NATHAN WADDELL

Introduction
Orwell's Book

Writing to his publisher, Fredric Warburg (of Secker & Warburg), on 22 October 1948, George Orwell claimed that the manuscript of the book he was working on was not only 'fearfully long' but also 'unbelievably bad' (*CW*, 19, pp. 456, 457). Orwell added that he was 'not pleased with the book' yet 'not absolutely dissatisfied' (*CW*, 19, p. 457) with it either. The book in question was *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). When Warburg wrote his report on the manuscript nearly two months later, he stated:

> This is amongst the most terrifying books I have ever read. The savagery of [Jonathan] Swift has passed to a successor who looks upon life and finds it becoming ever more intolerable. Orwell must acknowledge a debt to Jack London's 'IRON HEEL', but in verisimilitude and horror he surpasses this not inconsiderable author. Orwell has no hope, or at least he allows his reader no hope, no tiny flickering candlelight of hope. Here is a study in pessimism unrelieved, except perhaps by the thought that, if a man can conceive '1984', he can also will to avoid it. (*CW*, 19, p. 479)

Warburg felt that his extensive and almost entirely positive report on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* gave 'little idea of the giant movement of thought' which Orwell had 'set in motion' in this 'great book'. Nevertheless, Warburg was so disturbed by the novel that he prayed to be 'spared from reading another like it for years to come' (*CW*, 19, p. 481). David Farrer, another executive at Secker & Warburg, suggested that in 'emotive power and craftsmanship' *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 'tower[ed] above the average'. Orwell had done 'what [H. G.] Wells never did, created a fantasy world which yet is horribly real so that you *mind* what happens to the characters which inhabit it'. Farrer added: 'if we can't sell fifteen to twenty thousand copies of this book we ought to be shot' (*CW*, 19, p. 482).

The tone of Farrer's remark now seems acutely misjudged – because of its casualness, and because it aligns the likely fate of Winston Smith, Orwell's

doomed protagonist, with a set of purely commercial imperatives. But all the same there is an urgency about Farrer's quip that evokes how *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was always likely to resonate with readers in a world exhausted by two world wars and anxious about the different kinds of political consensus likely to emerge in its aftermath. London-based readers would have been very familiar with the book's allusions to air-raids, Tube station shelters, rubble in the streets, and rationing.[1] It is, as Anthony Burgess pointed out, a book of London in 'war-time or just after' (Burgess, *1985*, p. 14). *Nineteen Eighty-Four* spoke in the 1950s to the concerns of those who had seen the defeat of Nazism and feared the politics and ambitions of the Soviet Union. It appealed, and still appeals, to readers deeply critical of what Orwell elsewhere called 'oratorical way[s] of talking' (*DOPL*, p. 108). It resonated with those who were alarmed by the rapidity of technological advance and the ever more rationalized, efficiency-driven characteristics of modern society. It said something meaningful to the persecuted, the forgotten, the hopeful, the obsequious, the afraid. With its suspicious attitude towards dewy-eyed reminiscence and equally scathing account of authoritarian utopianism in all its forms, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also brilliantly rang true for those sceptics who, like Hannah Arendt, believed that 'all efforts to escape from the grimness of the present into nostalgia for a still intact past, or into the anticipated oblivion of a better future, are vain' (Arendt, *OT*, p. xii). It was and remains a book of the moment.

Seventy years later, much of the appeal of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* lies in the fact that so many of its readers share in Winston's knowledge 'that something is wrong' with the world, as Louis Menand has put it, 'that we are losing control of our lives', and yet fear, too, that 'we are powerless to resist' the nightmarish transitions of a gradually more technocratic humankind.[2] The novel's account of an all-encompassing paranoia, in which not even the person you love is to be trusted fully and finally, seems disconcertingly compatible with the worst techno-political effects of social media, which for many people have become vehicles of alienation and distrust. Orwell's contemptuous depiction of Ingsoc's anti-intellectual politics holds water for those who have lived through the oppressive regimes of the Eastern Bloc, and still engages readers the world over who are faced with a resurgent anti-intellectual populism. It's a book that shows how experts will only be useful to the state until they are deemed unnecessary and undesirable, at which point they will be cast out, or killed. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* warns us, as Christopher Hitchens once wrote, against 'the awful pleasures and temptations of servility'.[3] It is a book about love, and about enjoying love in secret in order, maybe, to survive, but it also ruminates on how hatred is the hidden freight of a love teetering on the brink of sadism.

