it is discovered that he has a remarkable talent for copywriting. His wages are raised; and, most important of all, he meets Rosemary.

But naturally, he can't stand it. He cannot bear his success. "And it was now that Gordon grew frightened. Money was getting him after all. He was sliding down, down into the money-sty." He flees in a panic "out of the Money-world" before he gets involved and "stuck in it for life." (KAF, p. 54) So, once more he quits his job. What is brilliantly achieved by Orwell here in this representation of his character's complex of motives is the sense that while Gordon quits this good job from the highest integrity, beneath the level of realistic purity beats a timid heart terrified of success and self-fulfillment. In Gordon's unconscious, promotion means sliding down into a sty and getting stuck there, becoming committed, enjoying licit sexual intercourse, earning money. These pleasures he will not permit.

In a late psychological paper, Freud writes of "Some Character-Types Met With in Psychoanalytic Work" and describes "Those Wrecked by Success."

> Analytic work soon shows us that it is forces of conscience which forbid the person to gain the long hoped-for enjoyment from [a] fortunate change in reality. It is a difficult task to discover the essence and origin of these censuring and punishing tendencies . . . .[4]

Healy and Bronner describe a clinical case history of a neurotic who could not tolerate success. Instead, he was rebellious against authority, met constant failure in everything he attempted, let himself be exploited, lost money

and, at the same time, suffered great anxiety about having lost it. These authors suggest that the underlying cause of "marked masochistic trends" is a deep unconscious fear of damage to manhood should that manhood become sexually engaged. To the guilt-ridden unconscious, sexual gratification is fraught with the danger of sexual mutilation; and the unconscious representation of these fears is the reluctance to be committed to anything, to succeed in anything, to get caught, stuck, or to slide down--with all their sexual overtones.[5]

Thus, Gordon renounces once again, and so is relieved of his desperate anxiety: "He was a made man--or . . . by aspidistral standards, unmade." (KAF, p. 55) Therefore, Gordon embodies the characteristic reversal so prominent in all of Orwell's work: to be promoted is to slide down, to quit a job which pays well and brings triumph and fulfillment is to be made; "the very reverse of a 'good' job . . . a blind-alley job was the very thing Gordon was looking for." (KAF, p. 55) Theodore Reik, in his definitive study, Masochism and Modern Man, speaks of the quality of "negative ambition" in the masochistic character.[6] The psychoanalytic theory of masochism makes it clear that this character type suffers from an acutely sensitive conscience which makes the person tremble at the approach of fulfillment and triumph. In order to attenuate this overwhelming fear, says Theodore Reik, the masochist will renounce the anxiety-ridden

gratification.[7] Furthermore, the fear of punishment is so great that the masochist seeks to ward off the dreaded event by, paradoxically, bringing it about himself! The thing "one is afraid of is brought about intentionally in order to avoid the anxiety. . . . They produce the feared sensation because they are so much afraid of it. [For the masochist] an end with terror is preferred to a terror without end."[8]

Like the little boy in "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " who provoked a second whipping to prove that it "didn't hurt," Gordon Comstock quits his job a second time to become, by "aspidistral standards, unmade." Yet, he is terribly aware that he has behaved "perversely . . . that the glow of renunciation never lasts." (KAF, pp. 55-57) He feels that he is cut off, almost damaged in his essential self to the point of deadness: "It is in the brain and soul that lack of money damages you." (KAF, p. 57) Lying in his lonely womanless bed, mocked by the aspidistra leaves, Gordon sinks into the masochistic bog. With his "smallish, delicate foot, ineffectual like his hands," he feels quite simply unmanned. He is painfully "aware of his own futility . . . of the blind alley into which he had led his life." (KAF, p. 35)

By thrusting the aspidistra, shaped like Agamemnon's sword, far from him, by his saint-like repudiation of reality, he has brought about what he most fears and craves. He is utterly humiliated--moneyless and impotent. "Social

failure, artistic failure, sexual failure--they are all the same. And lack of money is at the bottom of them all." (KAF, p. 78)

Gordon gives up his job at the New Albion advertising agency in order to devote himself to his poetry. Instead, he takes a "Blind-alley" position at two quid a week, with no future assured, in a bookstore. He finds that the lack of money even "robbed him of the power to 'write.'" (KAF, p. 9) In his mind, his sexual power is also damaged by the lack of money.

Like all of Orwell's novels, Keep the Aspidistra Flying, in spite of its superficial theme of social criticism, is actually a novel of romantic love. The condensation of the themes of money, sex, love, and manhood which Orwell achieves represent a level of genius comparable to Lawrence's level of genius in Sons and Lovers. These strands are brilliantly fused in the central symbol of the aspidistra plant, and further unified in the story of Gordon's courtship of Rosemary.

Quitting his job at the New Albion is a straightforward physical flight from the proximity of Rosemary, but Gordon's regression is even deeper than that. By reducing his income to the level of two pounds a week, he effectively forecloses any possibility of marriage, for "how can you marry on two quid a week?" Furthermore, since "outside of marriage, no decent relationship with a woman is possible,"

(KAF, p. 104) he has also precluded any chance of sexual fulfillment. His Comstockery is so intense that he flings out at Rosemary, "Bloody! How can you have any fun when you've got no money?" She is frankly dumbfounded, "What has money to do with it, Gordon?" For reply, he harangues her with his fantasies of inferiority:

> I mean the way nothing ever goes right in my life. It's always money, money, money that's at the bottom of everything. And especially between me and you. That's why you don't really love me. There's a sort of film of money between us. I can feel it every time I kiss you . . . . Don't you see that if I had more money I'd be more worth loving? (KAF, p. 112)

Thus, money has been reified in Gordon's fantasy to a symbol of sexual as well as artistic power. It is the thing that gets other poets published and other men loved; and it is this very thing he craves that he must flee from. At moments, it seems as if he would castrate himself. He seems to exult in self-disparagement as he tells Rosemary that a moneyless man is "a weakling, a sort of half-man." (KAF, p. 114) It does, in fact, turn out this way when Rosemary finally offers up her virginity and he proves impotent. But he blames it on the weather--and money.

Rosemary cannot understand his obsession. "You let it worry you too much, Gordon," she says in her reasonable way; but Gordon is beyond reason, for it is the unconsciously symbolic meaning of money which makes him despair: "Impossible. It's the only thing worth worrying about," rejoins the rebel against material values. He nevertheless agrees

to go on an outing in the country where, it is tacitly understood, they will consumate their relationship.

On the great Sunday, the very "plumes of the chimneys floated perpendicular." (KAF, p. 123) They are, however, the only things that will be "perpendicular" this day. It is an astonishingly warm, sunny, winter day; he has "borrowed" five pounds from his sister; they are happy as children as the trees about them seem to soar in a "curiously phallic" way. (KAF, p. 126) But Comstock spoils it. He finds it necessary to tease his girl by spouting "ugly similes for everything they passed." (KAF, p. 128) They fetch up at an expensive, snooty hotel and take a humiliating and dismal lunch. After eating the cheapest thing on the menu--tasteless cold beef--and enduring the jibes of the waiter, Gordon pays the enormous bill.

They have now reached the climatic moment of their two-year relationship, but

> Gordon felt dismayed, helpless--dazed almost. All his money gone at a single swoop! It was a ghastly thing to happen . . . . The whole day was ruined now--and all for the sake of a couple of plates of cold beef and a bottle of muddy wine! Presently there would be tea to think about, and he had only six cigarettes left, and there were the bus fares . . . . All the warm intimacy of a moment ago was gone. (KAF, p. 137)

All his sexual anxiety and dread are displaced onto the preoccupation with money. His sexual desire itself is paralyzed:

> he wanted to <u>have had</u> her, but he wished it were over and done with. It was an effort--a thing he had got to screw himself up to. It was strange that that

> beastly business of the hotel bill could have upset him so completely . . . worry about money . . . squalid and shameful. (KAF, p. 138)

As they walk into the countryside, the natural beauty everywhere about them, the loveliness of the warm day, the shy, pretty girl, awaken desire in Gordon which his Comstockery immediately stifles: "His heart beat painfully, his entrails were constricted." It is very warm. Coming to a natural alcove, they decide to sit down, and his heart thrills, "How supple and strong she was!" But not Gordon, for his change, all the money he had in the world, "clinked in his pocket, daunting him anew." (KAF, p. 139)

When they are hidden in their secret alcove, he kisses her and feels her breasts, but

> at heart he . . . was . . . reluctant. It dismayed him to find how little . . . he really wanted her. The money-business still unnerved him. How can you make love when you have only eightpence in your pocket and are thinking about it all the time? (KAF, p. 139)

How, indeed? Every time he kisses her, it is the same inhibiting displacement onto money.

Rosemary promises to let him do anything with her; he presses her back on the grass; the warmth of the sun enters their bodies; she takes off all her clothes; he moves "closer to her. Once again the coins clinked in his pocket. Only eightpence left!" (KAF, p. 140) Then follows a fiasco because he has neglected to bring a contraceptive--"he had never thought of it till this moment." He gives up:

"Suddenly he knew that he could go no further with this business. In a wet field on a Sunday afternoon--and in mid-winter at that!" So, suddenly it has become wet and cold and impossible.

After a high-minded diatribe against contraception and "the finger of the money-god intruding," he orders her to get dressed. His shame is enormous, but it is entirely on account of having only eightpence in his pocket and having to confess it to Rosemary. "And that was so damned humiliating." In his unconscious, the sexual impotence has found its permanent symbol in the form of financial shame.

Again, Rosemary willingly surrenders. She offers to risk the baby and she generously urges him to make love to her; but "that business of the eightpence had usurped his mind. He was not in the mood any longer. 'I can't,' he said finally." At this point, money and the lack of it have literally rendered him impotent; and this should not surprise us, for in Gordon's fantasy, phallic power and money are identical; the lack of it has "usurped" his masculine powers. The shame he experiences over having to "confess" his loss of manhood astonishes Rosemary, for she is quite unaware of its symbolic meaning and responds to it literally.

> 'Do you think there's anything to be ashamed of in having no money?' she asks him.
> 'Of course there is! It's the only thing in the world there <u>is</u> to be ashamed of.' (<u>KAF</u>, p. 146)

Why then does he adamantly refuse, <u>refuse</u> to get any? He

declaims that he can't make love, "just can't do it. It's physically impossible." All because he has only eightpence in his pocket. The logic of the neurosis and his symbolic displacement is clear. If not having money will keep him from making love, then by refusing to have any money he stays true to his name; and in a fashion which will be acceptable to him consciously, he avoids the dreaded sexual confrontation.

His unconscious sexual fear is as immobilizing as that of Dorothy Hare's in A Clergyman's Daughter. His timidity reminds one that he is the unsuccessful author of a book of poems called Mice, and the long "poem" he labors with has the ironic title, "London Pleasures." True to his masochistic character, his unconscious uses the Freudian defense mechanism of reversal in this long poem, as elsewhere in his fantasies. His poetic wit is at a high pitch when he returns to London after leaving Rosemary. Seeing himself clearly, "without saving disguises," he despairs:

> back to the cold lonely bedroom and the grimy, littered sheets of a poem that never got any further. It was a blind alley . . . . He would never finish London Pleasures, he would never marry Rosemary. . . . He would only drift and sink . . . down, down into some dreadful subworld. (KAF, p. 150)

But he does compose the poem with its inversion of values:

> Torn posters flutter; coldly sound
> The boom of trams and the rattle of hooves,
> And the clerks who hurry to the station
> Look, shuddering, over the eastern rooves,
>
> Thinking, each one, 'Here comes the winter!
> Please God I keep my job this year!'

And bleakly, as the cold strikes through
Their entrails like an icy spear,

They think of rent, rates, season tickets,
. . . . . .
The lord of all, the money-god,
. . . . . .
Who lays the sleek, estranging shield
Between the lover and his bride.
(KAF, p. 151)

This anguished cry of "London Pleasures" projects its author's sexual failure onto the impersonal deity, the money-god, who by laying the "sleek, estranging shield" of contraception between him and "his bride" has deprived him of his fulfillment. The clerks who are able to have their licit intercourse are figured as victims, imprisoned by worry and penetrated by the "icy spear." Thus, Comstock reverses the values of reality. Men who have jobs and wives, who are able to earn money and enjoy their phallic power, are represented in the poem, as in Gordon's unconscious, as the passive victims of fortune, as patsies at the mercy of a cold spear in the entails. Gordon repeats endlessly the pathologically distorted catechism: to have a job, to earn money, is the equivalent of loss of freedom; "Circumcise ye your foreskins, saith the lord." (KAF, p. 149)

The fear of castration, usually represented consciously as the claustrophobic fear of losing freedom, and breaking through to Comstock's mind in the obsessive equation of money with circumcision, is the deepest motive of masochism. "So firmly established is the conviction that sexual pleasure

must be connected with pain and suffering" that the sexual aim is renounced rather than face the fantasied danger. Thus,

> masochism contradicts the pleasure principle . . . [and instead] follows the mechanism of 'sacrifice'; the price paid beforehand is meant to appease the gods and [to avoid the ultimate retribution]; masochistic activities of this type are a 'lesser evil'; symbols of self-castration are used by masochists to avoid castration.[9]

This psychological theory of the origin of self-destruction forces in primitive fear of mutilation and loss would seem to account for much of Gordon Comstock's paradoxical values and actions. If he equates money with power and enjoyment, marriage, pleasure, being published, grace and beauty--why then does he refuse to acquire any for himself? This riddle is not only central to this character, it recurs again and again in Orwell's work in many variations, from a little boy's courting of a beating to a spinster's refusal of marriage. The answer to the problem of "moral masochism" would appear to lie in the fear of retribution from an unduly severe conscience. Pain, humiliation, and failure are apparently sought in order to ward off pressure from the superego which unconsciously anticipates an absolute destruction. As Fenichel puts it,

> enjoyment of humiliation indicates that the idea of being beaten by the father has been further transformed into the idea of being beaten by God or destiny.[10]

So we return to Comstock's dismal "London Pleasures." Here it is painfully clear that as fanatic as his repudiation of money, sex, and power is, so is his conviction that the money-god is the cause of all his misery and helplessness. But even the destiny of masochists has a way of surprising. Gordon again succeeds in spite of himself. Suddenly he receives a "cheque" for fifty dollars for a poem he has sent to a California magazine. He exults in the recognition and the "luscious" money, the clean pound notes, and the fantasies of pleasure they will bring. However, Comstock is of the type that is ruined by success, whose enjoyment of pleasure is pathetically destroyed by guilt.

