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Bachelor Thesis

Orwell versus Lewis

The Sceptic and the Believer:

George Orwell's and Clive

Staples Lewis' visions of a

dystopian world

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Abstract

The aim of this Bachelor thesis is to outline Orwell's and Lewis' views of religion, tyranny, science and the world as a whole, and the author's methods of treating characters. The main topic is their vision of a dystopian future after World War Two in their books *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and *That Hideous Strength* (1945). The thesis attempts to compare them, find similarities, differences, where they were wrong and where they were right in their predictions and finally to decide what their most important contribution (maybe not only to the literary world) was. It also tries to comment on modern criticism of Orwell and Lewis and possibly to come up with counter or corroborative arguments. The author would like to deal especially with the differences between their insights, compare them and comment on them in order to point out their singularity among other authors.

Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce je naznačit v hlavních rysech Orwellovy a Lewisovy postoje k náboženství, tyranii, vědě a ke světu jako takovému a jejich způsobu, jak nakládají s postavami. Hlavním tématem pak je jejich představa dystopie ve světě po druhé světové válce v jejich knihách *Devatenáct osmdesát čtyři* (1949) a *Ta obludná síla* (1945). Práce se pokouší je srovnat, najít shody, rozdíly, to v čem se jejich předpovědi mylily a v čem měly pravdu a konečně rozhodnout, co byl jejich největší přínos (možná že nejen pro svět literární). Také se pokouší opatřit komentář ke kritice Orwella a Lewise a přijít případně s podpůrnými či protiargumenty. Autor by se rád především zabýval rozdíly mezi jejich názory, srovnal je a okomentoval je za účelem poukázání na jejich výjimečnost mezi ostatními autory.

Introduction

This literary studies bachelor thesis focuses on an analysis and an interpretation of two social science fiction novels with characteristics of a dystopian novel – *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell and *That Hideous Strength* (1945) by Clive Staples Lewis. The focus is on four main features of the books – the interpretation of the main characters, the female character, characteristics of the enemy and the description of the dystopian world.

In the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the author tries to find counterarguments to Orwell's logic and interpretations of totalitarianism and the image of an undefeatable enemy. At the same time, it tries to reflect on Orwell's predications and expectations of the future. Partially it comments on Orwell's views of heroism, morality, feminism and politics. The thesis draws mainly from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* but also from the biography *George Orwell A Personal Memoir* (1983) written by Orwell's acquaintance Tosco Raphael Fyvel, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (2004) by Andrew Sanders, and *Animal Farm* (1945) by George Orwell.

In the case of *That Hideous Strength* the author tries to find some supportive arguments for the assumption that the book is a dystopian novel, since the characteristics are not that clear as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. A further attempt is to defend Lewis' book from the theological point of view and clarify Lewis' claims and beliefs. Partially it comments on Lewis' views of heroism, morality, feminism and science. The thesis draws mainly from *That Hideous Strength* but also from the biography *C.S.Lewis: A Biography* (2002) by Roger Green and Walter Hooper, a critical study of Lewis' space trilogy *Planets in Peril* (1992) by David Downing, and *The Screwtape Letters* (1942) by Clive Staples Lewis.

The bachelor thesis contains an abstract, a brief summary in Czech, an introduction, a main body and a conclusion. The main body of the thesis is divided into two main parts. The first one deals with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the second one with *That Hideous Strength*. Both halves consist of four similar parts: descriptions of the dystopian world, the main male character, the main female character and the archenemy.

The expected result should be a detailed commentary on the books and criticism based mainly on the analyses and to some extent other critics.

The shabby world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

The reader of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can easily imagine the world in which Winston Smith lives. Orwell manages to show its dirtiness, shabbiness, poverty and devastation in a few sentences.

Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 3).

Orwell chooses April to emphasize the unfriendliness – April is after all a spring month. Anyone who has visited a city at least once knows what he means by “a swirl of gritty dust”. The reader can see the lines of grey blocks of houses, gloomy, anonymous and depressing. Orwell does not stop here. He continues and moves to smells.

The hallways smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 3).

The reader is again reminded of stinking and greasy canteens with appalling food. Old rag mats remind one of dark, foul halls in anonymous blocks of flats. The fact that Winston is used to these conditions only adds to the whole effect – these living conditions are apparently common in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Winston’s reaction (or rather lack of reaction) to them emphasises the dejection.

The story takes place in a not-so-distant future London. Winston manages to escape the city from time to time but Orwell does not seem to put a great deal of emphasis on it and it seems that salvation does not lie outside the city. It works only as a temporal refuge and in spite of Winston’s relish in nature he and Julia realise that it is only an illusion and they will not be safe there forever.

London is devastated by an unending war. Nobody (including the government) repairs buildings and everything is falling apart without anyone to fix it. The only buildings which are untouched are the institutions and symbols of the hated system – the Ministries of Truth, Love, Peace and Plenty.

The ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below. Scattered about London there were just three other building of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government

was divided. The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs (Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four 6).

Orwell's pointing out these buildings has two effects – first, the reader is reminded of a devastated London whose dominant features have become two ugly buildings and, secondly, they are a memento of the Party's unquestionable power.

He masterfully outlines the hopeless surroundings with neutral and somewhat detached comments through Winston's perspective. It is not only the physical repulsiveness which stresses the hopelessness, but also the atmosphere of anonymity, distrust, fear, loneliness and suppressed hate.

People in the Records department did not readily talk about their jobs. In the long, windowless hall, with its double row of cubicles and its endless rustle of papers and hum of voices murmuring into speakwrites, there were quite a dozen people whom Winston did not even know by name, though he daily saw them hurrying to and fro in the corridors or gesticulating in the Two Minutes Hate (Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four 44).

The anonymity at work supports the impression of loneliness and Orwell manages to create a joyless paradox – despite the uncomfortable closeness of his colleagues, Winston cannot befriend them and thus is condemned to psychological solitude.

The reader is dragged through depressing scenes in the course of the whole book but the worst setting Orwell keeps for the ending. The Ministry of Truth is quietly threatening from the beginning and Winston from time to time fearfully comments on it, thereby the reader might expect it to be the scene of the climax, which it is indeed. Orwell takes his time to properly explain and point out all its horrors. When Winston is captured, the reader is completely taken out of the outside world and, along with Winston, thrown into the unknown.

He was in a high-ceilinged windowless cell with walls of glittering white porcelain. Concealed lamps flooded it with cold light, and there was a low steady humming sound which he supposed had something to do with the air supply. A bench, or shelf, just wide enough to sit on ran round the wall, broken only by the door and, at the end opposite the door, a lavatory pan with no wooden seat. There were four telescreens, one in each wall (Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four).

Then he continues and he describes the torture with dry simplicity.

