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Erotic Dream to Nightmare: Ominous Problems and Subliminal Suggestion in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*[1]

THOMAS DILWORTH

> By means of electricity, the world of matter has become a great nerve, vibrating thousands of miles in a breathless point of time? Rather, the round globe is a vast head, a brain, instinct with intelligence! Or, shall we say, it is itself a thought, nothing but thought, and no longer the substance which we deemed it?
>
> —Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* contains what appear to be many glaring faults. They are so many and so obvious that they recall the worst coincidence-driven novels of Dickens. Like its early reviewers, however, academic interpreters have tended to ignore them, wishing, perhaps, to avoid impugning the technical competence of so powerful a work. It is a modern classic, after all, and possibly the most read novel of the twentieth century. But such selective perception amounts to widespread critical doublethink, and these faults, if that is what they are, ought to be addressed since they bear on our assessment of this novel as a work of art. If they are technical faults they aesthetically weaken it; if they are not faults, Orwell must intend the reader to notice and be troubled by them for aesthetic-interpretive purposes. I think that the latter is the case and that these apparent faults are all, in fact, integral to plot and therefore constitutive of theme

[1]A short version of this article was published as "Power of Suggestion, from Erotic Dream to Nightmare: Improbabilities in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*" (*Times Literary Supplement* [27 Jan. 2012]: 14-15).

but in a way that requires a significant shift in our interpretation of the novel. Giving the work and its author the benefit of the doubt, let us call these apparent faults problems. Of these there are two kinds: one involving games; the other, narrative improbabilities.

In the Britain of Orwell's novel before Ingsoc came to power, games were—as in real life—either competitive or games of chance, but now, in Oceania, they are neither. Chess was real when both players had a chance of winning, and it was best when competitors were approximately equal in skill. Now by law, only the white side can win (302). (White is also the side that always moves first—we shall see that this has special significance.) Before Ingsoc came to power, all players of "Snakes and Ladders" had an equal chance of winning; now the game does not exist. In the rhyming game "Oranges and Lemons" numerical odds once gave all participants an equal chance of evading capture and pretend execution; now they have no chance of escape. The difference between games as they were and as they are, or are no longer, is that now there is no equality of players, no determination of outcome by skill, and no chance.

What is the symbolic relevance of such games for the real lives of the main characters in the novel? Is there no chance of success or survival for Winston Smith and Julia? That is to say, would they have a chance if Winston did not go to the antique shop (actually a trap laid by the Thought Police) or if he and Julia did not entrust themselves to O'Brien during their visit to O'Brien's flat? Might Winston and Julia conduct their sexual affair with impunity, as Julia says she has her earlier affairs? Apparently they might, which is why most if not all published criticism assumes that, at least initially, Winston and Julia have a chance of eluding arrest. But what, then, is the meaning of the motif of games that are predetermined, chanceless, and can only symbolize hopelessness? Although no prior criticism of the novel has noted this, there is clear dissonance, even disjunction between such games and the possibility of eluding the Thought

Police. Can the relation of games to real life in the novel amount solely to such difference? The implication that life is fairer or more reasonable than games can only diminish the satirical force of the novel, and what would be the point of that? Or else there is actually no dissonance, no disjunction, and the difference between "games" (no longer really games) and human life is only apparent. But before reaching any conclusion about the relation of games to the lives of characters, we must consider those lives and examine the second kind of problem, narrative improbabilities. There are at least half a dozen of these, and some of them are glaring.

I contend that these are only seemingly improbable and that they imply an exceptionally vile aspect of policy and procedure in Oceania, which has never before been noticed, one that makes life in the novel even more chillingly dehumanized than has heretofore been thought. It also renders the lives of Winston and Julia—and O'Brien, too—entirely congruent with predetermined, chanceless games. The range and penetration of dehumanization in Oceania is evident to at least this extent: from years before the action of the novel begins, the important thoughts and dreams of characters have been predetermined by the Thought Police. As a consequence, these characters are deprived of all significant freedom of thought and agency, so that their lives are and for years have been or, for those young enough, have always been essentially meaningless.

A striking improbability early in the work is that the first trysting place of Winston and Julia is identical to the setting in Winston's recurring erotic dream, a setting which he calls "the Golden Country." The dream-setting is, for him, erotically charged:

> It was an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like women's hair. Somewhere near

> at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees.
>
> The girl with dark hair was coming towards him across the field. With what seemed a single movement she tore off her clothes and flung them disdainfully aside. Her body was white and smooth, but it aroused no desire in him, indeed he barely looked at it. What overwhelmed him in that instant was admiration for the gesture with which she had thrown her clothes aside. (32-33)

When, in waking life, Winston enters the rural setting Julia has selected for their tryst, he experiences “a curious, slow shock of recognition,” confirmed when he learns from her that there is a stream nearby with “fish in it, great big ones … under the willow trees.” He murmurs to himself, “It’s the Golden Country—almost” (129), and then Julia flings off her clothes “almost as in the dream” (131). The extreme improbability of the actual setting so closely resembling the dream-setting fails to bother Winston as it has interpreters of the novel, one of whom simply notes that this is “a dream come true” (Baruch 47). This coincidence, between the Golden Country of his dream and the real setting of the actual sexual encounter, in which Julia behaves like the dream-girl, is the most egregious of the improbabilities that challenge realistic credibility.

Others improbabilities include Winston’s apparently unmotivated purchase of a blank diary. It is “a compromising possession,” and he is “reasonably certain” that opening it is “punishable by death,” yet he buys it without being “conscious of wanting it for any particular purpose” (8). A related improbability is his later leaving his work-place bus-stop “on impulse” (85) and inadvertently returning to the antique shop where he bought the diary—returning through the labyrinthine streets of an unfamiliar part of London, a feat that would be difficult to accomplish intentionally. We are told, “he had sworn never to come near the place again. And yet the instant that he allowed his thoughts to wander, his feet brought him back here” (97).