The money burns holes in his pocket and in his soul. He has to be rid of it; and what is worse, get rid of it in the quickest, most foolish and self-destructive way possible. He "squanders" it as fast as he can by inviting his friend, Ravelston, and his girl, Rosemary, to an expensive dinner. Over their objections, he orders more and more wine until his increasing drunkenness ruins any chance of a pleasant social occasion. They are all painfully uncomfortable and embarrassed, but Gordon only wishes to spoil and spoil: "All he wanted now was to be properly drunk and have done with it." (KAF, p. 162) When the dinner party is over, he suffers an anxiety attack which fully embodies his fears of any success. He was

> full of some dreadful realisation--that you are doomed to die . . . that your life is a failure . . . . He knew all about himself and the awful folly he was committing--knew that he had squandered five pounds on utter foolishness and now was going to squander the other five . . . . (KAF, p. 163)

It is here that the mechanism of symbolic self-castration in those "who are ruined by success" is quite near the surface. It is because of unconscious dread of some awful retaliation for the triumph of getting his poem published that he panics with the fear of death--"that you are doomed to die"--and sees his life as a failure. In order to ward off the unbearable and nameless dread, he brings about a lesser evil by "sacrificing" the money in the most foolish and painful way. He feels virtually on fire with his agony:

> That burning, bursting feeling was dreadful . . . . The sober half of him still knew with ice-cold clarity what he had done and what he was doing. He had committed follies for which tomorrow he would feel like killing himself. He had squandered five pounds in senseless extravagance . . . . go home! cried sober half. ----to you! said drunken half contemptuously. (KAF, p. 168)

The unconscious is pitiless in its ravages and thirst for vengeance. It forces him to keep drinking until hispain is unendurable. He dashes into a pub and forces the acrid cheap beer down his throat, pot after monstrous pot, until he is sick: "Down with it," orders the implacable superego; he can hardly lift the huge beer pots; "it almost choked him this time. But stick it out, stick it out!" (KAF, p. 169) Gasping for breath, almost drowning in beer, he

keeps on mercilessly.

> Its smell nauseated him. It was just a hateful, pale yellow, sickly-tasting liquid. Like urine, almost! That bucketfull of stuff to be forced down into his bursting guts--horrible! But come on, no flinching! What else are we here for? Down with it! (KAF, p. 170)

This is unbearable. But even worse horrors are to come for Gordon must pay and pay. He picks up a couple of vulgar, hard prostitutes with faces "like predatory animals" and has the fantasy that "he was a damned soul in hell. The landscape in hell would be just like this. Ravines of cold evil-coloured fire . . . . But in hell there would be torment. Was this torment?" (KAF, p. 174) This is exactly the problem: Comstock cannot distinguish between pleasure and pain; he does not even know when he is in agony. He steels himself to go through with the final horror. "Stick it out! No flinching!" he adjures himself to go on with the tarts. He is quite certain that putting it into these predatory beasts is the equivalent of losing it. Yet he must. "No flinching!" He must prove that it won't be too bad.

In the prostitute's room, however, he is found out by "his enemy," the aspidistra, and naturally, sexual intercourse is impossible. Again and again he tries, but it's no use. "The booze, it must be." He pays the two quid--a week's wages as the additional premium for this demonstration of impotence. After going with the tart "into the room with the aspidistra," he comes to in jail. His employer finds

out about the frantic drunken spree, the jailing and violence, and Gordon loses even his two pound a week job as bookseller's assistant.

Now he is utterly defeated. He believes that it is impossible for him ever to find another job. "He was going down, down into the sub-world . . . down into . . . workhouse depths of dirt and hunger and futility." (KAF, p. 189) This is what the success of getting a poem published and getting ten pounds for it has brought. These are the fruits of victory: agony, quarrel with friends, jail, loss of job. He has characteristically turned success into failure, has turned the silk purse into a sow's ear.

Gordon's only desire now, as always, is "to reach the gutter quickly, and get it over." In a chapter of his book called "The Flight Forward," Theodore Reik says the masochist "conjures up what he fears" because he cannot tolerate the suspense. Comstock, in particular, makes this a flight downward because "the self can not bear the increasing pressure of the anxiety." The mechanism is described by the term "anticipando," which "grants the masochist the most dreaded punishment and liberates him from unconscious anxiety."[11]

This description perhaps makes more intelligible Gordon's refusal to be helped by either Rosemary or Ravelston; he wishes only to be left to his fate and his deserved punishment. "Ahead of him were dirt, cold, hunger, the streets, the workhouse and the jail. It was against that

that he had got to steel himself." (KAF, p. 194) What he really does is steel himself against any of his friends's efforts to aid him. Rosemary gets him his job back at the New Albion, but he repudiates her as violently as he did Ravelston: "Four pounds a week!" he snorts, "Splendid! I could afford to keep an aspidistra on that, couldn't I?" He is contemptuous of her in his self-righteous renunciation of his phallicism. Rosemary, responding according to her lights in feminine commonsense, simply cannot understand: "You don't seem to want to make any effort," she laments. "You want to sink--just sink!" At last the truth has come through to her, but she is powerless against the force of his destructive will. "I'd rather sink than rise," he insists now as ever. (KAF, p. 196) This rejoinder seems rich in unconscious sexual connotation. For one thing, all of Comstock's explicit strategies of marital and sexual avoidance, the canted meaning of his name, his repeated sexual failures and impotence charge his refusal to "rise" to a sexual base; but in addition to this abnegation of "aspidistral" manhood, the imagery of sinking down, down into the bog is symbolic of the thwarted desire--and fear--of sexual union. It is as if Comstock actually fulfills by unconscious symbolic action what he denies to himself in reality.

In the climactic closing movement of the novel, Comstock does fantasy himself "Underground, under ground! Down in the safe soft womb of earth . . . . " Home at last.

There is no hope, no fear, no ambition or friend "to plague you." (KAF, p. 203) He is in the womb of self-destruction and has floated free of his anxiety. This is "where he wished to be . . . . The evil, mutinous mood that comes after drunkenness seemed to have set into a habit." Orwell continues:

> That drunken night had marked a period in his life. It had dragged him downward . . . . He wanted to go down, deep down . . . to cut the strings of his self-respect, to submerge himself--to sink, as Rosemary had said. It was all bound up in his mind with the thought of being under ground . . . where failure and success have no meaning. (KAF, p. 203)

Thus, the single success of his life--publication of and payment for his poem--has been furiously avenged by a punitive superego that reminds one of Nazi "schrecklichkeit." Understanding what Comstock's perverted sexuality is capable of doing to himself reminds one that the State never lacks for wardens, jailors, storm troopers, and guards for its penal colonies, concentration camps, and execution chambers.

Reality, however, cannot match the inner unconscious cruelty. For it is only the child's mind within which conceives of such gruesome absolutes. Rosemary will not let him go. More important even than her love and loyalty is the fact that she comes to understand what is happening inside her lover. She "divined that desire of his to escape from all effort and all decency, to sink down, down . . . [that it] was not only from money but from life itself that he was turning away." (KAF, p. 214) In her "wordless feminine way,"

she knows that the only way to move him out of the bog toward a return to life is to plunge him into genuine sexual gratification. If he can be made to enjoy some real pleasure, he will give up the perverse fantasy pleasures of masochism. The pathogenic process must be reversed, and he must be brought to exchange going down into a fantasied womb for going down into a real woman.

Their relationship has reached its climax. "What hope was there that they could ever get married now? . . . time was passing and Gordon's chance of earning a decent living was infinitely remote. He seemed to want to sink . . . . And so the thought . . . grew gradually in both their minds that they would have to part--for good." (KAF, p. 214) But Rosemary is a real woman and does not give up easily. She speaks to Gordon's old boss at the New Albion; they will give him his job back. This sets up the predictable response: " . . . he was alarmed and angry. This was what he had been fearing." (KAF, p. 215) They quarrel and part, possibly forever; but Gordon is relieved:

> Mainly with relief he watched her go. He could not stop now to ask himself whether he loved her. Simply he wanted to get away--away from the windy street, away from scenes and emotional demands . . . . If there were tears in his eyes it was only from the cold of the wind. (KAF, 217)

Now at last he touches bottom. His writing is totally forsaken: "the whole concept of poetry was meaningless to him now," and he reaches nadir with the renunciation of that last

"futile dream of being a 'writer;'" he wants to get "below" all that. (KAF, p. 219)

His aspidistra, which he had tortured with cigarette butts and which had yet seemed as indestructible as the life force itself, is withering upright in its pot. "Surely now he was past redemption? Surely, try as they would, they couldn't prise him out of a hole like this?" But in his heart, he knows that they can; he is even counting on Rosemary to force him to decency in spite of himself. But he is still in terror. "He had been frightened as well as angry when Rosemary told him about Mr. Erskine's offer [of reinstatement at the New Albion]. It brought the danger so close to him . . . . Sometimes your salvation hunts you down like the Hound of Heaven," (KAF, p. 219) which Rosemary seemed to be. She comes back, takes one look at the dying aspidistra and knows what she has got to do: she goes to bed with him at last.

> He did not want this to happen, it was the very thing that he least wanted.
> 'This isn't wise,' he says.
> 'I don't care, I wish I'd done it years ago.'
> 'We'd much better not.'
> 'Yes.'
> 'No.'
> 'Yes!'
> After all she was too much for him.
> (KAF, p. 220)

So Gordon is saved.

Rosemary becomes pregnant and he cannot bear the thought of a bud of his flesh, his penis, being "mucked

about" with knives and destroyed; down there in her belly is a part of himself, and he is horrified by the thought of abortion. He must marry her to keep his "bud of flesh" intact. "The aspidistra, it turned out, had not died after all . . . it was putting forth a couple of green shoots." (KAF, p. 223)

Gordon has his hair cut short and goes back to his job: "Circumcise ye your foreskins, saith the Lord," and his only feeling is one of relief; he "had tried to live like an anchorite . . . and it had brought him not only misery, but also a frightful emptiness . . . . He had a queer feeling that he had only just grown up." (KAF, pp. 237-38) He has been brought to recognize that "the aspidistra is the tree of life."

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV.

[1]George Orwell, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1956), p. 95. Further references will be included in the text accompanied by the designation *KAF*.

[2]"Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " in *A Collection of Essays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1954), p. 50. Further references will be included in the text accompanied by the designation *SSJ*.

[3]In a personal communication from Mr. A. S. F. Gow, who was Eric Blair's Classical tutor while he was at Eton.

[4][Sigmund Freud] *Collected Papers*, ed. Ernest Jones; trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), pp. 323-26.

[5]*The Structure and Meaning of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Knopf, 1930), pp. 331-33.

[6]Trans. Margaret H. Beigel and G. M. Kurth (New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., 1941), p. 257.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 105.

[8]*Ibid.*, pp. 100, 105, 122.

[9]Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1945), p. 358.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 364.

[11]pp. 119, 135.

CHAPTER V.

THE FAT MAN: TIRESIAS IN ASPIC

The unsaga of Coming Up for Air[1] continues Orwell's chronicle of the non-hero who is victimized by his circumstances. "Fatty" Bowling, however, is no martyr-saint like Dorothy Hare, nor is he the rebel-sinner like Flory or Gordon Comstock; he is rather the opposite of extreme in every way. George Bowling is as fanatically average as his name would suggest. Middle age, middle income, middling mentality, and middling unhappiness--these are the conditions of his struggle with society and the crisis within himself. For in spite of the low key and genial understated tone of the novel, there is an intensely felt crisis and struggle for "air" which is the fight for life itself.

Gordon Comstock, at the conclusion of his fight against the "money god" and the "aspidistral" ways of bourgeois life, made his peace and rendered up his submission. He married, accepted respectable employment by the New Albion advertising agency, proliferated, earned money, bought the aspidistra and reconciled himself to his weekly "spot of licit" sexual intercourse.

"Tubby" Bowling represents all that Gordon might have become after two children, middle-age spread, a soured marriage, and fifteen years of suburbia and meaningless work. At the age of forty-five, Fatty Bowling, "the life of the party," (CUA, p. 4) is suffocating in suburbia. Ellesmere Road, West Bletchley: whether you know the street or not doesn't matter, for there are fifty other streets "exactly like it." All the houses in all the streets of West Bletchley are exactly the same, festering "all over the inner-outer suburbs. Always the same. Long, long rows of little semi-detached houses . . . the stucco front, the creosoted gate, the privet hedge, the green front door." (CUA, p. 11) The nagging wife, the demon kids, the boredom and sameness--these constitute the life of George Bowling's modern times.

Purely at the level of social criticism, this is a grimly prophetic vision of the horrors which urban capitalism has wrought. The effectiveness of the social satire, however, derives from the depth of the psychological issues engaged in the character of George Bowling. From the outset, Orwell fuses the unspeakable horrors of the bourgeois prison with the complex fears, anxieties, and neurotic conflicts of the protagonist.

Even in so casual a matter as the purchase of razor blades, Tubby Bowling sees the haunting, prevading fear of modern society. He walks into a department store only to buy a package of blades and is confronted with an image out

of Gestapo annals: "The floor-manager was an ugly little devil, undersized, with very square shoulders and a spiky grey moustache." He has just pounced on a salesgirl for some mistake in the change, and "was going for her in a voice like a circular saw . . . . She'd turned pale pink and she was wriggling, actually wriggling with pain. It was just the same as if he'd been cutting into her with a whip . . . . The girl flinched like a dog that sees the whip." (CUA, pp. 16-17)

In this perfectly realized little vignette we have a dramatic representation of Das Kapital and all of Marx's tragic vision of the alienating and dehumanizing consequences of the cash nexus. The girl is in terror lest she lose her job, and Bowling's comprehension and sympathy are deep enough even to extend to the manager who is inflicting the pain: "It crossed my mind that that little bastard with the spikey moustache was probably a damned sight more scared for his job than the girl was." (CUA, p. 18) It is the system, society itself, which is degrading and terrifying. The interest we feel in Bowling's mind throughout the novel derives from this complexity, dualism and generality of his empathy and understanding of modern times. It is Orwell's Romantic genius, never greater or more alienated than in this apparently genial picture of a salesman's mind, to seize upon the homeliest, most ordinary situations and feelings, and to find in these mundane scenes an emblem of the vicious

cruelties and wrongs of modern capitalism.