With the first blow on the elbow the nightmare had started. Later he was to realise that all that then happened was merely a preliminary, a routine interrogation to which nearly all prisoners were subjected. There was a long range of crimes – espionage, sabotage and the like – to which everyone had to confess as a matter of course... Always there were five or six men in black uniforms at him simultaneously. Sometimes it was fists, sometimes it was boots. (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 252).

Orwell projects the unimaginable horrors with a down-to-earth image of so far imaginable torturing and admits that this is only the beginning and the worst is yet to come. Winston's understanding of the procedure proves that Orwell takes already known inhumane methods and developed them to twisted perfection.

Furthermore, he denies the reader any chance of hope outside the borderlines of Oceania as the rest of the world is divided between another two dictatorships – Eastasia and Euroasia which are based on a similarly authoritative system. Because of this the reader cannot seek help abroad, there cannot be any *deus ex machina* in the form of salvation by a foreign army or freedom fighters. Winston does not even bother with constructing a plan against the Party, he assures the reader that the Party is indestructible and even though he sees the Proles as a possible hope, he dismisses them after a while.

This depiction of an unchangeable situation and invincible enemy has a price – the reader might ask the question: If this book is not supposed to be entertaining and is to bear a message, what is it? As long as the assumption is that Orwell did not intend to write a light work and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has a moral, the reader might be frustrated by that. Orwell does not answer many questions in the book. He replies to How? and Why?, but he does not answer the questions 'How do we prevent it?' or 'Why fight it?'. His aim is not to outline how to destroy a dictatorship. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is supposed to be a warning against totalitarianism and a reminder of the necessity of preventing it.

The world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is nothing but horrifying, depressing, fearful and dangerous. Orwell uses mainly images of sight and sound but also describes the twisted immorality of Winston's colleagues which adds to the overall impression of distrust, persecution and death. Orwell does not have to use fervent clichés to show his unique dystopia, he makes do with images of derelict London and the reader can no doubt imagine what the rest of the world is like. Orwell's world may not reach beyond the narrow borders of London but this does not seem relevant, the place is still atrocious and decaying.

Winston – the feeble hero of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

The hero of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is far from one the reader might wish for. Orwell uses Winston at first as an observer and commentator and then as a narrative device to describe the horrible system and the way it treats its enemies. Winston seems to despise himself, but that should not mean that Orwell despises him too. Orwell's biographer Fyvel suggests (and the image of Winston's character supports this argument) that Orwell projected at least part of himself onto his hero. Since it is impossible to speculate about Orwell's intentions, it is necessary to approach this issue from a different point of view. For several reasons he simply does not dislike Winston despite his weakness, repulsiveness and cowardice.

The reader might ask after having read the book, what Winston's role in the book was, if he was supposed to be a part of it or only a guide. In many respects he is far from being a unique personality. He might have an individual opinion but in all other aspects he sinks clumsily into grey mediocrity. He is not special. The ending only highlights it when Winston is defeated and he gives in completely.

Orwell does not try to cover Winston's imperfection and has the gall not even to comment negatively on it.

Winston was not trembling any longer. Even his eyes he barely moved. One thing only mattered: to keep still, to keep still and not give them an excuse to hit you! (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 232).

In the moment of arrest it does not even occur to Winston to resist it. He can only think about not being hit and trying to avoid as much pain as he can. He does not feel sorry for or worry about his lover Julia. Orwell puts him into a cowardly position and leaves him there. The reason for it is not cruel though – Orwell only reassures the reader that physical resistance is useless. He does not condemn Winston and the reader feels that the real fight will not be physical but ideological on the public level and mental on the private one. Orwell nevertheless carries on and describes Winston as an absolute coward.

One of the men had smashed his fist into Julia's solar plexus, doubling her up like a pocket ruler. She was thrashing about on the floor, fighting for breath. Winston dared not turn his head even by a millimetre, but sometimes her livid, gasping face came within the angle of his vision. Even in his terror it was as though he could feel the pain in his own body, the deadly pain which nevertheless was less urgent than the struggle to get back her breath (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 232).

Once again Orwell does not give his hero even a slight chance to act as one, he makes Winston stand still, dying with fear and act like a weakling. Yet if Winston tried to fight, the whole spirit

of the book would easily be disrupted and it might assume an essentially false tone. Winston's lack of action is not intended to defame him. It works only as an image of a different morality which has to be accepted in order to survive. It is cowardice only from the subjective free man's point of view and is not to be judged impetuously.

Winston realises the brutality and hideousness of the world around him (from his narrowed perspective since travelling outside the city is suspicious and travelling abroad is out of the question) but he is not concerned with morality. When he criticises the Party and the world he argues for freedom and rejects slavery and fear but not immorality per se. At some point he admits willingness to commit atrocities in order to destroy the Party.

The reader is already familiar with the fact that his man's moral position is not important for Orwell. Morality in general becomes an empty talk and there is no place for it in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Winston's fight is not a conflict of moral versus immoral. He does not have many chances to redeem himself, not omitting the fact that he does not much want to. His motivation to go on is also unclear – he admits he will be captured and killed in the end. Nor does he have an ambition to change anything. He does write rebellious statements in his notebook, but this can hardly suffice as the point of his rebellion.

His eyes re-focused on the page. He discovered that while he sat helplessly musing he had also been writing, as though by automatic action. And it was no longer the same cramped awkward handwriting as before. His pen had slid voluptuously over the smooth paper, printing in large neat capitals – DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 20).

Surprisingly, he sometimes enjoys his work and is proud of it, even though it makes him a part of the system and he knows that. If not puzzling, it is inappropriate for him to take pleasure in it.

With a faint feeling of satisfaction Winston laid the fourth message aside. It was an intricate and responsible job and had better be dealt with last (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 41).

Winston does not have to start any conspiratorial undermining of the system, but Orwell could have chosen different vocabulary – words like “satisfaction” and “responsible job” degrade Winston to a mere cog in the ideological machinery of the state. Some readers may consider this as contradiction to his beliefs and Winston may appear to be a hypocrite.

Unfortunately (though probably not unexpectedly) Winston manages to lose this fight as well, thus shattering the reader's last hope. While being tortured he quite quickly accepts the enemy's concept and willingly agrees to cooperate. His ideological fight takes place only in discussions, which he also loses. His arguments are weak and O'Brien manages to contradict all of them.

Winston finally retreats within himself, reasoning that the only thing they (the Party) cannot control is the freedom of his mind. O'Brien manages to break his resistance even there and thus destroy him.

One day they would decide to shoot him. You could not tell when it would happen, but a few seconds beforehand it should be possible to guess. It was always from behind, walking down a corridor. Ten seconds would be enough. In that time the world inside him could turn over. And then suddenly, without the changing of a line in his face – suddenly the camouflage would be down and bang! would go the batteries of his hatred. Hatred would fill him like an enormous roaring flame. And almost in the same instant bang! would go the bullet, too late, or too early. They would have blown his brain to pieces before they could reclaim it. The heretical thought would be unpunished, unrepented, out of their reach for ever. They would have blown a hole in their own perfection. To die hating them, that was freedom (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 294).