Another improbability is his apparently unaccountable feeling of attachment to his future interrogator, O'Brien, whom he has not met and "had seen … perhaps a dozen times in almost as many years" yet "felt deeply drawn to" (13).

Another involves his recurring nightmare about "something terrible on the other side" of "a wall of blackness in front of" him (297)—a nightmare from which he always awakens before discovering what that "something" is. In Room 101 in the Ministry of Love, O'Brien informs him that this terrible "something" is rats. O'Brien might know of Winston's waking fear of rats from bugging the room Winston rents above the antique shop (151) or from subsequent interrogation under torture. But Winston himself did not know what the object of his dream-terror is, so how can O'Brien know?

Yet another improbability is that O'Brien knows some of Winston's thoughts. When, unknown to Winston, O'Brien took up his case and became his handler, Winston dreamed of someone saying, "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness" (27). Sometime later—"he could not remember when" (27)—he recognizes the voice in his dream as that of O'Brien. Seven years after the dream, Winston and Julia go to O'Brien's flat to join Goldstein's conspiracy against Big Brother. As they are about to leave, O'Brien begins to say, "We shall meet again—if we do meet again," and Winston tentatively finishes, "In the place where there is no darkness?" Hearing this, O'Brien shows no surprise, "as though he recognized the allusion" (185). And the oddly poetic expression does not surprise or intrigue him, as it ordinarily would anyone hearing it for the first time. How can O'Brien be familiar with precisely these words, "the place where there is no darkness," if they have previously occurred solely in Winston's dream? Later, after being incarcerated in the Ministry of Love, a "place with no darkness," Winston realizes "why O'Brien had seemed to recognize the allusion" (241): he had foreseen their meeting here. But O'Brien seems to refer to Winston's dream when he says, "I told you … that if we met

again it would be here" (256). Winston simply accepts the triple coincidence between the words of his dream, those of O'Brien's interrupted prediction, and O'Brien's "I-told-you-so." Interpreters of the novel have likewise accepted it, but the coincidence ought to bother us. Furthermore, aside from the problem of O'Brien knowing the words of Winston's dream, how, before meeting O'Brien, can Winston have retained the memory of that dreamed voice—its pitch, tone, and timbre—so that he could later recognize it as O'Brien's voice?

During interrogation in the Ministry of Love, O'Brien repeatedly seems to read Winston's mind. Winston wonders "why bother torturing me," and O'Brien says, "You are thinking … that since we intend to destroy you …, why do we go to the trouble of interrogating you first?" (267). When Winston silently searches for the word for "the belief that nothing exists outside your own mind," O'Brien supplies it: "The word you are trying to think of is solipsism" (279). O'Brien is also correct in saying, "You are thinking … that my face is old and tired" (276). But he is incorrect when he continues, "You are thinking that I talk of power, and yet I am not even able to prevent the decay of my own body" (276). This minor error is important because it indicates that O'Brien is not actually reading, or consistently able to read, Winston's mind. How, though, does he so often know what Winston is thinking?

This improbability and all the others mentioned above are striking and ought to prompt the reader to wonder whether this novel is a technical catastrophe—as it must be unless the improbabilities are sensibly explicable aspects of plotted narrative. But how can they be? Daphne Patai comes close to an answer when she writes of Winston, "his very dreams are known to the Party and may, in fact, have been in some way planted or induced by the Party" (859), but she ventures no suggestion about what that way might be. Murray Sperber likewise approaches an answer when he suggests that "perhaps Winston found his way to Charrington's" antique shop "because the Thought Police had

programmed him to do so" (217). But he, too, suggests no way in which they might have done it. Sperber goes on to hypothesize that "every movement" of Winston and Julia is "possibly choreographed by the Thought Police" (217), again without suggesting how this can have been done.

The only previous critic explicitly to acknowledge any of the improbabilities mentioned above is Malcolm Pittock. He proposes as an explanation that the members of the Inner Party or the Thought Police have "demonic" "supernatural powers" and that O'Brien can read minds and "exhibits … powers of telepathic suggestion" (155, 148). According to Pittock, such abilities allow the regime to send the dream of the Golden Country to Winston and render that dream prophetic by giving members of the Inner Party the demonic ability "to predict the future with absolute accuracy" (152). As we have seen, however, O'Brien's ability to read Winston's mind is imperfect, and that obviates the possibility of demonic supernatural power. (Supernatural power is not like comic-book super powers, which can be temporarily diminished as, for example, by kryptonite.) Furthermore, O'Brien indicates that he cannot foresee the future with certainty. He says to Winston, "We shall meet again—*if* we do meet again" (emphasis mine)—words implying awareness that, at the very least, Winston might die of natural causes or while resisting arrest.[2] So Pittock is mistaken in explaining the narrative improbabilities as evidence of telepathy and the supernatural. Moreover, his explanation would merely displace reader incredulity, since telepathy and demonic powers are themselves improbable, at least in novels. They are unrealistic and would generically establish *Nineteen Eighty-four* as a Gothic romance.

[2]For the arrest of Winston and Julia, the Thought Police take precautions against violent resistance by emptying the stove in the room above the antique shop so that its fuel cannot be used to set the building on fire: "The stove's gone out," says Julia. "There's no oil in it …. The funny thing is I made sure it was full" (227).