This *Companion* builds on successive waves of generational inheritance and debate in the novel's reception by asking new questions about how and why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written, what it means, and why it matters. Chapter groupings on a selection of the novel's interpretative contexts, the literary histories from which it is inseparable, the urgent questions it raises, and the impact it has had on other kinds of media, ranging from radio to video games, open up the conversation in a purposefully expansive way. Established concerns (e.g. Orwell's attitude to the working class, his anxieties about the political compartmentalization of the post-war world) are presented alongside newer ones (e.g. his views on evil, and the influence of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* on comics). The goal is to stimulate further exchanges about the novel's significance in an age in which authoritarianism finds itself newly empowered. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not a book about Donald Trump, or Kim Jong-un, or Jair Bolsonaro, or even Boris Johnson, but it is a book that tells us something about how individuals of their stripe can push through illiberal political change. It tells us something very important about cults of political celebrity, about 'war-fever and leader-worship' (*NEF*, p. 139). Although *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains Orwell's book, to these extents it is increasingly *ours*.

Part I of this *Companion*, 'Contexts', establishes four frameworks within which Orwell's novel can be understood from a socio-historical perspective. Natasha Periyan's essay on 'Teaching and Learning in and beyond *Nineteen Eighty-Four*' (Chapter 1) looks at how pedagogy functions in the novel, relating this to Orwell's attitudes towards the school system of his day and to connections between the novel's politics and form. Douglas Kerr's 'The Virtual Geographies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*' (Chapter 2) takes another look at the post-war geopolitical developments that inspired the eternally warring political blocs of Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia. Diletta De Cristofaro's 'The Politics of the Archive in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*' (Chapter 3) considers the novel's presentation of memory and the political workings of archival storage and retrieval. And David Dwan's discussion of 'Orwell and Humanism' (Chapter 4) reminds us of just how thoroughly *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is embroiled in debates not only about human rights – a key context for Orwell, given the appearance of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* just six months after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948 – but also about the idea of what it means to be human itself. All of these different perspectives on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* indicate that it continues to tell us about how the way we live now is bound up with unresolved issues from over a lifetime ago.

Putting things like this makes it seem like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be boiled down to that oft-caricatured, unhelpfully derided thing: the novel

with a message – what Orwell called, in his 1929 essay on John Galsworthy, 'the novel which aims to be a picture and a criticism of contemporary life rather than a straightforward story' (*CW*, 10, p. 140). But although we should be wary of seeing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as only this, as only a novel seeking to tell us something, it isn't necessarily a problem to emphasize its moralistic dimensions. Orwell certainly thought that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* had urgent things to say about rights and wrongs, clarifying in a statement issued in July 1949 that the novel was not intended 'as an attack on socialism, or on the British Labour Party', which Orwell said he supported, but 'as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable', and which had 'already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism' (*CW*, 20, p. 136). He added that the 'scene of the book' was 'laid in Britain in order to emphasize that the English speaking races are not innately better than anyone else', and that totalitarianism, if it went unchallenged, could 'triumph anywhere' (*CW*, 20, p. 136). *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a kind of petition, a work asking its readers never to become so complacent that they fail to spot an incipient totalitarianism growing all around them (what Amy Siskind refers to as the 'small signs of normalcy on our march into darkness').[4] Hence Warburg's insistence that the moral to be drawn from the 'dangerous situation' explored in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 'is a simple one: *Don't let it happen. It depends on you*' (*CW*, 20, p. 134).