This paragraph sounds astonishingly romantic in its own way. Orwell reveals here his capacity to find a flicker of gratification in the worst possible situation but at the same time he could be accused of naivety and illogicality. The simplest counterargument is that one can hardly expect anyone to think clearly while they are knowingly striding to their death – the person would have to have an incredible self-control. The second argument is more complicated – to accept the idea of freedom as he puts it is not that simple. He abandons all hopes for fighting or destroying the system, he just turns to the mind itself and claims that expressing one's opinion right before death means to triumph – the victory over the Party. However it is not a physical victory, not even a moral victory, it is simply the last agonal quiver. The metaphor "they would have blown a hole in their own perfection" remains theoretical and can have a meaning only for the dying victim – but it does not change anything practically (the only possible explanation would be that the executioner would be moved by witnessing his victim's determination but this possible rationalisation is far beyond far-fetched).

Winston, on the other hand, manages to regain (or rather gain) some of his heroism with "to die hating them, that was freedom", since this statement sounds almost romantically heroic. He quickly loses it when he later accidentally yells out his lover's name which he immediately regrets.

He set to work to exercise himself in crimestop. He presented himself with propositions – 'the Party says the earth is flat', 'the Party says that ice is heavier than water' – and trained himself in not seeing or not understanding the

arguments that contradicted them. It was not easy. It needed great powers of reasoning and improvisation (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 291).

Winston's trying is pitiful since he is aware of the fact that he does not believe in the Party's teaching but he wants to. He willingly and openly goes against his own conscience and is finally broken. There is no more freedom of mind, no more independent thoughts, no more feelings whatsoever but love for Big Brother.

“He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was alright, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother” (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 311).

This ending may almost seem to be taken out from a noir but bears a different meaning. Its reason is not to awaken pathetic emotions but to trample the last hope. Orwell thus creates a dread of certain politics and their possible outcome. The statement “He loved Big Brother” sounds nearly ironic since Winston hated him to the core heretofore. The reader can hardly blame Orwell for being autotelic or overdramatic, this ending has its meaning.

Winston is hardly a portrayal of a typical hero, but he is an Orwellian hero – weak, pitiful, mediocre yet still with a purpose and thus attractive in his own way. Not every hero has to win in the end. Winston suffers a crushing defeat and the reader is thoroughly persuaded there is no chance for anyone to escape or anywhere to escape to. However it is still possible to sympathise with Winston and praise him for at least taking a shot and being the only one who is being objective at all cost. His greatness and uniqueness lie in his admitting the loss to himself. Orwell shows us this way that the reader may identify with a hero without him or her being the winner or a strong person at all. It is not a glorification of failure or mediocrity but a requiem for humanity.

The Party & O'Brien – the untouchable enemies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

To create a respectable and believable enemy for the hero might be a difficult task for any writer. Since the writer has to prefer the hero to his or her enemy, the enemy may become one-dimensional and uncomplicated. Orwell indeed manages to create a wonderfully spine-chilling monster – the Party and its representative, O'Brien.

Throughout the whole novel the Party is the undisputed master of the situation. There are some moments when Winston has a fond hope of possibly overpowering it but these moments are quickly trampled and there are no suggestions that there will be a turn of events of any kind.

The Party is a monstrous colossus, efficient, deadly, omnipotent and seemingly eternal. O'Brien explains the new level of horror – the Party does not control only the physical world, but also everyone's mind and comes to the conclusion that this means ultimate power.

We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. You will learn degrees (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 277).

The Party is powerful because it controls everyone's minds, and it controls them by implementing fear into everyone's hearts and by the permanent surveillance of members of the Outer Party.

Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except darkness, every movement scrutinised (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 5).

Orwell explains here that fear is one of the crucial emotions which the Party needs to instil in the population – the purpose of surveillance is not only to prevent “thoughtcrime” but also to instil the fear of being watched and found guilty in the people.

The Party is indestructible and horrifying. However it consists of individuals who can be corrupted, make mistakes and thus can disrupt the Party's unity from within. Orwell seems to explain the Party's unity through using O'Brien as a mouthpiece, but his argument is not flawless.

The Party seeks power for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 275).

O'Brien's motivation for power is understandable but too inhumane and diabolical, since his hunger for it is not rooted in any other pleasure. Orwell leaves out three important aspects.

First, the Party is not an organism working by itself but consists of individuals seeking their own good. The way he puts it implies that every single one of them is in a way selfless since he or she places the good of the Party above his or her own. It is hard to believe that the Party is full of demonical figures with a single godlike virtue: self-sacrificing. The corruption of the Inner Party is inevitable. On the one hand Orwell claims that the Party is interested only in

Power, but on the other hand, he inadvertently claims that the Inner Party members cooperate among themselves. In any group of power-seeking individuals the struggle between them is inevitable. They may help each other in the beginning, but they will unavoidably turn against each other simply because it is their nature. Anyone who hungers for power is not likely to be willing to share it with anyone else. The history of the twentieth century only proves it.

The second counterargument is that a human being cannot be interested in nothing but pure power. Power without enjoyment is useless and paradoxical. O'Brien is an example of the paradox – he is a member of the Inner Party but except for his better living conditions the difference between him and Winston is not so vast and this explanation of his motivation is not sufficient. Moreover, O'Brien cannot exercise his power on a large scale. Yes, he can torture Winston but that is hardly a driving force for most human beings to cooperate with any system.

The third flaw in the argument's logic is the fact that O'Brien believes in what he is saying. O'Brien is a true believer – he is able to think in “doublethink” and he is aware of it. This is a paradox – if one is trained in “doublethink” one should not be aware of it. If O'Brien admitted that doublethink was only a tool for the masses, it would make sense, but although he says that they are interested only in power, he behaves as someone who believes in the Party's teachings. He is thus both a heretic and a true believer at the same time – which is a paradox. He could be a fanatic with utmost belief in the Party or he could be a careerist using it only as an instrument to gain power but he cannot be both of them.

No matter how questionably O'Brien is portrayed, the arch-villain in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – the Party as a whole – remains more than a satisfactory and well-developed foe. The reader is drawn into a world governed by such a class and it is not easy to stop a shiver running down one's spine. The Party's practices are icily precise, effective, elaborated to the bitter and merciless end. Its terribleness is also supported by the actual history of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and Mao Zedong's China. Orwell's portrayal of the Party surely belongs among the most impressive archetypes of arch-enemies. The masterful portrayal is supported by the fact that there is no refuge from the Party – at one point Winston believes that having a heretical thought against the Party right before death represents a victory. No matter how weak and arguable a line of reasoning that is, he submits in the end anyway.