The novelistic genius of Coming Up for Air, however, lies not in the brilliant intensity or truth of Orwell's social indictment, but in the organic harmony of the view of society with the inner conflicts of the character of Bowling. The terrors he perceives around him, objectively valid though they may be, are projections of his inward and unconscious fears; what he sees is the representation of what he is. Orwell, in the manner of the modern psychological novel, unifies the subjective observer with the object observed.

At the conclusion of the scene in the department store, having for the moment entered into the life of the salesgirl as she wriggles with pain, and even deeper, into the life of the cad doing the whipping, Bowling is overwhelmed by his perceptions:

> Fear! We swim in it. It's our element. Everyone that isn't scared stiff of losing his job is scared stiff of war, or Fascism, or Communism, or something. Jews sweating when they think of Hitler. (CUA, p. 18)

It is this quality of sensitivity to suffering, of the imagination to put himself in the victim's place and feel what he feels--whether Jew or salesgirl, or manager--that makes Bowling himself such a sympathetic character. He identifies. He has Keat's negative capability. He listens to the sad song of Ruth and he can hear the nightingale. This is what he means when he tells us, "I'm fat, but I'm thin inside." (CUA, p. 23) Buried in those layers of jellied

fat is the solitary and suffering thing.

For it is not only the Jew or salesgirl who is swimming in fear, but Bowling himself, as the objects of his identification reveal the dynamics of his frantic struggle against submersion. Like the poet-speaker of Romantic lyric, Bowling suffers from an overpowering sense of his estrangement from the world; like Flory, he is the stigmatized unhero whose very physique serves to cut him off from the world, as from himself. It is this separation anxiety--perhaps the most fundamental and pervasive of all modern fears--and Bowling's struggle to overcome, to integrate, to salvage some wholeness, which is the plot and action of the novel.

Though he is "thin inside," he <u>is</u> fat outside. Like Prufrock's baldness and frailty, Bowling's physical disability robs him even of the possibility of tragedy. So his body itself ludicrously disables him from his own physical satisfaction. In his body image, he actualizes all the guilt, shame, sexual inferiority, frustration, absurdity of his situation. Above all, he is different from other men; and of course, sexually unattractive to women. His wife, Hilda, despises him; his kids are in the enemy camp; every casual encounter with fellow salesmen or with women results in frustration and humiliating rejection.

George Bowling continually suffers from frustration and defeat. In his own home, in the very first scene of the novel, he can not even take a bath in peace because the demon brats

are clamoring to get in. All day he will have a soapy neck because the damn kids take priority and have driven him out of the bathroom before he has had a chance to rinse properly, and "it's a rotten thing to have a soapy neck." (CUA, p. 7)

Indeed, it is a rotten thing to have a soapy neck: sticky, disgusting. Like Dorothy Hare who, in her own home, did not even have a bath towel to dry herself with, Bowling suffers the trivial yet profound humiliations of the bathroom. As usual in Orwell's books, the bathroom reveals the deepest thematic concerns and examples of character. This man's bathroom is the microcosm of his world, and rather than taking the throne there, he must endure the frustration of not even being allowed to wash off his neck in peace and privacy. As with the toilet, so it is with his home in general:

> Just a prison with the cells all in a row. A line of semi-detached torture-chambers where the poor little five-to-ten-pound-a-weekers quake and shiver, every one of them with the boss twisting his tail and the wife riding him like the nightmare and the kids sucking his blood . . . . (CUA, p. 12)

This is just the nightmare which Gordon Comstock evaded in terror of the aspidistra--only now, for poor old Bowling, it is a nightmare come true. He is trapped, caught, castrated, "never free," imprisoned in a little stucco box, with the wife riding him and the kids sucking his blood. Above all, it is the self-image of "a tame dairy cow" which drives him to resentful fury, (CUA, p. 9) but nevertheless, this is his

conception of himself. Marriage and fatherhood have robbed him of his manhood and sexuality. It is the drain, the sucking, the onerous responsibility which he thinks have unsexed him. His house, for example, is in mortgage to the Hesperides Estate Building Society; so cheerful George Bowling fantasies erecting a statue to the god of building societies: "It would be a queer sort of god. Among other things, it would be bisexual. The top half would be a managing director and the bottom half would be a wife in the family way . . . . " (CUA, p. 13) But he fantasies himself "a tame dairy cow," unsexed, bisexual--and his struggle for integrity becomes the struggle to regain his lost manhood.

One of the main functions of his fatness, then, is to make him different--to isolate him; but as it cuts him off from the world of men and women, it cuts him off from himself. There is the inner thin and phallic man, the outer fat and feminine. Isolato that he is, the decisive cut-off is this split between the inner and outer selves. The Tubby is also a joke to women, a cow, a castrato whose middle-aged, marital fat is the incarnation of impotence in aspic.

Two things happen which bring the crisis of his character into focus and occasion the action of the novel. First of all, in the opening sentence of the novel, he gets a set of new false teeth. Secondly, he wins seventeen pounds. As always in Orwell, and so particularly in Keep the Aspidiatra Flying as to control its very theme, money and its

awesome, even terrifying power is the prime symbol of the masculine principle--the very phallic power itself. Bowling thinks, "There's life in the old dog yet. I remembered my seventeen quid, and definitely made up my mind that I'd spend it on a woman." (CUA, p. 28) Not only is there life in the old dog; with the new teeth, there may even be some bite to the old dog.

But Bowling does not spend the money on a woman. Instead, he makes a journey back in time by revisiting the village of Lower Binfield, the place of his birth and early boyhood. The meaning of this journey, which is also the meaning of the character of George Bowling and the meaning of the book, can be examined on three distinct but organically related levels.

At the surface level, Bowling decides to use his windfall to get out of the horror of the modern world, if only for a brief respite from "everything slick and shiny and streamlined; mirrors, enamel, chromium plate. . . . No real food at all . . . . No comfort, no privacy . . . slickness and shininess and streamlining." (CUA, pp. 25-26) He fantasies going fishing near his home village, a little town of about two thousand nestled in a valley between lovely hills.

At the second level of meaning for character and for theme, this journey out of the modern horrors into an earlier bucolic time and place is, of course, the archetypal voyage

back of Romantic nostalgia. At this level, the novel is lovely, conjuring up the arcadian scenes of an almost pre-industrial English village and country boyhood as Bowling recounts with lingering delight this Intimations Ode. Of course, at this second level of meaning, all the conventions of Romanticism are observed: the protagonist is sensitive and therefore suffering (where but to think is to be full of sorrow); his suffering drives him out of the real world; in his alienation he seeks refuge in the nostalgic past--innocent and pure.

A third level of meaning, beneath the sociological and generic and adding depth and feeling to them both, also has relevance to Bowling's journey back. This is the level of sexuality. Bowling first planned to use the windfall (and the new teeth?) on having a woman: the regression back and down is the infantile expression of this same need. Above all, it is the effort to cope with his inner anxieties about his manhood, the sense of being cut off and fragmented, emasculated and maimed.

The deeper psychological issues of Fatty Bowling's character emerge quite clearly in the diction, tone and emotional texture describing the trip back to Lower Binfield. The first thing he does is fix up an "alibi" for his trip--something to satisfy his wife in case she turns suspicious. He asks a young salesman to post a letter to Hilda from Birmingham. "Saunders understood, or thought he did. He

gave me a wink and said I was wonderful for my age." (CUA, p. 202) This is amusing because the fellow can't go about innocent preparations for a fishing trip without taking the most elaborate measures to deceive his wife, and without having it assumed that he is up to something sexual and illicit. At the symbolic level of the unconscious, however, Saunders may indeed be closer to the truth than Bowling gives him credit for. Unconsciously, it is sexual and illicit. This is the real meaning of the alibi and elaborate deception. It is this unconscious sexual meaning which Saunders understands when he leers and winks. Though he misunderstands literally, the complex irony of his comment which assumes sexuality is that symbolically he understands completely.

Bowling himself is overcome with the sheer female sensuality of his flight into infantile freedom:

> I drove on. The wheat would have been as tall as your waist. It went undulating up and down the hills like a great green carpet, with the wind rippling it a little, kind of thick and silky-looking. It's like a woman, I thought. It makes you want to lie on it. (CUA, p. 204)

The very landscape--hills, wheatfields, wind and plain--is like a woman; and so we expect, as the accompaniment of this sheer physical joy, the inevitable burden of guilt and shame. Bowling is terrified of punishment: "The fact was I was feeling guilty about the whole business." He is tempted to go back to the path of righteousness and respectability and "chuck" the whole idea. "I was still inside the law, I

thought. It's not too late . . . . I could even turn round, go back to Hilda and make a clean breast of the plot." Finally, when he does pass the point of no return, he thinks of it in these guilt-ridden terms: "I was on the forbidden ground . . . . Strictly speaking I was in flight. And what was curious, I was no sooner on the Oxford road than I felt perfectly certain that they knew all about it." (CUA, p. 204) They, of course, refers to all the people to whom he feels responsible and the people whom he fears; but they also becomes by extension a reference to the whole cast of the disintegrating modern consciousness--"Scotland Yard . . . the Bank of England, Lord Beaverbrook, Hitler and Stalin . . . they were all after me." (CUA, p. 206) So, we have a paranoid terror at the very threshold of gratification, which anticipates the panic of 1984.

Bowling's fear, however, is objectively justified; the paranoid vision is of actuality, for when Bowling does arrive in Lower Binfield in his frantic reaching out to solidity and wholeness, he finds that Lower Binfield has ceased to exist. "It had merely been swallowed . . . it was buried somewhere in the middle of that sea of bricks." (CUA, p. 211) It has naturally been assimilated by a typical large manufacturing town. What Bowling discovers is that the Arcadian fantasy of England in 1900 does not exist any more in reality, if indeed it ever existed. He sees only ghosts, as he himself, for all his rolls of flesh, is only the ghost of a man.

As Fatty Bowling perceives the issues of his life, he must go fishing; fishing is the main reason for his return to Lower Binfield and the therapy to restore his lost and vital self; fishing is the central symbol of his innocent and strong youth, and it controls many of the unconscious influences of his actual behavior.

"From when I was eight to when I was fifteen, what I chiefly remember is fishing," he tells us. A good part of the book of his reminiscence is given over to fishing, so it is essential to ask, what is the latent meaning of the fishing? What does it really mean to him and what function does it play in the organization of his personality and fantasy life? He tells us himself. In all his life, nothing that he has ever done has "given quite such a kick as fishing." He continues,

> Everything else has been a bit of a flop in comparison, even women. . . . if you gave me the choice of having any woman you care to name, but I mean <u>any</u> woman, or catching a ten-pound carp, the carp would win any time. (<u>CUA</u>, p. 93)

He tells this to the reader in the form of "a confession" he has to make. Crudely put, it is that he prefers a good carp to a good lay. The second "confession" he makes at the same time is that after he was sixteen, he never fished again. That is, after his introduction to genital sexuality by Elsie Waters, he never fished again. Of course, the terms of these comparisons and oppositions--sex and fishing--suggest their symbolic equivalency. What he is really saying

is that the pristine and safe form of infantile sexuality is far preferable to the adult form and intercourse, largely because it is safe and innocent.

George feels his manhood in his fishing rod; and in his nostalgia he remembers when he felt himself whole and strong:

> I had a wonderful feeling inside me, a feeling you can't know about unless you've had it--but if you're a man you'll have had it some time. I knew that I wasn't a kid any longer, I was a boy at last . . . . the feel of the fish straining on the line--it was all part of it. Thank God I'm a man, because no woman ever has that feeling. (CUA, p. 75)

The feeling that no woman has ever had, of course, is none other than the feel of the fish straining on the line--the very feel of phallicism. This is indeed universal in the development of every man, but what is noteworthy as typically Orwellian and pathological here is that Bowling repudiates the actual genitality for its purely symbolic substitute. His castration anxiety is so great that, at the age of forty-five, he prefers the symbolic sexuality to sexuality itself. Even the symbol of his boyness is disparaged and reduced. Although he catches a fish on his first day out, the gang makes it out to be "smaller and smaller, until to hear the others talk you'd have thought it was no bigger than a minnow." (CUA, p. 76) His fish, like his penis, like his job at "The Flying Salamander," like his marriage, suffers from humiliating deprecations--almost to the point of a blind panic of annihilation.

It is this fear of annihilation which in all its symbolic exchanges, masks, defenses, is at the core of Bowling's personality and the heart of the novel. It is this quest for the lost pristine phallicism of boyhood which makes so poignant his eternal return to fishing; it is this fear of maiming which makes plausible the leit-motif of bombings, mutilation, detached limbs which recur throughout the novel; it is this classical castration anxiety which explains his paradoxical attitude toward his manhood, marriage, and children; and finally, Bowling's passivity, femininity, and fear of being thinned out by "streamlining" are given added point and depth by understanding his fears of impotence and the loss of male identity. His very job is ironically figured as with "The Flying Salamander."

At the opening of the novel, we saw that Bowling had a ready sympathy and identification with the Jew (who is, after all, "cut off") and the lady sales person. Now we are in a position to appraise the way his manhood grows smaller and smaller as he gets fatter and fatter. In fact, like Flory, Comstock, Dorothy Hare--the typical Orwell protagonist--his deepest fear is of his own phallic power. Bowling's fatness serves the same defensive role (of reducing his potency) which Comstock's poverty, Dorothy's religiosity, and Flory's hostile stuffy "prickliness" play. Within the idiosyncratic organization of their personalities, the Orwell character grows an impenetrable character armor which

defends him as an invulnerable bastion against his own sexual desires and their gratifications.