Before Pittock, Langston Elsbree proposed what could be another solution to the problem of the improbabilities but without mentioning them. He writes that *Nineteen Eighty-four* moves not by plot but by image-associations characterizing a "dreamlike state" (139). This is possible, he contends, because the novel is, in its structural technique, "literally [sic] a nightmare" (135). Its being a fictional nightmare would make it a surrealistic romance of free association and coincidence, liberated from the logic of causality. Keith Alldritt also sees "all the notorious barbarisms . . . in the book . . . less as possible phenomena in the external world and more as objects in the hero's psychological landscape" (161). Following Elsbree and Alldritt, Richard Smyer treats the novel not as an autonomous work of art but as a "surrealistic" "figurative representation of" the "inner condition" (141) of Winston—which is, he says, also that of Orwell—a condition Smyer subjects to Freudian dream-analysis.[3] But the novel cannot be a dream since it has no dreamer—unless Orwell can somehow be forced into that role. Furthermore, the associative leaps and coincidences of dreams do not generally characterize the narrative. It mostly progresses by means of clear, realistic cause and effect, as in the conduct of the affair between Winston and Julia and in O'Brien's long, patient entrapment of Winston. Even allowing for the narrative improbabilities under consideration, this is a novel, not a romance.

That its imaginative modality is basically, perhaps solely, realism has been attested to by many readers, including the poet Czeslaw Milosz, writing that Europeans in the Eastern Bloc "are amazed that a writer who never lived in [Soviet] Russia should have so keen a perception into its life" (42).[4] The realism in

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[3]Richard Smyer sees "the whole narrative—the settings, characters, institutions, and events" as "an objectification of Winston's inner self …. to a great extent a psychodrama within a single mind" (143) in which "Oceania is the paradoxical world of the subrational mind" (144).

[4]Among those demonstrating the close relation of the novel to reality, and hence its realism, are Irving Howe in "Orwell: History as Nightmare" (*Politics and the Novel.* New York: Horizon, 1957. 237-51) 236, 240; Isaac Deutscher in "'1984'—the Mysticism of

this novel is too powerful and pervasive to allow for generic morphing into Gothic romance or nightmare (a synonym for romance) or magic realism (which is also a form of romance). As a determining element of romance, the narrative improbabilities would undermine the compelling logic of the story's realism with gratuitous fantasy. The tension between realism and these unrealistic improbabilities problematizes this novel, implicitly challenging the reader to find a plausible, realistic explanation that renders them only apparently improbable. I think there is such an explanation.

The improbabilities may be explained as effects of subliminal suggestions communicated by means of two-way telescreens, which are nearly omnipresent in the novel and can never be switched off (4). While Winston is in the Ministry of Love, for example, the thoughts that O'Brien seems to mind-read can have been planted not telepathically or psychically but by hypnotic subliminal suggestion via telescreens. This could easily be done as Winston slept in his cell, where "there were four telescreens, one on each wall" (237). Winston's initial trip to the antique shop run by Charrington, who is actually a member of the Thought Police, and his inclination to enter it are explicable as a result of deferred subliminal suggestion. This is also true of his second visit to the antique shop, which is likewise inadvertent and even more unlikely since, when he finds himself in front of the shop, "a twinge of fear went through him. . . . [H]e had sworn never to come near the place again . . . his feet had brought him back here of their own accord" (97). And long before these otherwise

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Cruelty" (*Heretics and Renegades.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1969. 35-50) 34-35; Anthony Burgess in *1985* (London: Hutchison, 1978) 20-102; Frederick R. Karl in "George Orwell: The White Man's Burden" (*A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English Novel.* Ed. Frederick R. Karl. New York: Farrar, Straus, 1962. 138-66) 149; Jeffrey Meyers in "The Evolution of 1984" *English Miscellany* 23 [1972]: 246-61) 244-52; and Richard Rovere in "The Importance of George Orwell" (*The American Establishment and Other Reports, Opinions, and Speculations.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1962. 62-187) 178. Even Smyer, who treats it as surrealistic expression of Winston/Orwell's psyche, admits that it can be "viewed as a realistic novel" (152).

inexplicable actions, O'Brien or other Thought Policemen could easily have planted in Winston's subconscious the erotic dream of the Golden Country by means of subliminal suggestions through a telescreen like that in his apartment living room (7), which is audible in his bedroom since in the morning it gives "forth an ear-splitting whistle" that wakes him (33).

When Orwell was writing, television was the subject of experimental development in Britain and the United States.[5] But, unlike television then or later, the telescreen is an interactive two-way medium like the computer: the listener-viewer can be seen, heard, and individually spoken to. As film buffs know but no Orwell scholar has mentioned, telescreens were not invented by Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-four* but by Charlie Chaplin in his film *Modern Times* (1936). In the film, the president of "Electro Steel Corp.," played by Allan Garcia, has in his office a screen with two-way, on-line audio visual transmission. He uses it to supervise production and, by means of large screens on walls throughout the factory, gives orders individually to specific workers. In the film his face appears large on the screen like that of Big Brother on the public telescreens in the novel. When Chaplin's character relaxes during a bathroom break, the president appears on a wall-screen in the bathroom and yells, "Hey, quit stalling, get back to work. Go on."[6] Like Chaplin's factory worker in the

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[5]Television developed simultaneously in Britain and the USA. In Britain in March of 1925, John Baird demonstrated televised silhouette images in motion at Selfridge's Department Store in London. In January of the following year, he transmitted moving gray-scale images for the Royal Institute. In 1929, he participated in an experimental television service in Germany. In 1936 he broadcast images in 240 lines of resolution for the BBC. That year the BBC adopted Isaac Shoenburg's Marconi-EMI Emitron tube, providing a 405-line service.