Julia – the progressive female of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

When Orwell portrays his main female character, Julia, he slightly changes the tone of the narration. He describes her very simply, pointing out only some of her characteristic features, but the reader is still attracted to her for a reason. The reason is that Julia's appeal to him is very

natural and understandable. Winston is lured to her and he hates her at the same time because he believes she can never be attracted to him. This frank attitude is characteristic for someone like Winston. The reader cannot judge him for his sheer hatred. Winston is being too truthful and comprehensible and so the reader can put himself or herself into his shoes and understand him.

He did not know her name, but he knew that she worked in the Fiction Department. Presumably – since he had sometimes seen her with oily hands and carrying a spanner – she had some mechanical job on one of the novel-writing machines. She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick dark hair, a freckled face and swift, athletic movements. A narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 11).

Even though Orwell describes her in a few sentences Julia is immediately well portrayed – an austere, good-looking girl with a suppressed sex appeal which makes her even more desirable paradoxically. Later on Winston explains the crucial reason for his hatred, connected with his own sexuality.

Better than before, moreover, he realised why it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the odious scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 17).

Winston admits that his hatred is not based only on fear but also on injured pride and impotent lust. Orwell manages to mix two pure emotions – hatred and lust, which fit the atmosphere perfectly. Winston's sexual inaction partly absorbs his loathing of the Party.

The more Winston gets to know her, the more attractive she becomes not only for him but also for the reader. If she seemed as the image of a loathsome, shrieking activist at first, she destroys this image later and the reader gets to know quite a different Julia. At the beginning of their relationship she is the dominant one – she lets him know she loves him, she arranges the meetings and so forth.

With a sort of military precision that astonished him, she outlined the route that he was to follow (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 121).

The reader is not surprised by her initiative. Winston becomes submissive in the relationship as far as the daily routines go. This does not turn into any psychological or Freudian problem since the circumstances support such role assigning. Julia is swift, adaptable, smart, and knows how to blend in with the crowd.

Actually I am that sort of girl, to look at. I'm good at games. I was a troop-leader in the Spies. I do voluntary work three evenings a week for the Junior Anti-Sex League. Hours and hours I've spent pasting their bloody rot all over London. I always carry one end of a banner in the processions. I always look cheerful and I never shirk anything. Always yell with the crowd, that's what I say. It's the only way to be safe (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 128).

Orwell seems to enjoy Julia at this point. She reveals the absurdity of Oceania in its entirety. Whilst Winston drowns with hatred and is concerned with the Party all the time, Julia is breezy and at the same time, she is a proof of the possibility of not losing one's mind in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. She represents adaptation, which may also work in the long run as one way of changing the system. Winston is clumsier than her in almost all respects. However, he surpasses her in his rebellious awareness and seriousness, since her approach is far less ideological and much more practical.

Julia is aware of the hideousness of the system and the Party but she seems not to care for it much and rather have as much fun as she can. She does not have high hopes, she is not ideological, and she accompanies Winston to O'Brien's place mostly because of her love for him. This degrades her a bit – Orwell seems to assign her mediocrity while Winston is the one who takes the initiative and is sincere about his philosophy. Winston in all his imperfection gives an impression of a superior person in his intellectual awareness.

Julia as a female functions in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* well. She also shows Orwell's writing skills since she is well-developed. She complements Winston in many ways and could be seen as a different and more practical way of rebellion against the Party. Her role is more important than just being Winston's companion. Her mind is uncorrupted and different from Winston's – she is a representative of a new, adapted to the regime generation. Winston knows he is already dead, that the Party will capture him, torture him and kill him. Julia, on the other hand, differs from him and she might be perceived as an embodiment of hope, because she does not remember the time before the Party, she was brought up in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and yet she is untouched by its teachings and sees through the veil of lies. She does not care a pin for the Party or anything else much for that matter. She thus becomes a weak point in Orwell's logic of the indestructible Party – she is a proof of the Party's imperfect educational and awareness programme. Although she does everything she is expected to do, she is not orthodox and she does not believe in the Party. Her obedience is playful and therefore she is untouched by it.

The ambiguous world of *That Hideous Strength*

The world of *That Hideous Strength* is basically set in the post-war England – the exact time is not specified but a few signs suggest that it has been only few years since the World War Two ended. The story takes place mainly in three locations – Bracton College where Mark has recently been given a scholarship, N.I.C.E.'s headquarter in Belbury and its rival led by Ransom in St. Anne's. Lewis does not describe the rest of the world, only vaguely and in a few words he suggests that there is no escape in leaving England.

The poison was brewed in these Western lands but it has spat itself everywhere by now. However far you went you would find the machines, the crowded cities, the empty thrones, the false writing, the barren beds... you might go East so far that East became West and you returned to Britain across the great Ocean, but even so you would not have come out anywhere into the light. The shadow of one dark wing is over all Tellus¹ (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 290).

Lewis is very vague and it seems that the issue of the whole world being poisoned is not the most important one – the battle must only be lead in England. Hope does not lie outside England's borders. Lewis does not stress the pitiful state of the rest of the world on a large scale, and this unfortunately decreases the effect of hopelessness – nothing shockingly sinister is happening in the beginning and most of the atrocities usually remain vague in speech or in writing. Lewis might have intended it so but the result is a poor image of the dystopian future.

On the other hand, Lewis painstakingly emphasises the contrast between the three main places. He does it rather skilfully using the feelings of the main characters, names of the residents and the choice of words the inhabitants use. Bracton College seems to be in between these two worlds with its gawkiness, vanity and ineptitude. The fellows at Bracton College are tentative and insecure, although at first they play a rather strong role for Mark. Later the reader learns that they have been only puppets in someone else's hands and once they did what they were expected to do, they were cast out. This also applies for a lot of other characters, including Mark. Bracton College is mainly a place for plotting and cronyism but not to any unbearable or devilish extension. It is a common college with the same nonsensical disputes like any other larger institution. Some of the character's crookedness is shown in a sensitive and elegant way.

Denniston was your chief rival. Between ourselves, a good many people liked his papers better than yours. It was Dick² who insisted all through that you were the sort of man we really wanted. He went to Duke's and ferreted out all about

¹ The Earth

² Lord Feverstone alias Dick Devine

you. He took the line that the one thing to consider is the type of man we need, and be damned to paper qualifications. And I must say he turned out to be right (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 17).

This does not sound so horrific only because Lewis manages to hide the evil quite successfully – later he reveals his method openly, when the evil deed is even more apparent – Mark is asked to write two articles in which he twists the truth and covers the crime in favour of N.I.C.E.