Baldly stated, this is precisely why Bowling is so fat--paradoxically, in order to flee from his realistic capabilities into the very thing he fears most. Much of Oedipus's flight from Corinth to Thebes was compulsively ordained in the counterphobic struggle to master his destined destruction; so too, in his great anxiety of castration, as a counterphobic strategy to master the fear, Bowling flees into the very thing which terrifies him. He gets fatter and fatter, as his manhood becomes smaller and smaller, until his sexual possibility diminishes to the vanishing point: it is this complex welter of fears which lies beneath his horror of "streamlining" and the fantasied annihilation by marriage, family, job, and society.

Bowling was not always fat and emasculated, however. He was not always the "tame dairy cow." At the great moment of his boyhood phallicism he had discovered a secret pool,

> not more than twenty yards wide, and rather dark because of the boughs that overhung it. But it was very clear water and immensely deep. I could see ten or fifteen feet down into it . . . . And then I saw something that almost made me jump out of my skin.
>
> It was an enormous fish . . . . It was almost the length of my arm. It glided across the pool, deep under water, and then became a shadow and disappeared into the darker water . . . . I felt as if a sword had gone through me . . . . The brutes that I was watching might be a hundred years old. And not a soul knew about them but me. (CUA, pp. 90-91)

The fantasy of capturing such a fish "had given me a feeling

in my stomach almost as if I was going to be sick," he says. In fantasy, he makes all the arrangements, plans for strong tackle, silk salmon line, number five hooks. He vows to go back the very next Saturday.

But he never does go back. "Something turned up to prevent me," he rationalizes; and the enormous mysterious fish in their clear deep pool remain forever elusive and just beyond his reach. (CUA, p. 92)

The fish from his archaic past--a hundred years old, almost antiquity itself--and the ineffably beautiful, dark yet clear waters of the pool, remain just tantalizingly beyond. Like the jungle pool which Flory discovers in Burmese Days, with its hint of "mermaids, waterfalls, caves of ice . . . wide domes . . . gold mohur trees . . . " (BD, p. 88), the genuine pool of masculine gratification remains forever closed to the Orwellian protagonist. Why this should be is clear from the terms in which Flory refused the jungle headman's offer of drink: he is afraid it might make him sick.

Thus, out of his great fear of penetration, of the loss of identity in the moment of supreme fulfillment, of his very annihilation--Tubby Bowling never does return. His new crisis, which serves to open again all the old fears and possibilities, comes with the money he has won, and his new teeth. The first line of the novel, "The idea really came to me the day I got my new false teeth," sets in motion his

return to the repressed in the strength of his new and mechanical powers; now at the age of forty-five, he will venture back to Binfield equipped with strong line and fishing tackle; now he will fulfill the fantasied gratification of his lifetime and fish for the dark enormous carp of Binfield pool, the lost penis of his childhood.

But now, as had to be, the pool is a garbage dump. This is so incredibly sad; though effective and funny satire, there is an overwhelming pathos in this fact--because it is the paradigmatic fact of all of Orwell's characters, and perhaps of his life as well.

Instead of recovering the vanished joys and wholeness of his childhood, Bowling encounters the horrors of the modern destructiveness. When he returns to Lower Binfield, the pool has been drained and converted into a rubbish heap; but what has taken its place in Arcady is a modern military airfield. All through the novel, Bowling has been watching these bombing planes and prophesying war. Now, at the end of the quest, a bomb actually does drop in the middle of Lower Binfield. It destroys part of a street and "in a ribbon of blood . . . among the broken crockery," Bowling discovers a leg: "Just a leg, with the trouser still on it." (CUA, pp. 264-65) The military men inspect the damage and find the effects of the bomb "disappointing . . . it had only killed three people." One of them, though, has been entirely obliterated--annihilated without trace--"not even a trouser

button to read the funeral service over." (CUA, pp. 265-66)

Thus, the paranoid fears of annihilation, prepared for by dozens of references to bombing, mutilation, murder, and war, have all come true. In the beginning of the novel, for instance, Bowling was disgusted by the tabloid exploitation of a murder and dismemberment: "LEGS; FRESH DISCOVERIES. Just legs, you notice," he observes with moralizing terror. The "LEGS" keep coming up whenever Bowling is within range of a newsboy; and now, the idyll to Binfield ends as his guilt and fear anticipated: the legs, bloody and mutilated, are in his lap.

Chapter Three begins with the noise of a bombing plane flying low overhead; in Part Two of the novel, given over to remimiscence, the key question which ends a chapter is "Which would you sooner listen to, a bluebottle [fly] or a bombing plane?" (CUA, p. 63) Well, of course, the argument of this novel is that bombers have replaced bluebottles in the modern world--and it effectively anticipates 1984; but the novelistic qualities of this book (quite independent of such political insight that it correctly predicts the outbreak and date of World War II) lie in the unconscious creativity of character, the fusion of the man who sees with the thing seen, the modern unity of objective with subjective.

It will be recalled that Tiresias, too, had the gift of prophecy ("I, Tiresias who has foresuffered all enacted on this same divan or bed"), and that Tiresias, too, paid

the price of his gift with his neutricity. Bowling is equally perceptive, equally prophetic, and equally maimed by some Oedipal crime. Neither man nor woman, his fatness is like an earlier blindness, serving to stigmatize his identity as his sensuality, to cut him off from others and estrange him from himself.

In his nostalgic passages, George Bowling makes it clear that the latent content of his childhood was not quite so idyllic as the manifest content of his reveries would suggest. Like everyone's childhood, and particularly those of Orwell's maimed and crippled people, he was made to mind by punishment, trauma, and the threat of annihilation or incorporation; if he said "don't care" and refused to mind, the reply was:

> Don't care was made to care,
> Don't care was hung,
> Don't care was put in a pot
> And boiled till he was done.
> (CUA, p. 45)

The Oedipal conflict and fear behind this memory is clear from his other memory of childhood. At age five, his uncle would rehearse war atrocities, using little George for illustration:

> 'Throw them in the air and skewer them like frogs, I tell you! Same as I might throw this youngster here!' And then he'd swing me up and almost let go of me, and I had a vivid picture of myself flying through the air and landing plonk on the end of a bayonet. (CUA, p. 51)

To be skewered, penetrated, plonked on the bayonet is the

fear underlying the real and unconscious motives and perceptions, no matter how "objectively" valid they may be, of Fatty Bowling.

It is this spoiled and stigmatized identity which brings the alienated person to fantasies of the imminent destruction of the world. Like Gordon Comstock in the preceding novel, and Winston Smith in the following one, George Bowling lives with unremitting world-destruction fantasies. Aside from the matter of objective validity, what makes this Gotterdamerung dream so powerful is the inner anxiety of the character who literally feels that he is losing all contact with the world. The psychotics in mental hospitals often suffer from a panic sense of alienation and fear that they are cut off from their own bodies or sexual organs: the most characteristic of all these insane fantasies is that the world is coming to an end, which is the effort to cope with the panic the individual feels when he projects the inward reality of his contact with the world coming to an end.

It is the loss of contact, amputation, destruction in Lower Binfield which confirms Fatty Bowling in his apocalyptic vision; this is the final effect the Royal Air Force has had with its "five hundred pounds of T.N.T." He concludes what the sane observers can not see is that "War is coming," and there'll be plenty of houses ripped open and human guts plastered all over the street. This is the ultimate lesson of the romantic quest in Lower Binfield. What

it taught him is what he has known since marriage, since childhood and before:

> It's all going to happen. All the things you've got at the back of your mind, the things you're terrified of, the things you tell yourself are just a nightmare or only happen in foreign countries. The bombs, the food-queues, the rubber truncheons, the barbed wire, ... the machine-guns squirting out of bedroom windows. It's all going to happen. I know it . . . . There's no escape . . . grab your spanner and do a bit of face-smashing along with the rest. But there's no way out. It's just something that's got to happen. (CUA, p. 267)

All the nightmare terrors will come true, because within his mind they are already true. This is why Bowling is so acutely perceptive of the hatred and crueltry everywhere about him. When he goes, for example, to a Left Book Club meeting on Fascism, what he is painfully aware of is the hatred within the lecturer who is denouncing fascism. The whole trauma, and the vision of bombs, war, privation, anticipate the dismembered world of 1984.

"It is as though the power to prophecy had been given me," Bowling concludes as he makes his way home from Lower Binfield. " . . . everything . . . is going down, down, into the muck, with the machine-guns rattling all the time." (CUA, p. 169) And, in fact, this apocalyptic vision will be the substance of 1984. The peculiar unity of Orwell's five novels lies in just this: what each major protagonist most fears comes about for the protagonist of the next novel. Thus, the sexual fulfillment and companionship which Flory and Dorothy Hare long for and fear, Gordon Comstock achieves;

the nightmare of bourgeois domesticity which Gordon Comstock fled is the daily portion of George Bowling; and the apocalypse which Bowling glimpses is the whole truth of Winston Smith's life and death of the mind.

It only remains to bring Bowling back from his prophetic vision to the world of domestic low comedy which is his characteristic element. It is not for him to murder or create, but only to submit his fatness to the wife who henpecks and humiliates him. Hilda naturally finds him out (as she was intended to do?), and punishment will be forthcoming. When he went fishing as a boy, he had had three hidings for it in a single day, the last of them across his mother's knee "with the strap." (CUA, p. 75) Following the principles of repetition compulsion, the current fishing expedition must involve identical humiliating punishment. The novel ends with the three possibilities that he thinks are open to him:

> A. To tell her what I'd really been doing and somehow make her really believe it.
> B. To pull the old gag about losing my memory.
> C. To let her go on thinking it was a woman, and take my medicine. (CUA, p. 278)

In the manner of a Donald McGill cartoon, it is quite clear that Tubby Bowling will pull down his pants and take his medicine.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER V.

[1]George Orwell, Coming Up for Air (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950). All references will refer to this edition and will be included in the text accompanied by the designation CUA.

CHAPTER VI.

SADISM, MASOCHISM, AND PARANOIA IN 1984[1]

> "And painefull pleasure turns to pleasing paine." The Faery Queene, Book III, Canto X.

In the posthumous essay, "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " George Orwell recorded a whipping he received at the age of eight for having wet his bed.[2] Since English writers, from Colet to Coleridge, have always been beaten at school, the mere fact of this whipping is in no way unusual. Lamb's "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," for instance, presents a lively image of "the Blue-Coat boys" wailing as they bent beneath "the terrors of the rod" wielded by the notorious flogger, Reverend James Boyer.[3] Coleridge, after insisting that "no tongue can express good Mrs. Boyer," chillingly evokes her voice egging her husband on, crying, "flog them soundly, sir, I beg!"[4]

The headmaster's wife at Orwell's preparatory school was very like Mrs. Boyer, but Orwell's response to his persecutrix was strikingly different from Coleridge's. Instead of avoiding her punishments, he seems to have deliberately

provoked them. After the first beating, he actually felt "very much better." He felt so good, in fact, that he walked out with a grin and loudly announced that "it didn't hurt." The headmaster's wife had naturally heard everything, and his defiance had its intended effect. She instantly screamed after him,

> 'Come here! Come here this instant! What was that you said?'
> 'I said it didn't hurt,' I faltered out.
> 'How dare you say a thing like that? Go in and REPORT YOURSELF AGAIN!'
> This time Sim laid on in real earnest. He continued for a length of time that frightened and astonished me--about five minutes, it seemed--ending up by breaking the riding crop. (SSJ, p. 12)

What is strange about this vignette is that not only was the second beating provoked by the little boy, but he assures us that "it had not hurt very much either."

Why did the second whipping not hurt? Given the facts--a grown man beating a small boy with a bone-handled riding crop for five minutes, until in his rage he breaks it--how could it "not hurt?" This apparently small matter raises the most fundamental questions about Orwell's life and work. Why, in the first place, did the child make such a show of bravado which was bound to earn him fresh punishment? Why does Orwell, after presenting this bitter memory of injustice and pain, turn right around and justify it? He tells us that his bed-wetting finally did stop, but only because he received still another beating; he almost lovingly recalls the "whack, whack, whack . . . of a thin rattan cane." Thus, after so

many years, with the red weals and smarts still fresh in memory, he concludes:

> It is a mistake to think such methods do not work. They work very well for their special purpose. Indeed, I doubt whether classical education ever has been or can be successfully carried on without corporal punishment. (SSJ, p. 18)

This is like Dr. Johnson's attributing his matchless attainments in Latin to spankings. "My master whipt me well," he said; "without that, sir, I should have done nothing."[5] Orwell, however, is ostensibly condemning the barbarous practices of English public school methods. On the surface, at least, the title, "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " is heavily ironic. What, then, are we to make of his ambivalence? What meaning can we attribute to his justifying the cruelties perpetrated on him? Is it possible, shocking though it seems, that the final irony of the essay and its title is that the small boy did receive the cruelties with "joy?"