Generations of readers have read and valued *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in different ways, ranging from the audiences who first encountered it, in Britain and elsewhere, in the midst of the burgeoning Cold War; to those who read Orwell's books covertly in post-war Eastern Europe; to those who appealed to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in order to comment on political decisions made in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks; to those who first heard of the novel after the politics it satirizes seemingly came to full fruition, in the West, at least, in the administration of the 45th President of the USA, Donald J. Trump.[5] Dorian Lynskey has recently insisted not only that the book is 'far richer and stranger' than most people probably remember, but also that it has been 'claimed by socialists, conservatives, anarchists, liberals, Catholics, and libertarians of every description'.[6] A staple of school and university curricula, the novel confirms for many young readers the sense that something is rotten in the state, that the world can so often be a place of carefully constructed lies in which we're encouraged to accept unquestioningly the stories and statistics required by the *status quo*. And readers already alert to these problems are not inevitably better prepared for the novel's hard-nosed sombreness. Adult readers are just as likely to be disturbed by *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as are its young enthusiasts. But it is the young who will inherit the world left to them by adults who often don't seem to have

learned from the kind of cautionary tale *Nineteen Eighty-Four* so brilliantly exemplifies. For Lyndsey Stonebridge, the novel's 'descriptions of suffering are there to remind us that the pain of others is intolerable; and that what might bind us is not political ideology, but the human capacity to respond to that suffering'.[7] We need such a capacity now more than ever. Our world has never before been more like Winston's: a world of 'false rumours' (*NEF*, p. 74), 'continuously rewritten' histories (*NEF*, p. 222), and degradation through persecution, where the art of ruling (and of being ruled) is to play 'tricks with reality' (*NEF*, p. 223). What we do with such knowledge is for us to decide. Yet who this 'us' amounts to is a complex question.

Discussing the audiences of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in terms of a universal third-person plural can obscure how it has had a wide and unpredictable readership throughout the last seventy years, with many disparate constituencies finding things in Orwell's novel to value and abhor. Those who study *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in a school classroom in 2020 will think and feel very differently about the novel in contrast to those who once read it surreptitiously, and at significant danger to themselves, behind the Iron Curtain. Czesław Miłosz suggested that Orwell fascinated such individuals through 'his insight into details' of life under Soviet rule and 'through his use of Swiftian satire', which 'tresspass[ed] beyond the prescriptions of socialist realism and the demands of the censor'.[8] Similarly, there is a world of difference between those who furtively consumed *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Eastern Europe during the post-war period and those who in recent years have bought it openly in China, where it has been available in multiple translations.[9] Readers exposed to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in China's burgeoning economy, and in the wake of that country's turbulent history, will feel very differently about its contents to those who read it for the first time in America in January 2017, following Trump's inauguration, at which point sales of the novel spiked by 9,500 per cent.[10] And yet what unites all of these different readerships, surely, is a sense that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* speaks in an urgently particular way to the fears of those who find themselves at the whims of dictators, or of would-be tyrants. Bonding child readers at school the world over and the man who chose to read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in public in Thailand in June 2014, in protest against the military groups who ruled the country until 2019, is a commitment to Orwell's visionary nerve in the face of those hoping to destroy civil liberties as a matter of policy.[11]

Nineteen Eighty-Four appeals to readers everywhere because the central dynamic against which it is positioned – what Leszek Kołakowski called 'the sheer drive for power, for total power as an end in itself' – has lost none of its capacity to mutilate the liberal-democratic principles so many communities

still treasure.[12] *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a book of the 1930s and 1940s. It is clothed in the mental, social, and physical fabric of those decades. It is also sufficiently commodious to speak to readers born in the twenty-first century: the spectre of the omni-regulated life it rejects, to use another Kołakowskian phrase, has not yet been vanquished.[13] The novel remains 'relevant' because, at its heart, it is concerned with the underlying, generalizable structures of thought and action which accompany the drive for power for its own sake, and which incrementally bear down on and erode the resistant mind. So although *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is about the historically specific tensions and possibilities of a certain moment in time, it is also a novel about a set of attitudes the world has not yet vanquished. And this gives *Nineteen Eighty-Four* a flavour of the art defined by the American novelist John Gardner as that which 'beats back', or tries to beat back, 'the monsters', and makes the world safe for frivolous pleasures.[14] When Winston yearns to walk with Julia through the streets 'openly and without fear, talking of trivialities' (*NEF*, p. 146), he evokes an investment of the novel as a whole. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a big book about holding on to small things.[15]