[6]The company president also delivers orders to his foreman via a telescreen. His first order, "Section Five, speed 'er up, forty one," increases difficulties for the worker played by Chaplin, who struggles to keep up with the assembly line. The second telescreen command, "Matt, Section Five, more speed, four seven," makes things even worse. His last, "Section Five, give it the limit," speeds up the assembly line so much that it drives Chaplin's character crazy—he dives into the gigantic cogged wheels of factory machinery, which swallows him.

film, Winston in the novel is specifically and directly spoken to through telescreens. When he does calisthenics before his living-room telescreen, the shrewish instructress interrupts her general injunctions to speak solely to "6079 Smith W! Yes, *you!* Bend lower please! You can do better than that" (39). Later, in the rented room above the antique shop, Winston says, "We are the dead," Julia repeats, "We are the dead," and, to their and the reader's surprise, "an iron voice" from the hidden telescreen confirms, "You are the dead" (230). In the novel as in the film, telescreens provide an aspect of science-fiction. In the novel, they also realistically enable plot.[7]

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[7]In writing the novel, Orwell may have been influenced in other respects by Chaplin's satire of dystopian mechanisation. In the novel, Winston rebels. So does the Chaplin character in the film. Retrieved from the machinery that swallowed him, he becomes a revolutionary prankster, sabotaging the working of the factory by wrench-tightening buttons, nipples, and noses of co-workers, short-circuiting machinery and the telescreen system, oiling bodies of other workers as though they were machines, and finally squirting oil in the face of the company president. In the novel, Winston and Julia attempt to escape the state through their love affair. In the film, Chaplin's character and his girlfriend, played by Paulette Goddard, conduct a sexually innocent love affair and create a loving home life as an alternative to inhumane industrialism and social injustice. They conclude the film by walking together away from the camera to the tune of "Laugh Though Your Heart is Breaking."

In his review of Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* in *Time and Tide* (1940), Orwell implies that he has seen "all his films," which "have a kind of jerkiness, an impression of being tied together with bits of string." *Modern Times,* Chaplin's previous film, certainly gives this impression. Orwell goes on to write (and since this review has not been republished, I quote at length):

> What is Chaplin's precious gift? It is his power to stand for a sort of concentrated essence of the common man for the ineradicable belief in decency that exists in the hearts of ordinary people, at any rate in the West. We live in a period in which democracy is everywhere in retreat, super-men in control of three-quarters of the world, liberty explained away by sleek professors, Jew-baiting defended by pacifists. And everywhere, under the surface, the common man sticks obstinately to the beliefs that he derives from Christian culture. The common man is wiser than the intellectuals, just as animals are wiser than men. Any intellectual can make you out a splendid "case" for smashing the German Trade Unions and torturing Jews. But the common man, who has no intellect, only instinct and tradition, knows "it isn't right." Anyone who has not lost his moral sense—and education in Marxism and similar creeds consists largely in destroying your moral sense—knows that

Long after Winston had the dream of being told about the place where there is no darkness, he semi-realized, "It was O'Brien who had spoken to him out of the dark" (27) because O'Brien actually had spoken to him—through the telescreen in Winston's dark apartment. We are not told this, but it is the inference a reader is meant to draw. Using domestic telescreens, the Thought Police broadcast specifically targeted subliminal messages, technically known as "deferred suggestions," to people asleep or in a sleep-related hypnotic trance. It was a notion that Orwell may have gotten from Huxley's *Brave New World,* in which a dystopian society is based on the "sleep-teaching, or hypnopaedia" of very young children (18).[8]

Hypnotic trance resembles sleep and, when Orwell was writing, was associated with sleep. The adjective "subliminal" means "below the threshold" of consciousness and is used for both hypnotic trance and sleep. Colloquially, to hypnotize a person was, and still is, to put him or her "to sleep"—the Greek root *hypnos* means "sleep." Until 1933, hypnotic trance was considered identical to sleep (Hull 193-94). When Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty-four,* the major study of hypnosis was Clark L. Hull's *Hypnosis and Suggestibility* (1933), which reports conclusions by H. Bernheim, O. Kaudens, and P. Schindler that sleep and hypnosis are related states. They attest that sleep easily becomes hypnotic trance with full rapport between subject and hypnotist and with all the behavioral phenomena characteristic of hypnotism (208). Orwell may have thought that the hypnotist could simply speak to the sleeping subject without hypnotizing him.

"it isn't right" to march into the house of little Jewish shop-keepers and set fire to their furniture. More than any humourous trick, I believe, Chaplin's appeal lies in his power to reassert the fact, overlaid by Fascism and, ironically enough, by Socialism, that *vox populi* is *vox Dei* and giants are vermin.

No wonder that Hitler, from the moment he came to power, has banned Chaplin's films in Germany! (1250-51)

[8]Joshua Rey points out the importance of "sleep-teaching" in *Brave New World* in his letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* (3 Feb. 2012), 6.

If so, the subject might on rare occasions awake sufficiently to remember later what is being said, as Winston remembered O'Brien's words about "the place where there is no darkness." As understood today, hypnotic trance is a heightened state of suggestibility that has nothing to do with sleep, but subliminal suggestion during sleep is considered theoretically possible and continues to be practiced, so that Orwell's premise has not been invalidated by advances in psychology.[9] Subliminal suggestions may also take pictorial form with subjects, hypnotized or not, watching a screen. Otto Pötzl had successfully experimented with briefly shown pictures affecting the dreams of viewers as early as 1917 (Benjafield 102). Visual subliminal suggestion would explain how the pictorial image of the Golden Country entered Winston's dreams, although verbal description during hypnotic trance would adequately conjure the visual image as it does in the imagination of the reader of the novel.

A probable side effect of hypnosis is the otherwise inexplicable "strange intimacy that existed, or seemed to exist, between [Winston] and O'Brien" before they meet (159). Such a feeling of intimacy would originate in the rapport that is quickly established between hypnotist and subject. In an age before Stockholm syndrome was understood, that rapport is probably also intended to explain "the peculiar reverence for O'Brien," his interrogator and torturer, "which nothing seemed able to destroy" (286).

Though not previously noted by critics, hypnosis is an explicit motif in the novel. Rhythmic public chanting of "B-B!" (for "Big Brother") is "an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness" (18-19); and when practicing doublethink a person is said "consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you have just performed" (38). Winston believes the "white body"

[9]The late Byron Rourke, one of the foremost neuropsychologists in North America, in conversation with author.

of his estranged wife has been sexually "frozen forever by the hypnotic power of the Party" (71). In his portrait, Big Brother has "hypnotic eyes" (83), and, according to Goldstein's book (co-written by O'Brien), the specialties of "the scientist today" include "hypnosis" (202).