Before attempting to understand Orwell's ambivalent sado-masochism, however, it is important to note that rods, punishments, whippings, do indeed obsessively prevade the novels and essays. In his very first book, Burmese Days, Orwell gives the impression that the British were in Burma in order to whip--as they probably were. The life story of a minor character, Francis, a half-caste, is interpolated in order to give insight into the English missionary psychology. The father of Francis took a native woman, and in

his missionary zeal, administered regular beatings to the whole family; otherwise, there was neglect. As Francis says, "of my father, sir, I remember little, but he was a very choleric man and many whackings . . . both for self, little half-brother and two mothers." (BD, p. 120) Ellis, the "nigger-hater," is a more central character of Burmese Days for he is the very prototype of the British Raj. "Bamboo-ing," according to his theory, is "the only thing that makes any impression on the Burman . . . . Brought out of the jail in bullock carts, yelling, with their women plastering mashed bananas on their backsides. That's something they do understand." (BD, p. 112) Indeed, all of Orwell's personal guilt and hatred of injustice and colonialism are bound up in the central images of physical cruelty. When a Burman is suspected as a thief, for example, the police detection methods are brutally simple:

> 'Turn Round!' the suspect is ordered.
> 'Bend over!' His buttocks are exposed to reveal the scars left by a previous flogging.
> 'He is an old offender. Therefore, he stole the ring!' (BD, p. 75)

Thus, the essence of Orwell's indictment of British imperialism is carried by the English lament for "the dear dead days when the British Raj was the British Raj and please give the bearer fifteen lashes." (BD, p. 34)

Often it is the women who are singled out as the most conspicuous torturers. Mrs. Lackersteen, with her canted name, adjures her husband to whip her rickshaw man quite in

the style of the wife of an English public school head who demands the humiliation of the boys who are her subjects. It is Mrs. Lackersteen who plays the decisive role in frustrating the hero's courtship and causing his final destruction in Burma. One of Orwell's earliest memories of Crossgates was of "an intimidating, masculine-looking person wearing a riding habit, or something I took to be a riding habit," who was there, as he imagined, for the express purpose of beating him with a hunting whip. (SSJ, p. 10) What is important is not that this strange woman in the "riding habit" is the prototype for Mrs. Lackersteen in Burma, but that the little boy's fantasy is so classical an example of sado-masochism that it could come straight out of Sacher-Masoch's Venus in Furs, riding crop and all. And it was all a fantasy. Indeed, a number of writers on Orwell who were either at school with him or attended what they say were similar public schools, insist that Orwell's presentation of Crossgates is unfair and exaggerated. Cyril Connolly, Christopher Hollis, Richard Rees, question the "truth" of Orwell's chamber of horrors; and A.S.F. Gow, Orwell's tutor at Eton who knew St. Cyprian's well, calls "Such, Such Were the Joys . . ." an "utterly dishonest" picture; Lawrence Brander and Orwell's sister Avril also question the "truth" of the hellish childhood of the boys at Crossgates-St. Cyprian's.[6] This seems to be the significant biographical fact: that Crossgates does not correspond to any "real"

school at all, but to the truth of a child's feverish imagination of whippings and cruelties beyond rational belief. It is only when these horrors are understood as representing unconscious fantasies that their paradoxical and exaggerated qualities come into focus.

In Orwell's fantasy, authority always whips. Although only the women use rickshaws in Burmese Days, the men too are either continually punishing or lamenting the old days when "fifteen lashes" were dispensed to "one's butler" for any trivial offense. (BD, p. 29) Orwell was appalled by what he saw in Burma. He later wrote of the "intolerable sense of guilt" which overwhelmed him at the sight of "the dirty work of Empire at close quarters," symbolized by the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos. (BD, p. 120) The interesting biographical question of what the young socialist, Orwell, was doing as a policeman in Burma in the first place, remains unanswered. Flory, the protagonist of Burmese Days, comes to his anti-colonialist views gradually as a result of his experience doing "the dirty work of Empire;" but Orwell was a committed left-winger from Eton days or before, an admirer of Lenin, a rebel in all things, who yet goes straight from school into the Indian Imperial Police. The biographer of Orwell will have a greater difficulty here than did Orwell with the fictional character of Flory; for it is hardly possible to claim ignorance or political innocence, nor will it do to throw up

one's hands with the triumphant shout of "paradox." Beneath the typical contradiction here, as in Orwell's apologia for the Crossgates "methods" after he has obviously exaggerated their cruelty, is the Janus face of sado-masochism. Freud maintained that the child who is a victim always identifies with the aggressor, that the child within the unconscious perceives in black and white absolutes and then fuses or condenses both antinomies, that sadism and masochism are complementary sides of a single coin. To make sense of the paradoxical biographical facts or the dense literary symbolism, we will have to have recourse to the psychoanalytic theories of unconscious dynamics.

From the psychoanalytic point of view, pity is, indeed, the "cruel virtue." It is the reaction formation and defense against inordinate sadism from the unconscious. The hallmark of neurotic origin and what can distinguish it from normal human compassion is extreme, pervading, and absolute intensity. Precisely this quality of extremism is what characterizes Orwell's social criticism and lends to it its peculiar force. An exaggerated sense of social injustice and outrage is similarly an attribute of the "anal character type" who uses social reality to externalize his own sado-masochistic fantasies. From the masochistic side of the unconscious, he identifies with victims everywhere; from the sadistic side of the unconscious, his righteous indignation in combat with "evil" and "injustice" justifies him

in unleashing his own aggression. Furthermore, the super-ego of such neurotics identifies with the very authority--government, social system, parent--which it struggles against. It is this identification with the aggressor which so often insures the failure of his revolt, as it reveals the hidden end of such rebellion to be not the establishment of humane principles, but the provocation of the social environment into acting the role of punishing parent.

When Orwell's persona in Burma, the hideously stigmatized Flory, fights against the caste system, his struggle lacks heroism or nobility because it is so infantile in origin and so self-defeating in intention. It reminds us only of the wisdom of the Talmudic advice to "fear over-righteousness." But Orwell's righteousness--somehow associated with whips and beatings--is the central characteristic of his work. The triumphant moment of Animal Farm, for example, is that first pure revolutionary act of the animals when they burn the whips; "they capered with joy when they saw the whips going up in flames."[7] Orwell understands the meaning of the whips very well indeed, perhaps too well. Any animal caught singing "Beasts of England" [read Internationale] on the hostile encircling farms is, of course, punished by flogging; and when the pigs [read Communists] betray the principles of the revolution, they naturally "carry whips in their trotters." (AF, p. 148) Thus, even in the allegorical animal world, the whip is the symbol of injustice.

One symbolic center of Coming Up for Air is the picture of a store manager casually humiliating the shopgirl who is his victim "as if he'd been cutting into her with a whip . . . . The girl flinched like a dog that sees the whip." (CUA, pp. 16-17) George Bowling, the Fat Man who is yet Orwell's Everyman as Little Man, witnesses this scene and it brilliantly foreshadows his own humiliation at the conclusion of the novel. In the final scene, Tubby Bowling is punished by his wife, Hilda, much as he was punished by his parents and teachers when he was still a boy. He says manfully that he must "take [his] medicine" (CUA, p. 191) from Hilda with the same abandon with which he dismissed the "three hidings" he was given in a single day when he went fishing.

Dorothy Hare, the protagonist of A Clergyman's Daughter, also comes into focus in association with images of physical cruelty. Her companion in the hop fields, the petty criminal Nobby, remembers the "horrible suppleness of the Borstal canes," (ACD, p. 113) and the pretty little children of the hop pickers feel them. "Go on, Rose," screams the costerwoman at the tiny, pale girl, "Pick them 'ops up! I'll warm your a--- for you!" (ACD, p. 124)

The clergyman's daughter herself is an initiate in the ways of humiliation and physical punishment. She constantly wields a "disciplinary pin" with which she punishes herself for the most trivial and fantastic offenses; unable

to reconcile herself to her own sexuality, she pricks her skin until the blood runs. In "The Economic Problem of Masochism," Freud pointed out that in masochism the ethical sense itself becomes sexualized. Conscience which originally arose as a sublimation, a desexualization of intimate family relationships, becomes sexualized once more; and the conscience is swallowed up by the masochism. Consequently, masochism creates a temptation to perform "sinful" actions which must then be expiated by the sadistic conscience or by chastisement from the great parental power of Destiny. In order to provoke punishment from this last representative of the parents, the masochist must do what is inexpedient, must act against his own interests, must ruin his own prospects which open out in the real world, and must perhaps destroy his own real existence.

This Freudian statement of the dynamics of masochism, in all its baldness, offers a formula for understanding Orwell's five major novels and their personae. Dorothy Hare sins (in her fantasy), suffers degradation and is finally rehabilitated when she returns to the emptiness of life-in-death with her clergyman father. Flory commits suicide in Burma after struggling with the possibility of marriage and fulfillment for the entire action of the novel. Gordon Comstock does finally achieve what Flory and Dorothy could not do, as he allows himself to be forced into marriage and makes the aspidistra fly. George Bowling never does come up for air,

but frantically suffocates in his own estrangement from a world whose destruction is inevitable. The organic unity of the five novels is precisely this: that the fear of each protagonist is realized by the protagonist of the succeeding novel. At the end of Coming Up for Air, Bowling feels as though the power of prophecy had been given him, and what he sees is the world of 1984.

> It's all going to happen. All the things you've got at the back of your mind, the things you're terrified of, the things that you tell yourself are just a nightmare . . . . The bombs, the food-queues, the slogans, the enormous faces, the machine-guns squirting out of bedroom windows. It's all going to happen . . . grab your spanner and rush out to do a bit of face-smashing along with the others. But there's no way out. It's just something that's got to happen. (CUA, p. 267)

It is worth emphasizing that not only was this conclusion reached before the onset of the Cold War, but before the outbreak of World War II when an English statesman saw only "peace in our time." After conceding the prophetic power of Bowling, and Orwell behind him, it would seem appropriate to inquire of the sources of such power. It is obvious that the nightmare vision goes back a very long way, back all the way to "Crossgates" in fact, when Orwell, in spite his success in winning a scholarship to Eton and graduating in triumph, could view his future only as "ruin. What kind of ruin I did not know," he says.

> Perhaps the colonies or an office stool, perhaps prison or an early death . . . . I did know that the future was dark. Failure, failure, failure--failure behind me, failure ahead of me--that was by far the deepest conviction that I carried away." (SSJ, pp. 49-50)

Orwell carried this vision with him throughout his life, and the five novels represent an obsessive attempt to work out the variants of his dreadful destiny. Down and Out in Paris and London was the direct confrontation with all that he most feared, and it made him curiously secure to renounce all striving, to know that he had "touched bottom" at last in the world of tramps and hoboes.[8] But of course, it was merely a game of neurotic fantasy played out for reassurance and expiation. In a moment of real crisis, Orwell, unlike the genuine down-and outers, could always put the touch on an old friend for a "fiver" as he remained the "gentleman" whose old school tie and Etonian diction would always rescue when he had gone too far down. What is of the highest importance about the game of going down, however, is that it represents the efforts of the self to master an overpowering sense of dread and unconscious need for punishment by fleeing into the feared thing. The five novels work in the same counter-phobic way: the ego tries to master the trauma by rushing into it. What Flory and Dorothy Hare most fear is marital fulfillment; this is what Gordon Comstock achieves in the face of his greatest fear--total surrender to the bourgeois Money God who will swallow him up; George Bowling, after two kids and a sour marriage, has been swallowed by the suburban void of West Bletchley; what he fears is his fantasy of the destruction of the world, and as he suffocates, he predicts the thing that is to come in the alienated,

dehumanized society of 1984.

The "dark future" closing in, the bombs falling in the imagination of Gordon Comstock and Tubby Bowling (guilt-ridden as they are, they deeply wish for it), exile to the colonies, failure, an office stool, prison and an early death--it had all been implicit in the thirteen year old who was caned (brutally, in fantasy) for not doing his Latin. Orwell tortures his protagonists again and again with these same versions of Destiny which is implacable and dreadful: Flory to the colonies and early death, Dorothy to prison, Comstock to ruin and an office stool, and finally, Winston Smith to a nightmare world of terror unprecedented in modern literature.

All of Orwell's life and career was thus the preparation for writing 1984, but the template upon which the wounds were laid down was the whipping he received at Crossgates. Anthony West has been much berated by the old friends of Orwell, who would read only the surface of his novels, for insisting upon the connection between the torture scenes of 1984 and Orwell's boyhood at Crossgates. But connection there is, though it may not be quite as mechanical as West's identification of Big Brother with Bingo, the headmaster's wife in "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " However, West is essentially correct when he concludes that 1984 is a Gothic exposure of Orwell's "hidden wound" and represents a "generalized sadism that is clearly beyond control."[9] What

remains, however, is the task of uncovering the wound, determining how it is embodied in the art of 1984, and unfolding the contribution of unconscious masochism and the dynamics of paranoia to the plot, imagery, characterization, and symbolism of Orwell's highest achievement.

In analyzing the role of "provocation" in the masochist, Theodore Reik quotes an old German proverb: "Was du willst, dass man dir tu, das fuge einem Andern zu." This is a perverted reversal of the familiar rule of the Good Samaritan in which the unconscious commands the masochist to inflict precisely that aggression and punishment upon another which he wishes the other to do to him. The real aim of the overt sadism and pseudo-aggression is to provoke the desired punishment.[10]

In the first chapter of 1984, Winston Smith "voluptuously" slides his pen over the smooth paper, printing "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" until he fills up half a page with his secret act of defiance. What is essential to understanding the psychological meaning of his revolt, as well as its consequences, is an awareness of the emotional tone of the passage. His act is not only full of infantile sexuality--"his pen slid voluptuously over the smooth paper"--but thoroughly childish in its nature and intention. He has not opened this secret diary in order to preserve some shred of integrity for the ego, but on the contrary, to destroy it. He knows from the very outset that "the Thought Police would get him."

It is this certainty of defeat and punishment, as well as the futile immaturity of the act iself, which reveals his deep neurosis:

> theyll shoot me i dont care theyll shoot me in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother they always shoot you in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother-- (1984,

What leads up to this conviction of the bullet penetrating the back of his head, what had been in his mind just the moment before writing, was the sadistic fantasy he remembered from Two Minutes Hate, the "vivid, beautiful hallucinations" of flogging a naked girl to death with a rubber truncheon. (1984, p. 16)

A few minutes later, he gets up and leaves his diary open on the table. "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER was written all over it, in letters big enough to be legible across the room." (1984, p. 20) A bit later, a neighbor's child shoots him in the back of the neck, but only with a toy pistol. Nevertheless, it was "an agonizingly painful blow . . . as though a red-hot wire had been jabbed into him." (1984, p. 23) While thinking of the sting of the catapult bullet, the hot pain at the back of the neck, he wonders whether he "could find something more to write in the diary. Suddenly he began thinking of O'Brien again." (1984, p. 24)

Thus, from the very outset of his rebellion, the hot pain from behind and the secret rapport with O'Brien the tormentor have been foretold. Winston's eyes had crossed

with O'Brien's during Two Minutes Hate and O'Brien's eyes continue to penetrate his in his imagination. He did not know "whether O'Brien was a friend or enemy. Nor did it even seem to matter greatly. There was a link of understanding between them more important than affection . . . . 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,' he had said." (1984, p. 25) Winston only knew that it would come true.