This was the first thing Mark had been asked to do which he himself, before he did it, clearly knew to be criminal. But the moment of his consent almost escaped his notice; certainly, there was no struggle, no sense of turning a corner. There may have been a time in the world's history when such moments fully revealed their gravity, with witches prophesying in a blasted heath or visible Rubicons to be crossed. But, for him, it all slipped past in a chatter of laughter, of that intimate laughter between fellow professionals, which of all earthly power is strongest to make men do very bad things before they are yet, individually, very bad men (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 127).

N.I.C.E.'s headquarters in Belbury are different. They lack the incompetence of Bracton and seem better organised, self-confident and efficient. Mark is at first very much drawn into the organisation but his attitude changes several times and at one point he almost decides to leave. Belbury's wickedness is well hidden. Most of the negative characters are portrayed neutrally and even in a seductively unorthodox way. Later the reader realises that all of them are wicked to the core. Belbury's atmosphere is ambiguous: Mark is given pieces of vague information and the more he tries to learn about his position the more he is mystified.

Making things clear is the one thing the D.D.³ can't stand, replied Miss Hardcastle. That's not how he runs the place. And mind you, he knows what he's about. It works, Sonny. You've no idea yet how well it works (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 95).

Lewis achieves mastery in mystification and presents a language full of redundancy and useless turns of phrase when he presents Deputy Director Wither. His speech would be almost laughable if he was not one of the most dangerous men in *That Hideous Strength*, as the reader later learns.

It is so important to be perfectly clear what we are doing. You are no doubt aware that in certain senses of the words it would be most unfortunate to speak of my offering anyone a post in the Institute⁴. You must not imagine for a moment that I hold any kind of autocratic position, nor on the other hand, that the relation between my own sphere of influence and the powers – I am

³ Deputy Director Wither

⁴ Institute – N.I.C.E.

speaking of their temporary powers, you understand – of the Permanent Committee of those of the Director himself are defines by any hard and fast system of what – er – one might call a constitutional, or even a constitutive, character. For example... (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 102).

The reader has to reread his statements to make out what the director is talking about. The atmosphere of uncertainty and organised distrust is interwoven with omnipresent back-stabbing and treacherous rumour-mongering. When Mark suggests he does not want to work under one of his colleagues, Wither becomes interested.

That opens up a very interesting question about which I should like to have a quite informal and confidential chat with you on some future occasion (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 103).

Mark himself is confronted when he refuses to bring his wife to Belbury (but not for unselfish reasons).

Well, here we've all been working on your behalf and soothing him down and this morning we thought we'd finally succeeded. He was talking about giving you the appointment originally intended for you and waiving the probationary period. Not a cloud in the sky: and then you have five minutes' chat with him – barely five minutes, in fact – and in that time you've managed to undo it all. I begin to think you are mental (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 168).

Lewis however does not rely simply on the atmosphere, he manages to describe a real terror veiled by warm offices and quiet halls full of hushed conversation. N.I.C.E.'s real intention is the world dominance of a few over many through "superhuman beings" made of pure intelligence and deprived of any organic life – cruel and headless masters. The Institute already managed to keep a man's head alive – the head of the murderer Alcasan. The head became a tool for the dark powers to communicate with N.I.C.E. people and through them achieve the universal power.

Once in delirium he had seen the front of a horse, by itself, with no body or hind legs, running across a lawn, had felt it ridiculous at the very moment of seeing it, but not the less horrible for that. This was an absurdity of the same sort. A Head without anybody underneath. A Head that could speak when they turned on the air and the artificial saliva with taps in the next room (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 182).

Lewis does not use any naturalistic or gory images but he rather relies on the reader's imagination. His portrayal of Belbury as a place of evil slowly develops until the reader is perfectly informed about its sinfulness.

The opposite of Belbury is St. Anne's and its leader, also Director – Ransom, the hero of Lewis' previous two books *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938) and *Perelandra* (1943). St. Anne's

refuge is a small house run by an eccentric but friendly group of people. Mark's wife Jane finds an asylum there and overcomes her initial prejudices. The person of the Director himself is in contrast with the people at N.I.C.E. Lewis conscientiously describes not only him but the emotion he arouses.

On a sofa before her, with one foot bandaged as if he had a wound, lay what appeared to be a boy, twenty years old... the light of the fire with its weak reflection, contended on the ceiling. But all the light in the room seemed to run towards the gold hair and the gold beard of the wounded man. Of course he was not a boy – how could she have thought so? The fresh skin on his forehead and cheeks and, above all, on his hands, had suggested the idea. But no boy could have so full a beard. And no boy could be so strong. She had expected to see an invalid. Now it was manifest that the grip of those hands would be inescapable, and imagination suggested that those arms could support the whole house (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 139).

Lewis thus relies more on emphasising the characteristic features of the inhabitants than on describing the surroundings to stress the differences. The house in St. Anne's could be a derelict shack and the effect would be almost the same. Its atmosphere is much more pleasant than at N.I.C.E. but Jane has to get rid of her own fears at first – snobbishness and selfishness – to become a part of the household. Most of all she must completely devote herself and become humble, which at first seems to her old-fashioned, unfair and ridiculous.

Lewis uses the main places in order to demonstrate the differences between good and evil and the way they influence people. His goal in describing his world is not just to entertain but to and to educate the reader – thus the image of his world is rather symbolical.

Mark – the purified hero of *That Hideous Strength*

Mark is slightly disagreeable, conceited, selfish and immature man in the beginning. He is married to Jane whom he met at university. Their marriage is not unhappy per se, but both of them focus on themselves, not on each other and their relationship seems to crumble away.

In reality marriage had proven to be the door out of the world of work and comradeship and laughter and innumerable things to do, into something like solitary confinement (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 12).

Lewis does not take sides and even though he seems to prefer Jane to Mark he never assigns the fault of their dysfunctional marriage to either of them. Mark's greatest flaw seems to be his desire to belong to an inner circle wherever it may be – at Bracton or at N.I.C.E. He is also a bit

cowardly and he is usually afraid to express his true opinion for fear he might be seen as ignorant or be excluded from the inner circle.

Little by little he becomes part of N.I.C.E. through the various methods they use – an attractive job proposal, a seductive partnership and flattering, bad-mouthing, threatening, blackmailing and finally imprisonment and a direct attempt to break him. Mark is miserable from the beginning and even though he makes some feeble efforts to defy them, he is always defeated right at the start. It is only at the end that he conquers all his fears and he declines to do the utmost evil, the defining moment in his career, the irreversible turn to evil in his life.

In this description of Mark's feeling Lewis shows his literary mastery, for Mark's thoughts and the situation are very understandable and so familiar for the reader that they can be easily imagined, even though the situation Mark has to go through is unlikely to happen to most of the readers. Lewis now makes his so far weak man a true hero. Mark is asked under pressure and imminent threat of death after a certain kind of obnoxious and eerie re-education to trample over a cross with Christ on it, curse it and disparage it in many ways.