One reason why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is so unsettling is because it doesn't quite let us decide whether it's a hopeful or a pessimistic work. Like the 'shadow-world' (*NEF*, p. 44) of uncertainty in which Winston lives and suffers, the novel's meanings are themselves often shadowy and unclear. Winston addresses himself through his surreptitious jottings in his diary to those living in '*a time when thought is free*' (*NEF*, p. 30). With this move, Orwell turned a critical, if displaced, glance at his own time through the temporal deferrals of Winston's ostensibly private scrawling. Yet *Nineteen Eighty-Four* holds many different temporalities in play, both in terms of the story it tells and in terms of the many readerships it has enjoyed across time and space. It's a novel concerned with the oppressive dynamics of a time 'round about' the date of 1984 (*NEF*, p. 9), a date Orwell himself only settled on, as the novel's manuscript indicates, after toying with the nearby options of 1980 and 1982.[16] To that extent, it announces itself, and has very often been celebrated, as a work of H. G. Wells-inspired futurology – as a text whose 'success' rests on how accurately it predicted a future now almost forty years behind us. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also pits the time of 'round about' 1984 against other moments in its own internal frame of reference: Winston's half-remembered past; the past of the proles he encounters; the unknown future invoked in his diary; the power-for-power's-sake hereafter theorized by O'Brien; and the apparently transformed world of the future announced in the novel's appendix ('The Principles of Newspeak'), a document which has long been interpreted as a confirmation of Ingsoc's inevitable fall from power.

This proliferation of chronologies helps us get a handle on how and why Winston is so uneasy about his lot in life. He is not a man out of time, or 'outside history' (*NEF*, p. 283), so much as he is a man unable to locate himself *in* time. As we learn at the start of the novel, although he believes 'that he had been born in 1944 or 1945', Oceania's administrative disorientations mean that it's hopeless to try 'to pin down any date within a year or two' (*NEF*, p. 9). Winston's traumatic memories of his mother tear at his heart because he remembers her to have 'died loving him, when he was too young and selfish to love her in return' (*NEF*, p. 32). Dreaming of her and his sister 'down in some subterranean place', 'looking up at him through [. . .] darkening water' (*NEF*, p. 31), Winston is unable to get past his guilt because he has 'deliberately pushed [it] out of his consciousness over many years' (*NEF*, pp. 167–8). The end result of these internal pressures is that Winston is trapped not only in the 'brutal relish' (*NEF*, p. 26) of Oceanic tyranny, but also in the torments of remembrance. He feels as though he wanders 'in the forests of the sea bottom, lost in a monstrous world where he himself [is] the monster' (*NEF*, p. 28), an 'under-water world' (*NEF*, p. 252) from which he swims into the bright-lit torments of the Ministry of Love. Like the so-called traitor Rutherford, Winston belongs at least in part to the grotesque. But whereas Rutherford was a 'monstrous man' who seemed, when Winston saw him in the Chestnut Tree Café, 'to be breaking up before one's eyes, like a mountain crumbling' (*NEF*, p. 80), Winston is more like a desiccated husk who is still further reduced to 'a bundle of bones in filthy underclothes sitting weeping in the harsh white light' (*NEF*, p. 312) of a prison cell.

And Winston finds no solace in his relationship with Julia, a woman whose boldness initially fills him 'with black terror' (*NEF*, p. 12) and who, again in terror, he betrays to O'Brien. Winston and Julia's trysts in the room above Mr Charrington's shop revivify them both, but when they meet again, after Winston's torture, very little seems as it was. Mutual betrayal turns them into 'the dead', as they always knew it would. The 'rigidity and awkwardness' (*NEF*, p. 305) of Julia's body makes it feel like a corpse that Winston once dragged out of a bombed building, whereas he himself is gradually reduced into a living bureaucratic death, ahead of his eventual execution, in which he quibbles meaninglessly with fellow Ministry workers before the life is sucked out of them while they sit round tables 'looking at one another with extinct eyes, like ghosts fading at cock-crow' (*NEF*, p. 308). For much of the novel, Winston's paranoia means he can never quite shake the suspicion that Julia is spying on him. This fact may or may not lead us to argue that she is a member of the Thought Police, as Winston suspects she might be. But it certainly reminds us that fear and hostility are deep-rooted aspects of Winston's psyche.