Seven years later it does come true. In Room 101 of the Ministry of Love, Smith meets O'Brien again. From behind him, almost as an extension of O'Brien's body, stepped a guard with a "long black truncheon in his hand." (1984, p. 197) In this the same rubber truncheon Winston had used, in imagination, to flog the girl to death?

> 'You knew this, Winston,' said O'Brien . . . . 'You have always known it.'
> Yes, he saw now, he had always known it. [As the beating begins, exploding everything into the yellow light of inconceivable pain, Winston thinks that there is] nothing in the world so bad as physical pain. (1984, p. 197)

In the torture chamber of the Ministry of Love, Winston is strapped down, his body held so that he cannot move. "Even the back of his head was gripped in some manner. O'Brien was looking down at him gravely . . . a slight movement of O'Brien's hand, a wave of pain flooded his body." (1984, p. 202)

This is "the place where there is no darkness." Here, in the torture chamber of the Ministry of Love, Winston's

cell mate is a poet who insists on rhyming rod with God, (1984, p. 192) here his arm has been disabled by blows from a truncheon, and it is here that Winston will achieve his deepest gratification. "Of pain you could wish for only one thing: that it should stop. Never, for any reason on earth, could you wish for an increase of pain," so Winston thinks in his conscious mind. "In the face of pain there are no heroes, no heroes, he thought over and over as he writhed on the floor," (1984, p. 197) during the beating administered by O'Brien's torturer. Yet, during his interrogation by the "gentle and patient" O'Brien, Winston will do just this--obtain even greater, more excruciating pain for himself:

> O'Brien held up his left hand, its back toward Winston, with the thumb hidden and the four fingers extended.
>
> 'How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?'
>
> 'Four.'
>
> 'And if the party says that it is not four but five--then how many?'
>
> 'Four.'
>
> The word ended with a gasp of pain. The needle of the dial had shot up to fifty-five. The sweat had sprung out all over Winston's body. The air tore into his lungs and issued again in deep groans which even by clenching his teeth he could not stop. O'Brien watched him, the four fingers still extended. He drew back the lever. This time the pain was only slightly eased.
>
> 'How many fingers, Winston?'
>
> 'Four! Four! What else can I say? Four!'
>
> The needle must have risen again, but he did not look at it. The heavy, stern face and the four fingers filled his vision. The fingers stood up before his eyes like pillars, enormous, blurry, and seeming to vibrate, but unmistakably four.
>
> 'How many fingers, Winston?'
>
> 'Four! Stop it, stop it! How can you go on? Four! Four!' (1984, p. 206)

The question, it would seem, is how can Winston go on? Why does he force his torturer to inflict even higher increments of pain? The answer to this difficult problem has been suggested in the psychoanalytic theory of the paradox of masochism. Whereas people normally tend to avoid any pain, in the masochistic phenomena pain seems to give pleasure and to be striven for. The masochist embodies the paradox of avoiding and denying the feared punishment by actually suffering a lesser pain, which by virtue of his provocation is felt to be under control. Any fear can be fought by the anticipatory action of bringing about that which is feared. As Theodore Reik puts it, for the masochist a terrible end is chosen to avoid a terror without end.[11] Furthermore, masochists are individuals whose ability to achieve pleasure is inhibited by anxiety and guilt; the perversion represents a condensation of the reassuring measures with an erogenous pleasure; thus, the sensation of pain becomes a source of sexual excitement.

The first clinical investigator to recognize this connection was Havelock Ellis, who generalized his experience with patients thus: "Pain acts as a sexual stimulant because it is the most powerful of all methods for arousing emotion."[12] It constitutes a "special case of what we shall come to know as erotic symbolism." Ellis arrived at this conclusion as a result of many case studies of people who were excited by ideas of torture, whose primary sexual aim

was to be chained, fettered, sent to prison, and physically punished, restrained, humiliated. The more recent observations of Theodore Reik confirm Ellis's psychological studies. He presents the history of a man who suffered from a "moloch fantasy" in which he was sexually stimulated by imagining himself being sacrificed to a barbaric God after being rendered passive and helpless, and then tortured on a red-hot grate.[13] His fantasies came straight out of Fox's Book of Martyrs, and it is noteworthy that librarians complain that this book is among the most frequently mutilated. The fact that the gruesome illustrations of Fox's Book of Martyrs are continually torn out would seem to offer some evidence for Freud's designation of masochism as the most frequent and widespread of the perversions. George Bowling, in Coming Up for Air, also tells us that he "likes the pictures" in Fox's Book of Martyrs; (CUA, p. 104) and Winston Smith seems to live in it.

In the climatic scene of 1984, Winston is strapped on his back, held down at every point, utterly passive and helpless. O'Brien's hand is on a lever which regulates the exact degree of electrically induced agony which Winston will suffer, and he feels that "his body is being wrenched out of shape, the joints . . . slowly torn apart . . . the vertabrae snapping apart and the spinal fluid dripping out of them." (1984, p. 202) This is martyrdom, indeed. And it is all self-willed, for by the childish act of defiance, by

insisting upon the truth that two and two make four, Winston has it in his power to force O'Brien to increase the pain until he chooses to submit. Torture is always by a kind of mutual agreement, as Captain Segura informs Wormold in Greene's Our Man in Havana.[14] Thomas Mann goes even further in pointing out the mechanism of agreement. "The capacity for self-surrender . . . for becoming a tool, for the most unconditional and utter self-abnegation, was but the reverse side of that other power to will and to command."[15]

Freud and Ellis attribute the origin of sexual feelings connected with cruelty to the "Bemachtigungstrieb" or mastery impulse. Both the infliction and suffering of pain are, thus, the "result of the exertion of power."[16] While Winston Smith lies helpless and passive on his bed of pain, he is catechized on the subject of power. O'Brien, kindly, with his "air of a schoolmaster" questioning an erring pupil, asks:

> 'How does one man assert his power over another, Winston?'
>
> Winston thought. 'By making him suffer,' he said.
>
> 'Exactly. By making him suffer. Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation.' (1984, p. 219)

Here Orwell brilliantly conveys the infantile roots of the sado-masochistic impulse. The infant, passive and dependent in his crib, nevertheless believes in his own autarchy: he cries, and satisfaction magically appears. Emotionally disturbed people, who conserve and regress to this infantile

belief throughout their adult lives, consider themselves omnipotent. The sado-masochistic phenomena, therefore, constitute a megalomaniac, infantile striving for domination. Because of the trick of the fantasy called identification, it makes little difference intraphysically whether the behavior is sadistic aggression or passive suffering.

The importance of identification, reversal, and the mastery impulse which they mediate is to be seen in Orwell's use of the ideas of James Burnham in 1984. Just before setting to work on 1984, Orwell wrote a polemic against Burnham's The Managerial Revolution, in which he bitterly castigated Burnham for believing that "politics is simply the struggle for power."[17] He summarized Burnham's predictions for the future with the vision of "great super-states grouped round the main industrial centres of Europe, Asia, and America. The super-states will fight among themselves . . . . Internally, each society will be hierarchical . . . with a mass of slaves at the bottom."[18] Then Orwell denied this conception of the evolution of world politics with the angry rebuke that Burnham worships power.

> It is clear that Burnham is fascinated by the spectacle of power. . . . It is clear that in his mind the idea of greatness is inextricably bound up with the idea of cruelty . . . . The huge, invincible, everlasting slave empire of which Burnham appears to dream will not be established, or if established will not endure, because slavery is no longer a stable basis for human society.[19]

Yet, it is Burnham's prophecies which form the political structure of 1984, from the three warring superstates to the oligarchical enslavement of the proles. After polemicizing, Orwell takes over the opponent wholesale and incorporates him. Thus, when he writes of the English intelligentsia--typified by Burnham--admiring the "power, energy, and cruelty of the Nazi regime,"[20] he is most truly and desperately writing about himself. In 1943, Orwell was doing propaganda for the British government, beaming broadcasts to India aimed at preventing the outbreak of revolution there. As a socialist, he must have been revolted by the nature and purpose of the work, however necessary, in the middle of World War II. In Horizon, he attacked a book by Lionel Fielden and called the propagandist "a neurotic working off a private grudge and actually desirous of the exact opposite of the thing he advocates. We live in a lunatic world in which opposites are constantly changing with one another."[21]

The lunatic world in which opposites change places, are reversed, become identified with one another, was the inner world of Orwell's own unconscious. Its dynamics and mechanisms are to be understood by study of the autocratic child within. Freud related the mastery impulse of the child to sadism and the anal erogenous zone because the child's earliest experiences with "control" and the intense stimuli of pleasure and pain relate to that zone. Aside from the

theory of defense mechanisms such as identification, reversal, projection, Freud's most universal contribution to the modern understanding of personality was the conception of infantile sexuality and its genetic organization. Pleasure striving, according to the psychoanalytic view, proceeds by development throughout the life of the individual, from its earliest focus on the mouth and sucking of the mother's breast in the oral stage to a subsequent center in the anus and concern with the products of defecation and the experiences of toilet training. It is out of these experiences of the anal phase of the child's development that sado-masochism and the megalomaniac striving for power grow. In "Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex," Freud attributed anal sadism to this phase of life: " . . . feelings of cruelty emanate from the mastery impulse (Bemachtigungstrieb) and . . . carries with it the danger that a connection formed in childhood between cruelty and the erogenous impulses will not be broken in later life."[22] Freud would not have been surprised by the provocative behavior of the eight-year-old in Orwell's essay "Such, Such Were the Joys . . . " who claimed that the most severe whipping "did not hurt," because he had studied the expression of similar joys in Rousseau's childhood. "An erogenous source of the passive impulse for cruelty (masochism) is found in the painful irritation of the gluteal region, which is familiar to all educators since the confessions of J. J. Rousseau."[23] Nor

would Freud have been surprised that the first word in the vocabulary of "The Principles of Newspeak" should be hit. There are no accidents in art, nor in the phenomena of mental functioning.

Thus, all infants at some stage in the development of their sexual needs have sadistic impulses; but when the consequent guilt and repression become overwhelming, the original aggressive impulse is turned inward against the self and full-fledged masochism emerges. Active aggression and cruelty are converted into passive suffering under the impact of guilt and fear. Berliner emphasizes masochism as "a way of hating without great risk" and suffering as "a weapon of the weak . . . when undisguised aggression is dangerous."[24] Freud defined masochism as "a union between destructiveness directed inwards and sexuality,"[25] and Theodore Reik called it "a kind of sadism which has chosen the ego for its victim."[26]

As a result of his clinical experience, Reik enumerated the characteristics of masochism. It is, to begin with, essentially passive: the masochist has a "feeling of impotence . . . submission to another person . . . . " The technique of masochism is the "provocative factor." Again and again the Orwell personae play out their roles as humiliated and wronged martyrs by enticing their environments to victimize them. They are psychic agents provocateur whose hidden aim is bad treatment and exploitation; but in order

to satisfy the unconscious craving for punishment by creating an inimical outer world, the psychic masochist engages in pseudo-aggressive acts against the world around him. Thus, the provocation, according to Reik, "represents sadism as the sleeping partner of masochism."[27]

The psychological authenticity of Orwell's characters derives from the union of sadism, provocation, and masochism. The power of resistance to society of Flory, Dorothy Hare, Bowling, Comstock, Winston Smith is quintessentially ignoble because it is rooted in sado-masochistic substratum. "In the face of pain, there are no heroes, no heroes," thought Winston; this is certainly true when the pain is unconsciously desired to satisfy a perverted craving for punishment. When Winston is beaten by O'Brien's henchman, he admits that it was all foretold and foreknown from the moment his eyes held O'Brien's during Two Minute Hate years ago. The "desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in" (1984, p. 16) and his sexually charged flogging of a pretty girl with a rubber truncheon are all products of the sadistic side of the fantasy; shocking as it sounds, the obverse masochistic fantasy is that in his relation to O'Brien, he is the pretty girl; and appropriately enough, the same rubber truncheon is used on him.

That the hatred and sadism of 1984 represent the neurotic psyche as much as the authoritarian tendencies of modern politics is clear from the preview Orwell gives of

Two Minutes Hate in Coming Up for Air. There, at an ordinary socialist political meeting in merry middle-class England, Bowling concludes that the purpose and meaning of the fascist lecture is nothing but "hate, hate, hate. Let's all get together and have a good hate. Over and over. It gives you the feeling that something has got inside your skull and is hammering down on your brain." (CUA, p. 175) In the penultimate tortures of 1984, Winston's nervous system is felt to be drained, with the spinal fluid seeping out of it, and pieces taken out of his brain;" (1984, pp. 202, 212) and then, when it is squeezed empty and hollow, then says O'Brien, "we shall fill you with ourselves." (1984, p. 211)

Winston's feelings during torture are dominated by his love for his torturer. He has been tormented "to the edge of lunacy," but he can still say: "It made no difference. In some sense that went deeper than friendship, they were intimates . . . . He had never loved him so deeply as at this moment." (1984, p. 208) Indeed, this sado-masochistic relationship had its origin seven years before when, at the very outset, Winston had "felt deeply drawn to him, and not solely because he was intrigued by the contrast between O'Brien's urbane manner and prize-fighter's physique." Feminine and neurasthenic in build himself, childishly incoherent in expression, Winston is attracted to the large, burly man "with a thick neck and a coarse,

humorous, brutal face." (1984, p. 13) But it is not solely a physical or even intellectual love that Winston feels; from the very beginning of their relationship, he knows that O'Brien is a member of the Inner Party, which he ostensibly hates and fears; but from his first sight of O'Brien, he is sexually attracted to a rough, "thick" phallicism expressive of coarse brutality. It is the thought of O'Brien which pops into his head when he feels a hot pain on the back of his neck and immediately begins the defiant, doomed act of writing in his diary.

Above all, it is the image of penetration which gives 1984 its terrifying and pathological intensity. "We shall fill you with ourselves," said O'Brien; his mind "contained Winston." (1984, p. 211) It is this horror which Winston both fears and desires. It is at this point that we enter the most dangerous ground of paranoiac delusions of incorporation. It is this imagery which yields the unbearable force of the primitive unconscious to the structure and meaning of 1984.