Furthermore, hypnotism is virtually dramatized during an interrogation in which O'Brien makes what Orwell calls suggestions even though they are not suggestions but statements. The misnomer is, I think, deliberate and serves to imply hypnotic suggestion. After administering a painless but mind-purging charge of "three thousand" units of electricity—whereby this interaction differs, of course, from hypnotism—O'Brien asks, "What country is Oceania at war with" (269), and Winston answers, "I don't know" (270). O'Brien tells him, "Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia…. the war has continued without a break, always the same war. Do you remember that?" and Winston says, "Yes." Then O'Brien tells him that Winston's seeing a newspaper article years before, which proves the innocence of three Party members convicted as counterrevolutionaries, was an invented memory. Winston replies, "Yes." O'Brien continues:

> "Just now I held up the fingers of my hand to you. You saw five fingers Do you remember that?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> O'Brien held up the fingers of his left hand, with the thumb concealed.
>
> "There are five fingers there. Do you see five fingers?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> And he did see them, …. He saw five fingers, and there was no deformity. … There had been a moment—he did not know how long, thirty seconds, perhaps—of luminous certainty, when each new *suggestion* of O'Brien's had filled up a patch of emptiness and become absolute truth … (270-71, emphasis mine).

The motif of hypnotic suggestion increases the likelihood of its importance to plot.

Able to make subliminal suggestions to Winston, the Thought Police can also, of course, make them to Julia. That they have would account for her choosing Winston as a lover even though he is considerably older than she and not wealthy, handsome, or particularly charming. The improbability of her choice causes him to ask, "What could you see to attract you in a man like me?" (128). Subliminal suggestion would also account for her supposedly accidental discovery of the place resembling the Golden Country of Winston's recurring erotic dream and her subsequent choice of this place for their sexual rendezvous, even though she knows many other suitable spots through "innumerable community hikes" in the "countryside round London" (133). Her initial discovery of the place is, moreover, redolent of Smith's apparently aimless wandering twice to the antique shop: she discovered it when she "got lost once on a community hike" (126).[10] Also possibly predetermined by subliminal suggestion is her wanton behavior in this place, which is that of the young woman in Winston's dream, throwing "her clothes aside" (33), which was, in Orwell's time, unusual behavior on a first date.

So the liberty symbolized for Winston by his erotic dream is, in his waking life, illusory. That is why the place of rendezvous, which is identical to the Golden Country of the dream, evokes the imagined garden in Part I of T.S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" (1936)—something not previously noted by interpreters of the novel.[11] At Winston and Julia's trysting place is "a thrush" whose

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[10]The place resembling the Golden Country and the room above the antique shop (places where Winston and Julia first and last copulate) are further linked, symbolically, by their being (the first of these places, probably) bugged: Winston realizes "the danger of concealed microphones" in the first place, and in the second they are listened to through the hidden telescreen, as Orwell initially hints by having Charrington praise the bed in the room as beautiful "if you could get the bugs out of it" (100) and having Julia say of the picture that hides the telescreen, "I bet that picture's got bugs behind it" (153).

[11]Orwell was, of course, familiar with *Four Quartets.* He had reviewed the first three of the Quartets in 1942 (Orwell, *Collected Essays* 237). Though differing with Eliot in political philosophy, he admired Eliot's poetry, knew much of his early poetry by heart

movements and singing are the sole concern of nearly a whole page (130), so that the bird receives more emphasis than anything else about the place. This thrush alludes to the bird referred to four times in the opening section of "Burnt Norton," where "the deception of the thrush" leads to a quasi-Edenic "rose garden" called "our first world" (Eliot 24). Like this idyllic garden, Orwell's locus of free erotic passion and political rebellion does not exist—not, at least, since the takeover of Ingsoc and the Thought Police. The Golden Country is only, in Eliot's words, "what might have been" and takes dreadful meaning from the poet's statement that

> What might have been is an abstraction
> Remaining a perpetual possibility
> Only in a world of speculation.
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present. (Eliot 6-10)

In "a world of speculation" the Golden Country "might have been," but only if there were no Ingsoc, no Oceania, no Thought Police, no telescreens. As a symbol of freedom and happiness, the Golden Country was always just as impossible for Winston and Julia as the rose garden now is in "Burnt Norton." That, furthermore, is why the Golden Country is verbally redolent of the Golden Age of Greek mythology—which, of course, never existed—and of Goldstein, the revolutionary whose continued existence is undoubtedly fictitious. Paradoxically, the reality behind the Golden Country of Winston's erotic dream is the Ministry of Love where, as he accepts his fate, Winston thinks, "The end was contained in the beginning" (166)—an echo of the first and last words of Eliot's "East Coker" (1940), "In my beginning is my end" and "In my end is my beginning."

(*Collected Essays* 237), and defended it against the ideological reactions of leftist friends (Rae 197). When discussing modern writers in *Inside the Whale* (1940), Orwell refers most often to Eliot. In his own writing, he sometimes evokes Eliot (Sherry 89-90). As Ralph Stewart was the first to notice, the first line of *Nineteen Eighty-four* echoes the first line of *The Waste Land* in referring to April (151).

In employing subliminal suggestion, the Thought Police may only establish the temporal and spatial perimeters of rebellion so that, if and when it occurs, it is easily monitored and contained. But what if the Thought Police also deliberately and actively incline subjects to rebellion by making tempting suggestions?[12] What if they go further and predetermine or compel decisions to rebel? From the start, this would allow Winston and Julia no significant freedom of agency and consequently very little humanity. Through subliminal suggestion the Thought Police may well instill rebellious impulses in order to provide victims they can manipulate and destroy. Hypnotic suggestion may arouse and direct sexual attraction between Winston and Julia or, more probably, Julia's finding Winston sexually attractive, and may compel each to consummate and continue their relationship. It may even determine the extent to which Winston retains his love for her under torture. Without freedom of choice, the experiences of Julia and Winston would be less interesting to us. We might naturally think they would be uninteresting to Big Brother or the Thought Police, but that would be a mistake.