It may be that the only person in the novel Winston ever feels any genuine closeness to is his torturer. At first, and with no small amount of irony, given the way his conversations with Winston go in Part III of the novel, O'Brien has 'the appearance of being a person that you could talk to' (*NEF*, p. 13). O'Brien's gentility and neatness of manner are also reminiscent of Winston's similarly 'neat' (*NEF*, p. 31) father, a connection reinforced by O'Brien's quasi-parental embrace in the Ministry of Love, where Winston clings to him 'like a baby, curiously comforted by the heavy arm round his shoulders' (*NEF*, pp. 262–3). The comfort is short-lived, not only because O'Brien punishes Winston into compliance, but also because, in torturing him, he acts not as a father but as a kind of gruesome mother. Anna Freud's idea of the mother as the child's 'first external legislator' is helpful here, because it enables us to think of O'Brien as a quasi-maternal surrogate for Winston's absent mother, who along with his father was seemingly obliterated in one of the Party's 'first great purges' (*NEF*, p. 31).[17] O'Brien is Winston's second external legislator. He authorizes Winston fully to be the dissenter he himself has always known he would become, before he has his brains blown out. Not for nothing, after all, does O'Brien give 'an impression of confidence and of an understanding tinged by irony' (*NEF*, p. 182). He is Oceania's supreme ironist: the one who knows that Winston, in being legislated to become who he has for so long imagined himself to be, must cease to exist.

These ironical possibilities, in turn, allow us to think slightly differently about what happens to Winston in Room 101. Winston's dreams of meeting his imagined benefactor, O'Brien, in the 'place where there is no darkness' (*NEF*, p. 107) in fact anticipate his slow interrogation in the ironically named Ministry of Love, whose 'lights [will] never be turned out' (*NEF*, p. 241). The structure of the novel leads us to expect that Winston will meet and be saved by O'Brien in some utopian golden land. Instead, he finds himself subjected to the worst excesses of physical and psychological pain by an oppressor whose knowing duplicity is reflected in the 'ironical gleam' (*NEF*, p. 272) of his spectacles. Winston's narrative arc ends with him becoming reduced to a 'fragment of the abolished past, like a fossil bone' (*NEF*, p. 82), something like the photograph of Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford he once saw in the Ministry of Truth. And at a certain level, in being reduced to a fragment of the past, like the coral enclosed in the 'tiny world' (*NEF*, p. 154) of the glass paperweight he buys in Charrington's shop, he is simply reduced to the actuality of his place in life. For inasmuch as the novel comes to a climax with Winston confronting his worst fear, rats, in Room 101, this very same scene can also be understood as the moment of O'Brien's ultimate legislative act – that is to say, his bringing of Winston face to face not with the rats

per se, but rather with what the rats represent: namely, his own entrapment in the iron cage of rationalized existence.

All of this was challenging for the first readers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but it was not unanticipated. Many reviews of the novel pointed out the debts Orwell owed to his literary precursors. Warburg, as we have seen, insisted that Orwell had surely been influenced by Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1908). He also remarked that the narrative arc of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reminded him of the story of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940), and that the intensity of the third part of the novel was reminiscent of the similarly brooding novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky. Harold Nicolson judged it in relation to Huxley's *Brave New World*, while Philip Rahv, reaffirming the link to Koestler, situated *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the long sweep of utopian writings going back through Huxley, Edward Bellamy, and William Morris to Tommaso Campanella and Thomas More.[18] To these antecedents we can add Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924), which Orwell himself viewed as a novel that debunks 'the super-rational, hedonistic type of Utopia' more prominently associated with *Brave New World* (indeed, Orwell suggested Huxley must have 'plagiarised from it to some extent'), one that investigates 'the diabolism & the tendency to return to an earlier form of civilization which seem to be part of totalitarianism' (*CW*, 20, p. 72). And then there's H. G. Wells, a writer whose influence on Orwell arguably began when as an adolescent he read *A Modern Utopia* (1905), Wells's influential account of an ideal, strangely familiar world far away from Earth. In a discussion of Orwell's early relations with Jacintha Buddicom, Peter Davison points out that Orwell's youthful plan one day to write a book like *A Modern Utopia* 'might, with only a little romantic exaggeration, be seen as the moment when *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was conceived'.[19]