Freud's view of paranoia was that the core of the disease among men was the "homosexual wishful phantasy of loving a man." By a brilliant linguistic analysis he discovered the mechanism to be "the remarkable fact that the forms of paranoia can all be represented as contradictions of the single proposition: 'I (a man) love him (a man).'" The most characteristic of all the symptoms is the delusion

of persecution.

> The proposition 'I (a man) love him' is contradicted by: Delusions of <u>persecution</u>; for they loudly assert: 'I do not <u>love</u> him--I <u>hate</u> him.'
>
> This contradiction . . . cannot, however, become conscious to a paranoiac in this form. The mechanism of symptom-formation in paranoia requires that internal perceptions--feelings--be replaced by external perceptions. Consequently, the proposition 'I hate him' becomes transformed by projection into another one: '<u>He hates me</u>' and '<u>He persecutes me</u>.' . . . Observation leaves no doubt that the persecutor is someone who was once loved.[28]

All the conviction which the nightmare world of <u>1984</u> carries derives from the tensions set up by these mechanisms of paranoia. The action of the novel is the working out of the proposition, "He hates (persecutes) me." Ubiquitous Big Brother is always watching. This justifies Winston in his hatred of the Party and O'Brien who is its representative. But the last words of the novel, "He loved Big Brother," reveal Winston's secret aim to be the absolute erotic submission he finally makes. All through the novel, Winston Smith attempts to deny his love for O'Brien, as all through the novel it has been his central motive. As a result, when he comes to say at the end, "I love Big Brother," he has finally regressed to the core of his personality, all the secondary elaborations of which have tried to deny by manipulating Big Brother to hate and persecute and erotically torture. Thus, BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU--I LOVE BIG BROTHER form an identity of opposites which is the structure and action of <u>1984</u>. The provocations and

inevitable punishment of Winston Smith are the plot of the book, and they are the effort to deny what is implicit in his character from his first experience of erotic love for O'Brien.

To recapitulate: a normal person without pathological self-damaging tendencies is not slavishly submissive. He has an "opposing self" which safeguards his life and seeks biological gratification against the claims of repressive society. He will oppose when he has a reasonable chance of success and when failure does not mean self-destruction. It is quite otherwise with Winston Smith. He knows that he is defeated from the outset of his rebellion, and in spite of that foreknowledge, because of it, he persists to his end. "Theyll shoot me i dont care theyll shoot me in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother--" The absence of punctuation, the lower case "i" and the childishly defiant tone, the certainty that authority "would get him," (1984, p. 19) the awkward scrawl like a schoolboy writing punishment lines, the shame he feels while perpetrating the act--(1984, p. 20) all condition the tone and attitude of his rebellion as pitifully immature and totally lacking in dignity or heroism. Furthermore, the imagery and the action are correlatives of his fixated sexuality as they are the symptoms of his psychopathology. The scrawled DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER is for him "voluptuous" as the paper itself is "creamy." In order not to smudge this

creamy paper, he leaves the diary wide open on the table, with its letters almost big enough to be legible across the room, when he hears a knocking at the door. "It was an inconceivably stupid thing to do." (1984, p. 20) Quite. Why then does he do it? Why does a little boy loudly proclaim that a whipping doesn't hurt when it is sure to earn him another? Why does Winston insist upon the word "four" when each repetition makes his body quiver with greater electric shocks?

> How singular is the thing called pleasure, and how curiously related to pain . . . . They grow together out of one head or stem.[29]

In Orwell's imaginary world, pain is the means of pleasure; and it is the only one, for the normal heterosexual path is blocked: "He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones." (1984, p. 12) If the sight of a young, athletic girl with shapely hips is enough to fill him "with black terror," what then does he like? He answers in the next paragraph with his reverie on O'Brien's physique, thick neck, coarse, brutal face. (1984, p. 13) This is why he experiences such sexual shame at the thought that O'Brien will catch him and punish him by shooting in the back of the neck; and this is why the red-hot pain he feels when a child shoots a catapult bullet at him returns him to the thought of O'Brien and forces him back to the voluptuous writing of the diary. The voice had appeared to him in a dream, out of the dark, and the understanding existed: "We

shall meet in the place where there is no darkness," it had said, and the prophecy made by the voice "would come true." (1984, pp. 24-25) The place without darkness is the continually illuminated cellar of the Ministry of Love, where they shoot you from behind, or drain the body of its vital fluids and fill you with themselves. "He [Winston] was writing the diary for O'Brien, to O'Brien." (1984, p. 69)

It is instructive that the famous "Schreber Case" which Freud analyzed in developing his theory of paranoia centered on the delusion of persecution. Schreber suffered from the feeling that he was the victim of horrible homosexual assault at the hand of God Himself, and finally "voluptuously accepted this destiny."[30] Winston's attitude toward O'Brien, the Big Brother, is congruent with Schreber's in every detail. He, too, voluptuously accepts his destiny as a "feminine saviour" who will be penetrated and filled up by Omnipotence:

> What was happening was only the working out of a process that had started years ago . . . . The last step was something that would happen in the Ministry of Love. He had accepted it. The end was contained in the beginning. But it was frightening; or, more exactly, it was like a foretaste of death . . . . He had the sensation of stepping into the dampness of a grave, and it was not much better because he had always known that the grave was there and waiting for him. (1984, p. 132)

The characteristic Orwellian irony at its deepest and most emotionally powerful level proceeds by a double reversal and double contrast: for Winston, the tortures of

the Ministry of Love are love indeed. The secret aim which informs his every defiant act is to arrive at the lovingly punishing hand of O'Brien; but he does so by denying the homosexual impulse up until the last page of the novel. Thus, the paranoid mechanism of denying the statement "I love Big Brother" is "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" which he forces himself to print in childish capital letters again and again. By leaving the diary open, "inconceivably stupid" as it appears to him consciously, he shows that his unconscious end is the erotic apotheosis he ultimately achieves. It is in this ironic sense that the last four words of the novel, "He loved Big Brother," are to be read. He has always done so. The pseudo-revolts which constitute the action and plot are simultaneously the means of denying the erotic impulse (according to the paranoiac formula: I love him = I hate him = He hates me), and fulfilling it.

What causes this regression to homosexual impulses which are so ambivalently feared and desired in paranoia? Within the personality of Winston Smith, the answers may be sought in his thoughts and acts at the climax of the novel. "It had happened at last. The expected message had come. All his life, it seemed to him, he had been waiting for this to happen." (1984, p. 130) It is, of course, an invitation from O'Brien for Winston to visit his flat, to come up and look at some verbs in the tenth edition of the Newspeak dictionary. Winston, though his impulse is to run away,

immediately accepts. Consciously, he thinks O'Brien will invite him into a political conspiracy; but his throbbing heart, his guilt, his excitement by O'Brien's physical presence convey the deep sexual undertone. Now it is that he feels the "foretaste of death" and goes to sleep with Julia.

Winston wakes up from a dream, after sleeping with Julia, with his eyes full of tears. His dream was of his mother and a small boy being blown to pieces. "Do you know," he tells Julia, "that until this moment I believed I had murdered my mother?" (1984, p. 133) This is the key to paranoia: he believes the Oedipal delusion that he has murdered his mother, and accepting its reality, believes in the inevitable retaliation.

What seems not to have been noticed in the criticism is that all of Orwell's novels are about the sexual relations of men and women. These relations are always warped, frustrated and perverted. To understand why this should be and how it works, we shall have to consider the Oedipal triangle in 1984.

Theemotional opposition between the pretty, twenty-seven year old Julia and the large, thick-necked O'Brien is established in the opening pages of the novel. Winston's first sight of them is together:

> . . . two people whom he knew by sight, but had never spoken to, came unexpectedly into the room. One of them was a girl . . . he had sometimes seen her with

> oily hands and carrying a spanner. . . . Once when they passed in the corridor she had given him a glance . . . which had seemed to pierce right into him and for a moment had filled him with black terror. (1984, p. 12)

This is Julia. Appropriately enough, she works in the pornographic section of the Fiction Department which turns out books like Spanking Stories. Winston is attracted to her "bold looking" face, her athletic movements, her shapely hips, and this is enough to make him "dislike her from the very first moment of seeing her . . . . He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones." (1984, p. 12)

In the very next paragraph, we are introduced to O'Brien, and from the very first, Winston is strongly attracted to him. In a sexual reverie he thinks him "curiously civilized, urbane, disarming, burly," almost like an "eighteenth-century nobleman;" in spectacular contrast to his response to Julia, to O'Brien he "felt deeply drawn . . . . if somehow you could cheat the telescreen and get him alone." (1984, p. 13)

On the surface, and in Winston's conscious mind, there is the usual Orwellian ironic reversal. He thinks Julia may be an agent of the Thought Police, and O'Brien politically unorthodox; but this is errant rationalization to cover the deeper levels of motivation--and Winston knows it. He knows that O'Brien is a member of the Inner Party, as he dismisses the rationalization of his fears of Julia as an agent as

"very unlikely." But still he feels her feminine presence, the threat of her sexuality, with "a peculiar uneasiness, which had fear mixed up in it as well as hostility, whenever she was anywhere near him." (1984, p. 12) The obvious irony is that his political fears of Julia are as absurdly misplaced as is his sublime trust in O'Brien. Here, as everywhere in Orwell's work, the unconscious has invaded and contaminated the ideological issues, and political judgment itself is sexualized. The characteristic double reverse is that O'Brien is trustworthy simply because of his cruel phallicism, which can be relied upon to give Winston the beating he wants; Julia is dangerous because she offers the terrifying promise of genital fulfillment. In Winston's unconscious her name, the name of woman, is Circe.

Like Circe, Julia is a strong, "masculine" woman--else the relationship would not be possible at all. Winston's fantasy of her is heavily textured by her phallicism. Her hands oily, carrying a "spanner," she makes the overtures and seduces him. She sends him a mashnote which he carries to the toilet, and standing by a urinal, he unfolds and reads her declaration: "I love you," (1984, p. 90) she had written. Throughout their affair, she will take the initiative and remain the strong aggressive partner. At their first rendezvous, "she had immediately taken charge of the situation, just as she had done in the canteen . . . . With a sort of military precision that astonished him she

outlined the route he was to follow." (1984, p. 96)

Winston, however, is no Odysseus. Thirty-nine years old, with a racking cough, wasted body, varicose veins, five false teeth, he finds himself impotent among the bluebells. Embracing Julia in the May sunshine, with her young body straining against his, her wide red mouth turned up to him--"he had no physical desire." (1984, p. 100) He rationalizes his impotence with the alacrity characteristic of the Orwell hero. "It was too soon, her youth and prettiness had frightened him, he was too much used to living without women--he did not know the reason." But he is impotent. That Orwell is treating here with the psychology of the impotent neurotic rather than social criticism of the body politic is clear from the identity of Winston's sexual failure with Gordon Comstock's in Keep the Aspidistra Flying. Gordon, too, was impotent on his first opportunity with Rosemary, but he blamed it on the weather (although it was a beautiful day) and on his poverty. (KAF, pp. 139-41)

Winston "did not know the reasons." All he knew was the fact of his fear and incapacity. Orwell, however, suggests the clue to its understanding and the key to Winston's personality by the imagery of his first meeting with Julia. In Victory Square he caught sight of her, and when he was within arm's length of her,

> the way was blocked by an enormous prole and an almost equally enormous woman, presumably his wife, who seemed to form an impenetrable wall of flesh. Winston

> wriggled himself sideways, and with a violent lunge managed to drive his shoulder between them. For a moment it felt as though his entrails were being ground to pulp between the two muscular hips, then he had broken through . . . . (1984, pp. 95-96)

In psychoanalytic terms, the two huge figures who block his path to Julia are parental surrogates. To the child's mind within, in the unconscious operations of what Freud called the "primary processes," the man and woman who form an impenetrable wall blocking genital gratification are none other than the enormous bodies of the parents as they appear to a three-year old child. Contaminated as Winston's character is by the unconscious, believing himself to be that fragile three-year old thrusting himself between his parents, he must be inadequate. In a few moments, Julia leads him to the secret place among the bluebells; he perceives their scent as "sickly;" seeing "the curve of her hips, the sense of his own inferiority was heavy upon him." (1984, p. 99)

The psychoanalysis of countless men for the "potency disturbance" which is most common of all symptoms, shows its origin to be the persistence of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipus complex is considered the climax of infantile sexuality, and originally consists in love for the parent of the opposite sex, the wish for the exclusive possession of her, and death wishes against the parent of the same sex. In some people these wishes are so powerful and persistent that they generate overwhelming guilt and fear. It is this

unconscious guilt and fear of retaliation which gives rise to a generalized inhibition of heterosexual functioning. The primary processes equate wishes with deeds, the desire to kill the father and alone possess the mother, with the act of doing so. The consequent guilt and fear of retaliation in neurotics who are at the mercy of these unconscious distortions is so great that it paralyzes the genital function. The overwhelming fear is that they will be unmanned, will lose their sensitive and prized organ. This is called castration anxiety, and in all its manifold symbolic displacements represents the universal neurotic fears of men. Winston Smith's fears of fantastic body damage, however, are unique for their intensity and pervasiveness. The leit-motif of the novel is a child's nursery rhyme, told to him by an old man:

> Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St. Clement's,
> You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St. Martin's--
> . . . . . .
> Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
> Here comes a chopper to cut off your head. (1984, p. 83)

Again and again, at each climax of the novel, Winston hears this rhyme buzzing in his head. Just before Julia passes him the note containing her declaration, for example:

> Oranges and lemons, say the bells . . .
>
> Suddenly his heart seemed to turn to ice and his bowels to water. A figure in blue overalls was coming . . . . It was the girl from the Fiction Department. (1984, p. 85)

And again, just before he meets Julia in Victory Square, as

he pushes his way between the enormous man and woman, entrails being ground to pulp between them, he hears the churchbells chiming "You owe me three farthings." (1984, p. 95) When he finally does sleep with Julia, she supplies an additional line, "When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey--." (1984, p. 121) It remains for O'Brien to provide the answer to that question, as he exacts the payment from Winston in the Old Bailey of the Ministry of Love. It is only O'Brien who can furnish the "last line" to the rhyme which Winston struggles to learn all through the novel. He does so just before O'Brien's "powerful grip crushed the bones of Winston's palm." (1984, p. 147)

The thematic meaning of this continually repeated leit-motif of the nursery rhyme lies in its representation of the primitive fear of castration. As a nursery rhyme from the unconscious of the child, it obsesses Winston and he cannot remember its last lines. The effort to recover them is the struggle of his life. Julia supplies one line, O'Brien the final solution; but it is Winston himself who determines its last line to be a message of ultimate doom: the castrating image of paying in Old Bailey, when a chopper comes to cut off your head.