Julia may never have had any real freedom; and Winston and O'Brien, both born before Ingsoc came to power, may not have had real freedom for years. This is the ultimate possible horror of the novel. But how probable is it? What reason can there be for designating victims and initiating their sexual or overtly counterrevolutionary engagement? It might provide sadistic pleasure. But the many critics who call the regime sadistic are mistaken. Value for the Party cannot be pleasure derived from control or inflicting pain because value for the Party is not pleasure. It is, as O'Brien says, solely the exercise of power (276, 281)—"The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake" (275). Exerting control and inflicting pain are merely manifestations

[12]Supporting this possibility is Murray Sperber seeing evidence of pre-designation and temptation in the design of Winston's apartment, his telescreen being in "an unusual position," allowing him an alcove of privacy which facilitates his becoming an enemy of society (215).

of power, which is, as O'Brien says, an end in itself (276). (Since in the real world power is essentially and properly only a means, regarding it as an end or absolute is one of the great examples of metaphysical insanity in literature.) Daphne Patai is therefore mistaken in asserting that O'Brien enjoys "the pleasure of victory" (873). Despite his impressive intelligence and dramatic presence, he is merely an apparatchik, a tool, doing what he is required to do. Enjoying victory implies, moreover, the reality of a game and of O'Brien's humanity, which, as we have begun to see, are not real. Nor does the Party seek dramatic interest; it seeks only power, which it would certainly wish to maximize to the fullest extent possible by subliminal suggestion. In contrast to O'Brien is the other Thought Policeman, Charrington, who appears to feel sadistic glee in joking about "bugs" in the bed in the apartment (100) and in repeating the end of the children's game, "Here comes the candle to light you to bed, here comes a chopper to chop off your head!" (231). His playful, sadistic, humanity may indicate that Charrington's days are numbered.

Even if significant free choice is temporarily possible—and this is the most positive possible reading of the novel, one that seems to me unlikely—certain personal psychological associations and predilections are implicitly pre-suggested, i.e. predetermined. For example, rats were probably established as the object of Winston's dream terror by subliminal suggestion though telescreens years before the events narrated. Both of his recurrent dreams (his erotic dream of the Golden Country and his nightmare of unbearable terror) must be "suggested" by the Thought Police, and, in a profoundly symbolic sense, they are the same dream. The dream of the Golden Country has its continuation and ultimate truth in the threatened realization of his metaphorical nightmare of (O'Brien tells him) rats in room 101. It is probable that Thought Police using telescreens channel, and therefore limit, the freedom of Winston and Julia and presumably everyone else in the Party. It is possible—I think probable—that the subliminal suggestion through telescreens

eliminates all significant freedom as early in life as possible. This idea, after all, is not new. Near the start of Huxley's *Brave New World,* the Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre explains "the principle of sleep-teaching, or hypnopaedia" (18), as used on very young children

> Till at last the child's mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions! … Suggestions from the State. (22)

The difference from "sleep-teaching" in Huxley's novel is that here, in *Nineteen Eighty-four,* it continues through life and targets selected individuals, not solely for moral and social indoctrination but also for game-like exercise of power. When Winston thinks, "Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull" (29), he is mistaken.

The question remains, why is subliminal suggestion only implied and not explicitly disclosed, at least to the reader? The answer is that Orwell is writing in the limited omniscient point of view attached to Winston and, at least once, to Julia. Because they are not members of the Inner Party, they do not know about police use of hypnotic suggestion. This is part of the meaning of the novel, that the reach of Big Brother exceeds the knowledge of any of his subjects not in the Inner Party or Thought Police and that, for Winston and Julia (and, of course, also for O'Brien), Big Brother has already landscaped the inner garden of the psyche even in its unconscious dimensions. They have all been subsumed in what Hawthorne prophetically calls the "great nerve," the "brain," the "thought" (578) into which the world of historical realism has been transformed by electricity. The only free "person" left on earth is Big Brother—who is, of course, merely a metaphor for the state having replaced humanity.

We can now appreciate the lack of dissonance between Oceanic "games," if they can still be called that, and the lives of the characters in *Nineteen Eighty-four.* In the motif of games, subliminal suggestion through telescreens has its pervasive symbolic corollary, and the meaning of the symbolism is dehumanization. The importance of the motif of games, with its implication of hopelessness, is proportional to the pervasiveness of the motif. Julia is "good at games" (128) and associates them with her and Winston's situation when she speaks to Winston of "this game that we're playing" (142). Her use of this image raises intriguing questions. Does the analogy between their lives and a game have any meaning that is not merely ironic? If so, what sort of game do they play?

Prominent in the motif of games is chess, a game of competition that is now, as we saw, no longer really a game. It is initially associated with three disgraced-and-repentant revolutionaries (80) and subsequently with Winston (309-10) as a game they all decline to play. Winston attends a lecture entitled "Ingsoc in relation to chess" (115), Syme was a member of "the Chess committee" (154), and chess is the basis of a simile for an early challenge for Winston and Julia: the "difficulty of meeting was like trying to make a move at chess when you were already mated" (115). In fact, mating is a dreadful dramatic pun: long before Winston and Julia copulate, the "game" is lost. Now in Oceania chess is no longer competitive or uncertain in outcome because the white side always wins by law (302)—the implication being that the white side is the side of the Inner Party and Big Brother. The buildings of the Ministries of Truth, Love, and Peace are "white" (5), and workers in the Ministry of Love wear white coats (255)—simultaneously evoking the winning chess pieces and the whited sepulchre of Matthew 23:27. Since in chess the white side always moves first, it is the Inner Party that initiates the "game" in anyone's life, and the first move is an act of hypnotic sleep-teaching or subliminal

suggestion. The Party—not Winston, not even Julia—is the protagonist of this novel.