However we trace the origins of Orwell's novel in literary-historical terms, clearly we can think about the idea of origins itself in relation to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in different ways and on multiple chronological scales. Part II of this *Companion*, which is devoted to the theme of 'Histories', presents four such options, moving from broad generic inheritance (the satiric tradition); to immediate literary context (how Orwell can be viewed in relation to other writers of his time); to specific connections between individuals (here, Orwell and Wells); to the influence *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has had precisely as a point of origin for other writers (its shaping presence in the history of post-war dystopian fiction). In thinking about how Orwell fits into different kinds of literary-historical sweep, we can go as far back, as Jonathan Greenberg does in his chapter on Orwell and satire (Chapter 5), to Ancient Greek and Biblical precedent, or we can stick more closely, as Lisa Mullen does in her chapter on Orwell's literary context (Chapter 6), to the immediate networks of stimulus

and discrepancy that characterize the literary cultures of the inter-war period. Alternatively, we can relate Orwell to a particularly significant precursor, as Sarah Cole does in her chapter on Orwell and Wells (Chapter 7), or we can think about how *Nineteen Eighty-Four* fits into longer trajectories of literary creativity and innovation, a strategy pursued by Hollie Johnson in her chapter on Orwell's literary inheritors (Chapter 8). Whichever course we take – and these are not exhaustive possibilities, by any means – it becomes increasingly possible to see *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a work shaped by Orwell's long-digested responses, some more palpable than others, to several centuries' worth of political turmoil, futurological guesswork, and literary innovation.

Part III of this *Companion* indicates how *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has an ethical agenda: it shows the damage done to human beings by state systems built on the politics of cruelty and hatred, encouraging readers to resist and overcome them. This agenda looms large in the scene near the start of the novel when Winston writes in his diary about a war film showing a boatload of refugees bombed into oblivion by helicopters. For Janice Ho, in her chapter 'Europe, Refugees, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*' (Chapter 9), this scene sits at the heart of a broader anxiety running all the way through the novel about the treatment of foreigners by bloodthirsty nationalists. For Elinor Taylor, in her chapter on 'The Problem of Hope: Orwell's Workers' (Chapter 10), the ethical investments of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are unmissable, except here the focus falls on Orwell's oft-debated investigations of the fates and fortunes of the proles. Intersecting with some of the issues also discussed by David Dwan, my own chapter, 'Oceania's Dirt: Filth, Nausea, and Disgust in Airstrip One' (Chapter 11), shows how ideas in the novel about dirt and cleanliness are connected with broader political concerns about the health of individuals and nations. Peter Brian Barry's chapter, on 'Room 101: Orwell and the Question of Evil' (Chapter 12), takes a philosophical perspective on how torture functions in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as an index of intolerance. Placelessness, labour conditions, the politics of grime, malevolence: these are some of the emphases in relation to which Orwell's most ethically charged imaginings took shape.

Nineteen Eighty-Four engages with questions that had been on Orwell's mind for decades. Prominent among them is the slipperiness of the division between human and animal existence, a problem Orwell addresses most often through metaphor and simile. In *Animal Farm* (1945) he found a way to deal with this problem in memorably fabular form, even if animal substitutions and comparisons feature so frequently in Orwell's fiction that it can be hard not to view the *oeuvre* in its entirety as a kind of analogical outspilling from the 1945 work, its fairy-tale gambit implying