Mark made no reply. He was thinking, and thinking hard, because he knew, that if he stopped even for a moment, mere terror of death would take the decision out of his hands. Christianity was fable. It would be ridiculous to die for a religion one did not believe. This Man himself, on that very cross, had discovered it to be a fable, and had died complaining that the God in whom he trusted had forsaken him – had in fact, found the universe a cheat. But this raised a question that Mark had never thought of before. Was that the moment at which to turn against the Man? If the universe was a cheat, was that a good reason for joining its side? Supposing the Straight was utterly powerless, always and everywhere certain to be mocked, tortured, and finally killed by the Crooked, what then? Why not go down with the ship? He began to be frightened by the very fact that his fears seem to have momentarily vanished. They had been a safeguard... they had prevented him, all his life, from making mad decisions like that which he was now making as he turned to Frost and said: It's all bloody nonsense, and I'm damned if I do any such thing (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 334).

Mark experiences many emotions and argues with himself almost on every level – psychological, pragmatical, religious, even philosophical. Lewis does not want to prove his knowledge of human mind, the passage is not to entertain a reader who demands more escalated suspense. He well describes the stages of every moral conflict – evil uses a perfect logic and is very seductive. It is not a black and white image of a battle between good and evil, but an artful depiction of

Lewis' idea of evil's cunning. Mark is presented with a clear logic – the logic appeals to Mark's fear, his reason, and his will to survive.

It is very important for Mark that he refuses, since it is his only means of salvation. However, his redemption does not have any deeper meaning. It works more as a fairy-tale element of "All's well that ends well. On the other hand, the happy ending is expected and Mark's damnation would not fit.

Mark's character is well developed in the descriptions of his selfishness, arrogance and to some extent, his immaturity and his desire to belong to an "inner ring". However, it may be hard to expect a grown man, a scholar and a husband still to have these childish feelings of insecurity and longing to fit in. His almost miraculous delivery from evil is too magical and Lewis probably wanted a happy ending – which fits in with the theme of the book but depiction of Mark's character is a bit puzzling and awkward in the final part.

N.I.C.E. and its minions – the diabolical enemies in *That Hideous Strength*

Lewis may be most popular for his children's books, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956) and thus may be expected to create fairytale villains. Nothing could be further from the truth. His villains are at first seductive for the reader as well as for Mark. If they are not likeable, they are either humorous, pathetic or just queer. Later that changes to repulsiveness, fear, ugliness and horror. Lewis' villains keep some of the fairytale one-dimensionality and there is nothing positive about them, but since Lewis' aim is to describe every chance for human soul to condemn itself, through the portrayal of his villains with different vices, it helps the reader to grasp Lewis' moral warning.

One of the first villains to be introduced is Lord Feverston AKA Dick Devine, who was also a villain in *Out of the Silent Planet*. He seems to be smart, friendly and modern.

Man has got to take charge of Man. That means, remember, that some men have got to take charge of the rest – which is another reason for cashing in on it as soon as one can. You and I want to be the people who do the taking charge, not the ones who are taken charge of (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 40).

At this point Feverstone pretends to be a friend of Mark's, even an equal, but later when he is rightly accused of interfering with Mark's fellowship, he mocks and cheats him.

You make me rather tired, he said. If you don't know how to steer your own course in a place like Bracton, why come and pester me? I'm not a bucking nurse. And for your own good, I would advise you, in talking to people here, to

adopt a more agreeable manner than you are using now (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 109).

His speech shows every feature of a civilised argument, but in the circumstances (Mark reproaches Feverstone for talking behind his back and suggesting that Mark will get rid of his fellowship) it is absolutely unfair, mocking and degrading. Right before his death he is briefly described as a selfish and very pragmatic figure.

He knew that the Belbury scheme might not work, but he knew that if it didn't he would get out in time. He had a dozen lines of retreat kept open... He had never slandered another man except to get his job, never cheated except because he needed money, never really disliked people unless they bored him (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 354).

Lewis masterfully describes practical buck-passing – Feverstone is not portrayed as a man who enjoys evil, he merely uses it for his own good.

Another villain is different in many aspects. It is Miss Hardcastle – “Fairy”. She is also seductive (not sexually though) at first but later she becomes sarcastic and, later still, cruel.

Miss Hardcastle had apparently lived an exciting life. She had been, at different times, a suffragette, a pacifist, and a British Fascist. She had been manhandled by the police and imprisoned. On the other hand, she had met Prime Ministers, Dictators, and famous film stars; all her history was secret history (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 67).

Lewis manages to smuggle some disturbing facts about her under the impression of worldliness – Fairy knows celebrities, hence her having been a fascist is not that petrifying. Considering that Lewis wrote this book during the World War Two, the fact seems to be crucial for her character. Fairy soon loses the aura of an agreeable woman and becomes a villain entirely when she encounters Mark's wife Jane and tortures her for a piece of information.

Where had you been by that train? Said Miss Hardcastle. And Jane stared as if her eyes would start out of her head and said nothing. Then suddenly Miss Hardcastle leant forward and, after very carefully turning down the edge of Jane's dress, thrust the lighted end of the cheroot against her shoulder. After that there was another pause and another silence (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 153).

Although Lewis' description of the torture is a bit amateurish, it has a purpose – he is not concerned with sophisticated methods of torture, he is concerned with the portrayal of Miss Hardcastle. Her technique of inflicting pain may be crude, but he is trying to describe her and rather than the mere torturing – the idea of a woman who enjoys burning cigarettes on someone

else's flesh gives a sufficient evidence of her character. Lewis does not need to describe the torment with bloodshed to make his point.

The two factual leaders of N.I.C.E. are seemingly very different – Frost is emotionless, cold and sophisticated, Wither is eloquent, familiar and friendly. And yet they do have something in common – both of them lack personality. What is more important – though they are the two leaders, they secretly compete with each other and they hate each other. Lewis is very subtle about it and he reveals that later in the book. The way he does it is curious.

They were now sitting so close together that their faces almost touched, as if they had been lovers about to kiss... his [Wither's] shoulders twitched and gradually he began to laugh. And Frost did not laugh, but his smile grew moment by moment brighter and also colder, and he stretched out his hand and patted his colleague on the shoulder... the two old men lurched forward towards each other and sat swaying to and fro, locked in an embrace from which each seemed to be struggling to escape. And as they swayed and scrabbled with hand and nail, there arose, shrill and faint at first, but then louder and louder, a cackling noise that seemed in the end rather an animal than a senile parody of laughter (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 240).

Lewis reveals the horror by presenting a bizarre situation – two old men struggling in a mad fight over nothing. The explanation of this situation can be extracted from *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), where Lewis describes demons as creatures who wholly want to absorb other beings.