Charrington mentions the game of chance that accompanies the rhyme "Oranges and Lemons." It involves two children linking raised arms to form an arch for other children to pass under. They recite the rhyme with increasing speed and, as Charrington explains, "when they came to 'Here comes a chopper to chop off your head'" the two forming the arch "brought their arms down and caught you" (102). As Winston and Julia are about to be arrested, Charrington recites the end of the rhyme (231), suggesting that what seemed to them to be real life was really just a game. But the original was a game of chance in which the odds of escaping capture increased with the number of children playing. In this metaphorical version of the game, there are no other players to provide a chance of escape. As with the new chess, the metaphorical game is no longer really a game. The difference between real and metaphorical "Oranges and Lemons"—and its pervasive relevance to narrative events—is emphasized by "St. Martin's," in the rhyme accompanying the game, being the church on Victory (formerly Trafalgar) Square, where Winston and Julia first meet (120), and by O'Brien's servant, undoubtedly a member of the Thought Police, being named, or at least called, Martin (182).

Winston remembers as a child playing with his mother another game of chance, "Snakes and Ladders," which is no longer allowed or even acknowledged as having existed. For Winston late in the novel, after he is brainwashed, "It was a false memory" (309). In "Snakes and Ladders," the outcome is determined by a toss of the die (or, more often today, dice). Every player has a chance at winning, and it is an even chance—emphasized by Winston and his mother having played "eight games, winning four each" (309). As in all games of chance, no player controls the outcome, which is entirely capricious. The effect of chance

in such games is to abolish inequalities of skill and intelligence between players (Caillois 18).[13]

Numerological references give "Snakes and Ladders" symbolic prominence among games in the novel. Whereas chess is played on a board of sixty-four unnumbered squares, "Snakes and Ladders" is played—the tiddlywinks are moved—on a board of 100 numbered squares. It is probably with reference to this game-board that, in the Ministry of Love, Room 101 is the ultimate locus of terror.[14] This numerical one-upmanship symbolically indicates that, for Party members at least, in the metaphorical game of life there is no longer any chance of winning. (Or, to put it in terms of the moralistic Hindu prototype of "Snakes and Ladders," which is called *Moksha Patamu,* there is no longer any chance of *moksha* or salvation, which was represented by square 100.) While enjoying his seeming sexual idyll with Julia in the rented room, Winston fails to imagine the possibility of 101. Thinking of the Ministry of Love, he "was curious how that predestined horror moved in and out of one's consciousness. There it lay, fixed in future time, preceding death as surely as 99 precedes 100" (146). He thinks of fearfulness as symbolized by the number 99. This, too, seems a reference to the game board, on which square 99 contains a snake's head and requires a drop of 70 spaces to square 29. (His return a second time to the antique shop has spatial affinity with such a drop or, conversely, an ascent up a long ladder, bringing him closer to the supposed finality of 100.) In the Ministry of Love, furthermore,

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[13]Analogous to "Snakes and Ladders" and "Oranges and Lemons" as games of chance is the weekly lottery that only the Proles are allowed to play, a sign of their enduring freedom and humanity. Wyndham Lewis acutely observes that the disinterest of the Thought Police in the Proles is unbelievable and therefore a flaw in the realism of Orwell's novel. He writes, "It is unlikely, in a regime such as Orwell describes, that the millions of ordinary people will be left unmolested, treated indeed as though they were not there. The appetite for power involves the maximum interference with other human beings" (107).

[14]Orwell worked for a time in room 101 at the BBC, but this biographical fact and the numerical game association are not mutually exclusive.

the numbers on the dial of O'Brien's electric torture machine "run up to a hundred" (257), a range of torture that leaves Winston's inner freedom inviolate, so that he confesses everything but continues to love Julia. As long as there are 100 squares, he still has, as he supposes, a chance of winning, at least insofar as his secret feelings and inner freedom are concerned. In his innermost heart or mind he seems still able to play "Snakes and Ladders." But that game's one hundred squares of chance and possibility are surpassed by Room 101, an extra square in which the last vestige of chance and freedom vanishes as Winston is brought emotionally, willfully, and sincerely to betray Julia. Of course he never could have won the 'game' that the Thought Police play with him and had begun playing years before he was aware of it.

Room 101 is to the linear-climactic plot of the novel what hypnotic suggestion through telescreens is to its fictional realism: the abolition of freedom, chance, playing, and humanity. What was planted subliminally over the course of many years—perhaps for Julia over a lifetime—is harvested in Room 101. Telescreens and Room 101 are therefore corresponding components of mind-penetration. In a sense, ever since he began having a telescreen, Winston has been in Room 101. For all members of the Party, there is no other place—just as there are no real games. The Thought Police control everything, and they always "win"—if that word continues to have any meaning when there is really no contest. Winston and Julia do not actually lose since they never really play. Even when Julia thinks they are playing a game and we think so too, they haven't a chance. Patai is mistaken in saying that "both O'Brien and Winston are players" of a sort of game (856)—it is a non-game.

The abolition of games also involves war, which is metaphorically a game because competitive. In the never-ending war waged by Oceania, enemy and ally occasionally change sides. Neither chance nor skill nor power determines the outcome of war

because war now has no outcome—it merely continues. Even metaphorically, war ceases to be a game.