Fantasies of the destruction of his body haunt Winston in every chapter of the novel, but in the nightmare world of 1984 they are real:

> there was a middleaged woman might have been a jewess . . . 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 around him and comfronting 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 . . . a twenty kilo bomb . . . a child's arm going up up up right up into the air. . . . (1984, p. 132)

This is from Winston's first entry in his diary. What is so terrifying is not only the many repetitions of these scenes focused upon "a human hand severed at the wrist," or "bloody stumps" (1984, p. 72) but the shocking fact that in fantasy they represent what Winston believes must happen to himself. He is the three-year-old who is blown to bits, arm going up, up, up.

It all comes true. The central fact of 1984 is that Winston does suffer castration at the hands of O'Brien when a piece of his brain is taken out (1984, p. 212) and his vertebrae are wrenched apart until the spinal fluid runs out. (1984, p. 202) And this represents an explicit punishment for committing the act--Sexcrime--with Julia. In this way, the ideal Oedipus complex reflects the triangle: The father castrates the child for taking the woman. Winston had always known that it must come true. In the exact center of the novel, it will be recalled, "at the spot where Julia had slipped the note into his hand," (1984, p. 130) O'Brien invites Winston to come to his home. Winston accepts, thinking it was like "a foretaste of death," like

stepping into a grave. In the next paragraph, we find him in bed with Julia, having dreamed of his mother who is condensed with the Jewish woman who tried to shelter the small boy before both of them were blown to bits. At this point, just after consummating the act of love with Julia, just after the condensation of the two middle-aged women in his dream, Winston astonishingly says, "Do you know . . . that until this moment I believed I had murdered my mother?" (1984, p. 133) Dreams of murdering a parent are, of course, the most common of Oedipal phenomena; when the primary processes overwhelm the ego in psychoses, the madman actually believes his delusion of having killed a parent. In some cases of insanity, people even act out the death wish; but in the classical Oedipus complex, the death wish is directed against the hated competitor--the parent of the same sex.

What characterizes Winston's inner life is the wish to kill his mother and possess the man. This is the "negative Oedipus" or "Oedipus complex of reversed sign" which is observed in the disease of paranoia. The positive Oedipus complex expressed according to formula: "I love mother and hate father because he takes mother himself" is repressed. Because of fear of castration and identification with the aggressor, the child's love for the father prevails, and the mother is hated as a disturbing and dangerous threat. This passive homosexual love is ambivalent, masochistic, and depends upon a feminine submission of the child to the

father. In response to the overwhelming castration threat, the child becomes passive, dependent, protection-seeking, fixated at pregenital homosexual, sadistic, and masochistic forms of gratification. It is this homosexual resolution of the Oedipus triangle which Winston's paranoid belief that he has killed his mother would indicate. It foreshadows and provides the model for the ending of the novel.

"They can't get inside you," Julia had said. (1984, p. 239) This penetration by O'Brien is Winston's deepest fear, as it is his deepest desire. When O'Brien threatens him with the punishment of Oedipus--blinding, having rats eat out his tongue and eyes--he yields up the woman to his fear of castration:

> he had suddenly understood that in the whole world there was just one person to whom he could transfer his punishment--one body that he could thrust between himself and the rats. And he was shouting frantically, over and over: 'Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off . . . . ' (1984, p. 236)

So he betrays Julia and makes the ultimate submission to O'Brien. He accepts. O'Brien enters him. Now he believes: 2 + 2 = 5

"They can't get inside you," Julia had promised, but Winston had always known better. "What happens to you here is forever," O'Brien had said. (1984, p. 239) And O'Brien, as the instrument of Winston's own unconscious, has triumphed. Although Winston feels "cauterized," he now loves Big Brother; he now knows that he loves Big Brother. "There

were things, your own acts, from which you could not recover." (1984, p. 239) Your own acts, your own thoughts, your own desires--even in 1984.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER VI.

[1]George Orwell, 1984 (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1950). All references will refer to this edition and will be included in the text accompanied by the designation 1984.

[2]In A Collection of Essays (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1954), pp. 9-95. All references will be included in the text accompanied by the designation SSJ; all other works by Orwell, if cited earlier, will be referred to in the text by the designation used earlier.

[3]Charles Lamb, Life, Letters, and Writings (London: A. Constable, n.d.), IV, 178.

[4]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Table Talk (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), 1. 198.

[5]George Ryley Scott, The History of Corporal Punishment (London: Luxor Press, 1959), p. 97.

[6]Christopher Hollis, A Study of George Orwell (London: Hollis and Carter, 1956), p. 7. See also Richard Rees, George Orwell: Fugitive from the Camp of Victory (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), p. 22.

[7]George Orwell, Animal Farm (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946), pp. 23-24. All references will be included in the text accompanied by the designation AF.

[8]George Orwell, Down and Out in Paris and London (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950).

[9]Anthony West, "George Orwell," Principles and Persuasions (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1957), p. 171.

[10]Masochism and Modern Man (New York: Farrer, Straus, and Co., 1941), pp. 41-55.

[11]Ibid., p. 122.

[12]Studies in the Psychology of Sex (New York: Random House, 1942), I, 172.

[13]Reik, p. 176.

[14]Graham Greene, Our Man in Havana (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 171.

[15]"Mario the Magician" in Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 164.

[16]Ellis, p. 67.

[17]George Orwell, James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution (London: The Socialist Book Centre, 1946), p. 16.

[18]Ibid., p. 3.

[19]Ibid., p. 19.

[20]Ibid., p. 13.

[21]George Orwell, a polemical review of Beggar my Neighbor, by Lionel Fielden, Horizon, viii, No. 45 (September, 1943), 210.

[22]The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, tr. A. A. Brill (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 598.

[23]Ibid., p. 594.

[24]I. Berliner, "Libido and Reality in Masochism," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, ix (1940), 331.

[25]"Civilization and Its Discontents," The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, XXI, 119.

[26]Reik, p. 32.

[27]Ibid.

[28]"The Mechanism of Paranoia," The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, XII, 62-63.

[29]"Phaedo," in The Republic and Other Works by Plato, tr. B. Jowett (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., n.d.), p. 491.

[30]Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud (3 vols.; New York: Basic Books, 1955), II, 269.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION: THE USES OF PSYCHOLOGY

Freudian psychology has been with us for a long time. It is now sixty-eight years since our picture of the mind was forever altered by publication of The Interpretation of Dreams. Two fundamental assumptions underlie that radical yet representative work. First of all, Freud advanced the shocking proposition that consciousness was an exceptional condition of mental functioning, that in all the deepest feelings and important acts of life--love, marriage, career, friendship--the unconscious takes provenance. Furthermore, all the apparently small events of everyday life--dreams, laughter, jokes, "forgetting," slips of the tongue, and "accidents"--are not arbitrary or trivial, but on the contrary, are intensely meaningful clues for mapping the terrain and archeology of the unconscious. This extension of the scientific principle of causality to the inner life of the mind is, of course, Freud's representative achievement in the century of Darwin and Claude Bernard.

Shortly after publication of his dream book, Freud astonished the world with the genetic theories contained in

Three Essays on Sexuality. The startling news from underground was that the Child (oral, anal, Oedipal) was, indeed, Father of the Man. And this "child within" continues to live and give meaning, richness, pain, conflict, symptoms, fantasies, and joy to the adult psyche. The organic connection between the desires of the infant and the mental life of the adult was the essence of Freud's genetic, developmental system. It was no accident that he began his scientific career as an anatomist, and he remains for us a Darwin of the mind. Like Darwinism, psychoanalysis is typically Romantic in its emphasis upon change, becoming, development, dialectical interpenetration of opposites, and organic harmony of conflicting polarities. By his conception of dynamics, above all, Freud did for the study of the human personality what Darwin did for the understanding of biological species.

However, as Freud was the first to point out, it was not the scientist but the writers who had the greatest influence on the development of psychoanalysis. They had always intuitively known the difficult truths which Freud sought to make explicit. Our very definition of tragedy, whether Greek or Renaissance, implies such notions as levels of personality, organicism, development of character. Poetry itself by its very modes of communication has a good deal in common with Freud's view of mental functioning.

One of Freud's earliest and most persuasive of distinctions was between two types of thinking. The universe of ordinary, conscious, verbal, logical, syntactical communication was designated as the secondary process; but the more interesting mode of thinking of the immature ego, characterized by images, symbolic displacements, reversals, and condensations carried on by the infantile self, Freud called primary processes. It is largely this kind of thinking which interested Freud in the dream work. To him dreams were the "royal road to the unconscious." But art is the high road to the unconscious; and it is obvious that the energies, techniques, and effects of poetry derive in large measure from the primary-process thinking which Freud described.

Imagery, complexity, symbolic action, reversal, levels of meaning, paradox, oppositions, and mutually contradictory elements held strongly and simultaneously--this is the list of "Freudian" characteristics of the primary processes; if we add "irony" as our special means of literary comprehension of these modes of communication, we are talking about literary richness and density as well.

Although much of this study was necessarily given over to the analysis of psychopathological mechanisms at work in Orwell's five novels, there is no intention to disparage him as a "neurotic." Quite the contrary. In his unconscious conflicts and creativity, Orwell found a means of

finally achieving an art so high and intense that it is only with the greatest difficulty that we can scrutinize it directly. It is much easier and safer to consider him a political writer, or a novelist of "ideas," or as simply a "virtuous man." But this hardly does him honor; nor can criticism by propaganda measure the emotional depths and heights of 1984. Freud defined dreams as "thoughts transformed into images." Orwell's literary greatness derives from his ability to transmute ideas and ethics into imagery which has immediate access to the unconscious.

The way to take Orwell with the seriousness he deserves is to attend closely to his imagery. Many clusters of images, their context, patterns, and transformation into a coherent symbolism have been observed. It is always the image--auditory, visual, or as is frequently the case, one of smell--which carries the theme. Just a small sampling of the images of physical cruelty, for example, leads right to the heart of meaning and the pity and terror which Orwell's work regularly evokes.

In Orwell, the imagery functions according to the laws of the primary processes. Money, foul odors, rods and whips, the beautiful body of a young woman, always represent complex psychological values which are charged with doubled and antagonistic meanings. This is why his work gives so strong an impression of paradox. The main interest of this study has been not so much to identify and define

these paradoxes of Orwell's thought and personality as to account for the unity of paired opposites in the work itself. The Freudian defense mechanism of reversal, for example, offers many insights for the structure and meaning of 1984, as well as for grappling with the thoughts, feelings, acts of all of Orwell's complicated and contradictory characters. 1984 is a nightmare vision which carries the passionate conviction of childhood fantasy. Only the child who believes his fantasies would accept O'Brien's knowledge of Winston's dreams, would "know" that dreams come true, would assume that O'Brien could read Winston's mind. Only a child would expect that "they" watch his every movement and know his every thought; and that child is Orwell's unconscious which speaks directly to our own. It is here in the realm of the primary process that we confront the horror of Oedipus and of matricide; of the omnipotence of thoughts, which equates the wish with the act; of childhood terror which assumes that "they" know every guilty act and desire; of a desperate alienation which is projected as the fantasy of the destruction of the world. Though a projection into the future, 1984 is actually a regression to the archaism and primary process of the infant. Appropriately enough, a nursery rhyme summarizes the action and explains the character. Everything seems inverted and reversed in 1984, from Winston's sexuality to the slogans of society (WAR IS PEACE), to the values of pleasure and pain. Reversal,

Freud showed, was the essential quality of the unconscious, for the mind of the two-year old has no real grasp of the logical concepts of negation.

A paranoid reversal of the formula: "I love Big Brother" = "He hates me," is the key to the plot of 1984 as well as the paradox of Winston's personality. The Freudian defense mechanism of projection and reversal are essential to all of Orwell's books, indeed to his very manner of seeing the world. Flory, Dorothy Hare, Comstock, Bowling all reverse the meanings of pleasure and pain, success and failure. They all flee, in the counterphobic way characteristic of Orwell's own struggle to overcome his wounds, into the feared thing. The central protagonist always dies in some way: Flory, quite literally, of course, by his suicide; Dorothy Hare, when she rejects Warburton and returns to servitude in the house of her father; Gordon Comstock, when he accepts the aspidistra as his flag of truce with life; George Bowling, when he returns to his wife prepared to "take his medicine;" and Winston Smith, when he betrays Julia and makes his submission to O'Brien.

Flory, with his hideous stigma and a terror of success which makes him "undo" every victory, is the model of the unhero. But they are all stigmatized in some way: they all follow the pattern of "doing and undoing" in response to overwhelming guilt and anxiety (indeed, the Freudian mechanism becomes a principle of oscillating structure in the

novels); they all deny and reverse their sexual identity (Flory's bitch is even called Flo); they all are defiantly rebellious as well as the opposite, slavishly submissive; they are Freud's "people who are wrecked by success;" they adopt the "shiko" posture of defiant submission as a means of provoking, and in fantasy controlling, their own destruction. This is why the bombs and bombing planes buzz so obsessively for Gordon Comstock, George Bowling, and Winston Smith.

Finally, Orwell's novels begin with some distortion of Time as a metaphor of the central character's imprisonment in Time. In the manner of Freudian dream language, the clocks striking thirteen or going off like a bomb symbolize an inimical inner world which permits no growth, development, or pleasure, which impoverishes and ultimately destroys the self by relegating it to psychosexual fixation points of early childhood or infancy. This is a jungle of unrestrained aggression, hatred, and terror--also literary power.

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