The most impressive portrayal Lewis kept for Frost's death. When Frost realises he cannot escape and that he has been defeated, instead of repenting he retreats within himself, refusing to accept the loss.

“Like the clockwork figure he had chosen to be, his stiff body, now terribly cold, walked back into the Objective Room, poured out petrol and threw a lighted match into the pile. Not till then did his controllers allow him to suspect that death itself might not after all cure the illusion of being a soul – nay, might prove the entry into a world where that illusion raged infinite and unchecked. Escape for the soul, if not for the body, was offered to him. He became able to know (and simultaneously refused the knowledge) that he had been wrong from the beginning, that souls and personal responsibility existed. He half saw: he wholly hated. The physical torture of the burning was not fiercer than his hatred of that. With one supreme effort he flung himself back into his illusion. In that attitude eternity overtook him as sunrise in old tales overtakes and turns them into unchangeable stone” (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 355).

Lewis again does not use any vicious images. The horror lies in Frost's complete denial, his blindness and the damnation of his soul. He is offered a way out – but he furiously refuses it because of his pride and willingly lies to himself. He combines the frightfulness of a fairy-tale villain with a feasibly evil scientist – thus the reader can imagine that such a person could actually exist.

Lewis' villains may be one dimensional, but together they create exactly what Lewis wanted to show – all the possible sins a man can commit. His description is caricatured and exaggerated, but that may be his intention.

Jane – the counterpart of Mark in *That Hideous Strength*

Lewis' depictions of female characters are usually limited to the stereotypes of the evil witch or a loving, asexual and motherly character. In *That Hideous Strength* he proves that he is a good psychologist and that he can also depict a well-developed female character.

Jane is not only a supplement to Mark, her actions mirror his. His experience in N.I.C.E. is comparable to hers at St. Anne's. They both go through the same situations, are confronted with opposite opinions and philosophies and they both work more as observers than parts of the action. This changes later when Jane is discovered to be very important to locate Merlin (Merlin from the Arthurian legend is a part of *That Hideous Strength*) who is expected to turn the scales either in favour of N.I.C.E. or St. Anne's. She is a modern woman, rejecting any anachronisms, relying on her judgement and intelligence. Her struggle in the book is rather with herself than with N.I.C.E., with a small exception, when she accidentally encounters Miss Hardcastle, who tortures her. Jane must conquer her prejudices and her resistance to give herself to St. Anne's household, Ransom and subsequently Maleldil (God).

If the reader tries to apply a feminist point of view, the impression will be probably negative. In spite of Jane's superior position to Mark, her beauty, intelligence and affability, any fundamental feminist would tear her hair when Lewis through Ransom outlines his opinions about women, marriage and their role in society. For example equality from his point of view may be unacceptable for some of them.

I thought love meant equality, she [Jane] said, and free companionship. Ah, equality! said the Director. We must talk of that some other time. Yes, we must all be guarded by equal rights from one another's greed, because we are fallen. Just as must all wear clothes for the same reason. But the naked body should be there underneath the clothes, ripening for the day when we shall need them no

longer. Equality is not the deepest thing, you know... equality guards life; it doesn't make it. It is medicine, not food (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 145).

If the reader considers this only from the mundane point of view, the thought might seem almost heretical – modern western civilisation strongly emphasises equality and Lewis' view suggests reactionism and anachronism. However, if the reader thinks about it on a spiritual level and in the view of the possibility of afterlife, Lewis is right and not old-fashioned. Jane later accepts that and finds inner peace. Unfortunately, the indignation of feminists is more than probable, if they read it as a sociological novel.

Jane is at first passive, frightened and unsatisfied with Mark and her marriage. She nurses an aversion to being treated like a little girl, like a submissive person. Lewis demonstrates not only Jane's sorrow and dissatisfaction from her marriage, but also her fragility and anxiety. She does not necessarily have to be seen as a weak person and later in the book Jane proves her strength and importance. Before she wholly joins the household of St. Anne's, she has doubts and goes through a stage when she refuses to become obedient.

I want to lead an ordinary life. I want do my own work. It's unbearable! Why should I be selected for this horrible thing... Jane made a vague movement and said, rather sulkily, Well if you can do nothing for me, perhaps I'd better be going (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 65).

Her anger is mixed with pride, prejudices and testiness. She overcomes them and becomes a full member of St. Anne's society. She accepts faith and in the end her conversion is complete.

First she thought of the Director, then she thought of Maleldil. Then she thought of her obedience and the setting of each foot before the other became a kind of sacrificial ceremony. And she thought of children, and of pain and death (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 380).

Jane wins the battle over herself and gets rid of her pride. Of course, this is attackable like Lewis's patriarchal view, but he does not propagate man's superiority over woman, but the beauty of unconditionally giving oneself to someone else. For him, it is the core of love and faith in God. Jane is not an archetype of a woman in an apron by the stove, but a balanced image of women as they should be according to Lewis – confident, loving and equal.

Jane as a woman is well-portrayed, her psyche is deeply analysed and her character changes in the course of the book. Fortunately, Lewis does not rely on an angelical portrayal of a woman – on the contrary – he depicts Jane in many situations as a naive girl who is misled by her prejudices. That makes her a believable character that supplements Mark and exceeds him morally and intellectually in many ways. Taking into account Lewis' other books and women's position in them, Jane's character is almost surprisingly balanced and well-developed. The only

danger lies in misunderstanding Lewis' intentions – the reader should not consider Jane to be an attack on feminism but Lewis' way how to express his theological opinions.

Conclusion

In his masterpiece Orwell managed to depict an amazingly bizarre and cruel world. The reader is wholly absorbed by its viciousness, brutality, malice, coldness, inner solitude and lunacy. The omnipresent depression and resignation is overwhelming. The horror is even more present because of Orwell's assumption that this can and may happen. Thus the book cannot be perceived as a fantasy or sci-fi but as a dystopian novel with sociological, psychological and political elements.

The strongest parts are the images of a world without any hope, the elaboration of the perpetual political system and the description of the technique of searching, finding and breaking enemies. The whole third part of the book only describes the methods of torture, the Party's twisted ideals and finally Winston's loss and his change. Nobody can possibly accuse Orwell of bloodthirstiness, but that does not mean that he spares the reader any unpleasant details. Orwell explicitly illustrates the stages of Winston's defeat and how he gradually becomes a broken man and a servant of the Party. His explanation of the Party's absolute dominance is believable. Moreover, anyone acquainted with the history of the twentieth century can more or less imagine the feasibility of this outcome.

This would all work flawlessly if the book was supposed to be a light reading. All the techniques are brilliant for a novel but not for serious literature. The reader is presented with a vague idea of the Proles as a means of salvation, later with the brotherhood and finally with a rather speculative victory – inner freedom right before one is executed. This however is also destroyed, no matter how questionable a freedom that is. The outcome is straightforward – there is no chance of salvation, outside or inside, in believing or pessimism, fighting or capitulation. If the person is against the Party, he or she is simply “evaporated” no matter how hard they try. Again, this would not be an issue if Orwell intended to write an entertaining novel but if we take into account that this is a political novel with a message, the book lacks it. Orwell admitted that the intention behind the book was not to let this happen, but in that case he forgets two things – a piece of advice on how to prevent it and how to fight it successfully. This argument is based on the prerequisite that Orwell did not intend to be only entertaining.

There are some other illogical arguments used by Orwell. The improbability of O'Brien character has already been mentioned. He is driven by a paradoxical need – he seeks power at all cost but he does it with the help of his comrades. If we take into account that the human mind does not change that much, it is highly unlikely that any person would behave like that. He would plot against his colleagues and would not waste time with Winston. Orwell assumes that

O'Brien is a fanatic, but he lets him admit that he is concerned only with power and not with the good of the people. A fanatic cannot be fanatical about a pragmatic idea and being aware of his being fanatical at the same time. Moreover O'Brien says he does not care about anything else than power. This makes him either inhuman or a lunatic. One simply cannot be interested only in power if the power does not bring advantages. Power may be the means but not the final aim alone. When O'Brien says he does not seek happiness, it is also hard to believe – for every man pursues happiness. This could make sense in the context of *Brave New World* (1932) where human beings are genetically modified, but it is too fantastical in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Finally, Orwell presumes that the Party and the illusive of the world created by the Party perpetuate themselves and will do so forever. This is a bold expectation considering two things: first, the Party and its economy do not rely on renewable resources. The second reason is less profound and thus more uncertain – history teaches us that nothing can be repeated indefinitely and some change has to occur. If it does not, that civilization crumbles after a certain time. It is true that Orwell painstakingly explains why this would not happen in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but one must take into account the variability of the human character.

Nineteen Eighty-Four can be seen as a more complex sequel to *Animal Farm* (1945) in which Orwell outlined his fears which in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are described in detail. There can be found many similarities between them, the blindness of the masses, the purges in the party and the use of propaganda and rewriting the history. According to Andrew Sanders, Orwell's writing is influenced not only by the Soviet Union and Stalin, but also by Kafka's dark fantasies of incomprehension, Koestler's dark fantasies of totalitarian logic and Huxley's dystopian vision of an ordered scientific future (Sanders 579). Orwell's biographer Tosco Raphael Fyvel criticises Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* for showing the Proles as a demoralised British working class, which can be hardly linked to the working class of the eighties (Fyvel 197).

Lewis himself called his *That Hideous Strength* a fairy-tale and a fantasy in its preface (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 7). What he left out is that his book contains a lot of dystopian features. Even though they are present, he outlines them only roughly, especially in Ransom's predictions and the plans of the people from Belbury. Some of them are disguised as scientific progress, some of them as an attempt to improve mankind, but the ultimate goal is the rule of a few over the many, which is undoubtedly a dystopian characteristic.

Lewis' main aim was not to predict the future. He does warn against a certain approach to science, namely the effort to use science to spread humankind all over the universe, making it all-powerful and immortal, and the outcome of which would be the worshipping of man instead

of God. However, his real goal is to portray an allegorical fight between good and evil over human beings, based on the Revelation of St. John. The only two characters that are not depicted as black and white are Mark and Jane. All the people in N.I.C.E. are evil and they die horribly in various ways in the end. On the other hand, all the people at St. Anne's are good and thus are rewarded accordingly. Of course, there are some minor characters who cannot clearly be assigned to either side, but they do not have enough space to express themselves. Only Mark and Jane have to decide which side they will choose. Both of their characters are well elaborated, mainly morally and psychologically.

Lewis manages to describe horror without using any clichés and images of slaughter, death or torturing. The terror is much more subtle – he only outlines what might happen, he only uncovers some of the grand ideas of a corrupt mind, he only makes use of a few bizarre images. The reader is frightened only if he starts reading in between the lines – to imagine a hygienic, yet a dead world as Filostrato describes may be fascinating, but definitely horrifying. The idea may sound at first amazing, even messianic, but if the reader continues along these lines of thought, he or she may realise the dreadful result – a dead world without any happiness. Lewis often skilfully hides the awfulness and evil behind in seemingly innocent dialogues, but he also proves his skill when he decides to use a real image of terror. Again, he does not slip into vulgarity and naturalistic viciousness, but rather uses bizarre images. The scene where three leaders of N.I.C.E. are naked in front of the Head and bow to it is extraordinarily repulsive and yet Lewis does not have to describe any particular ugliness. The most horrifying fact about the scene is its bizarreness. Lewis nevertheless throws away the last illusion of a fairy-tale later when he moves the focus to the truly evil master – the Head through which the evil forces communicate. Lewis does not openly admit it, but what he means by them are fallen angels and Satan. The shock is achieved also through the contrast between Wither, Filostrato and Straik as scientific minds who behaved nonchalantly, confidently and as leaders and their behaviour in the end, when they suddenly and without hesitation accept and give themselves to a supernatural power in a situation which would look very odd and humiliating to any outsider. This also reveals the true emptiness of their views and opinions.

Lewis confutes the scientific confidence in a materialistic world and thus confronts materialistic philosophy. Lewis' aim is however not to frighten, but to warn against pride, the refusal to obey and faith in the omnipotence of humankind. *That Hideous Strength* works also as an allegory to Armageddon and as a pseudo-theological discussion.

There are some weak elements in the book though. Lewis cannot help himself, but he uses some fairy-tale images of women dressed up almost as princesses, a tearful saying goodbye to

Ransom and a few more incongruities which do not fit into the spirit of a book which deals with grave matters.

That Hideous Strength partially refers to Lewis' earlier book *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), in which Lewis describes the logic of evil ones and their methods how to destroy or get hold of man. An indication of evil to wholly consume everything else is more evident when Screwtape describes Hell's intentions (Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* 120), the back-stabbing atmosphere at Belbury refers to the quiet hatred between demons (Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* 171) and most of the theological arguments Ransom presents are present in *The Screwtape Letters*. According to David Downing Lewis is influenced mainly by Charles Williams (Downing 132), John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (Downing 133) and the Bible (Downing 136). Also Lewis' biographers Roger Green and Walter Hooper confirm this. (Green and Hooper 205). They also add that Lewis is partially influenced by Gordon Bottomley and his poem *Babel* (Green and Hooper 205).

That Hideous Strength may seem like a failed fairy-tale, a chaotic fantasy, an amateurish and anachronistic lecture, but if the reader judges it while considering what Lewis' intention really was, it is a masterpiece. He managed to express his theological views in an interesting way without degrading them or discrediting them.

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