Games of competition benefit from (and games of chance require) "conditions of pure equality between players impossible to people 'in real life'" (Caillois 17). Rivalry in competitive games presumes and requires approximate equality, even to the extent of handicapping players of advanced skill (Caillois 14). Patai hypothesizes that the purpose of O'Brien's years-long handling of Winston is to develop him into a strong opponent in order to make their interaction an interestingly competitive game for O'Brien (859). But from the start, O'Brien has in every respect ensured Winston's failure by predetermining the manner and form of his rebellion and ensuring its surveillance. As we have seen, O'Brien may even have determined that Winston would rebel, a probability since it maximizes power. Winston probably never has the least capacity for effective resistance and certainly is never deliberately allowed that capacity. He never enjoys the "relative equality between the players" that Patai claims to see (858, 857) and never has anything approaching the equality that distinguishes games from real life. If their interaction were a game, by using telescreens, O'Brien cheats egregiously, and this degree of cheating makes what might otherwise be a game definitely no longer one.

As far as competition and chance are concerned, Winston and Julia are not players but game elements—pawns, cards, or tiddlywinks—manipulated by O'Brien. He is an extension (a finger or hand) of Big Brother as personification of the state. For Big Brother, this manipulation of Winston and Julia resembles a game of solitaire except that the player always cheats to win, and such a "game" is, of course, no longer really a game.

But Julia says they are playing a game. How might this be true? Either she is mistaken, or they play in the sense of pretending. Perhaps they engage in mimicry or simulation, which Roger Caillois says is a kind of game playing (8). Julia and Winston may not fully realize this, but Orwell does. They are

simulating life as it was when human. They are pretending to be free, pretending to play a game they might win, imitating a normal human relationship. They imagine themselves to be exercising free agency unobserved, at least for a while. As they pretend, readers succumb to their performance. We believe they are eluding the authorities, but Winston and Julia may know—as Orwell certainly knows and we soon find out—that this pretending involves the willing suspension of disbelief and the exercise in other-belief so important to Method playacting. This is doublethink, and it gives them affinity with O'Brien, an expert at achieving doublethink, which has its recurring symbol in "his characteristic gesture" of "re-settling his spectacles on his nose" (19, 12).

Even their pretending is not actually playing, since actual players are fully aware that they are playing and since real players are free to leave whenever they please (Caillois 6). Julia and Winston may be free to involve themselves in their sexual affair and political rebellion, though I doubt it; but once involved, they have no freedom to withdraw from the "game." O'Brien, too, pretends: he says that there is a rebellion and that he is part of it, but this is not gratuitous playing at simulation—it is lying in order to entrap. For him pretending is only metaphorical play. But for Winston and Julia, thanks to doublethink, pretending is, for a while, at least imaginatively, possible, and that may be the sole form of playing (and of humanity) that is now possible—though only loosely, in English usage, can pretending be called a game.[15]

All other forms of play, and certainly all playing of games as we use the word in English, have ceased with the loss of freedom, of uncertainty, of equality, and of chance. Games in this novel are metaphorical because humanity is now metaphorical, abol-

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[15]Although Caillois calls it a kind of game, simulation seems a more elementary sort of playing or pretending, which precedes and underlies games. Such playing involves no set rules and is not usually called a game in English.

ished in people and transferred to the personified state. This includes the humanity of O'Brien, who is merely an extension of Big Brother and does not exist as an independent agent, just as he has no real opponents (ones who might win). People are now merely parts or cells of the larger body politic in which some cells, like antibodies, attack others. Owing to the difference between humanity and post-humanity, the game metaphor has no positive meaning—it is simply a lie. This may be the one instance in literature in which metaphor is itself metaphorical.

The game-allusions imply the terrible reality in which total Party control extends to the innermost psyche of a person, rendering him or her a former person. Hypnosis combined with electronic technology diminishes or eliminates interior freedom, which is essential to humanity. There is a minimal, residual humanity in playing-as-self-deception and in Winston's memory of his mother and sister and his feelings about them, but these serve mainly to emphasize by contrast dehumanization owing to loss of freedom of agency.[16] In this novel, freedom is minor or temporary if it exists at all. O'Brien says, "If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man" (282). It is a big "If." He was temporarily human only if his love of Julia was, while it lasted, free. That gone, he is no longer human and neither, according to O'Brien, is anyone else in the Party. But, as we have seen, even Winston's love or lust may have been predetermined.

The pessimism of Orwell's fictional vision extends to its mythic resonance. Until the reader becomes aware of the telescreen as medium of subliminal suggestion, the chief underlying myth seems to be Paradise Lost, with Adam and Eve as the archetypes informing Winston and Julia, especially in the pastoral equivalent to the quasi-paradisal "Golden Country" where they first copulate. O'Brien would then correspond to Satan, the tempter and

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[16]For the idea that Winston's memories indicate a surviving humanity, I am indebted to comments from my daughter, Christine Dilworth, during discussion following the paper on which this essay is based, delivered at the IAUPE conference in Malta, 20 July 2010.

father of lies.[17] But the humane myth of Paradise Lost does not underlie this fiction, except as a myth denied. Use of telescreens for hypnosis means that paradise has been lost long ago. The true mythic location of this novel is not Eden but hell, and the fictional reality is worse even than that since theologically the damned retain their humanity.

Also informing the novel are the myths of apocalypse (the end of the world) and the coming of the anti-Christ, an archetype informing Big Brother. These myths operate not as occurring but as having occurred. Convinced Party members participate in Big Brother's mystical body. O'Brien tells Winston, if a person "can make complete, utter submission, if he can escape from his identity, if he can merge himself in the Party so that he is the Party, then he is all-powerful and immortal" (277). If, as O'Brien says, "God is power" (276), Big Brother as metaphorical God is power personified, power metaphorically incarnate (276).

Psychologically and metaphysically, realism in this novel is very close to utter desolation. The most optimistic interpretation is that Party members may live for a while on the edge of unfreedom and inhumanity and are then pushed over the edge, ceasing to be human before bodily death. The more probable, darker reading is that, since the triumph of Ingsoc and the installation of telescreens, the freedom of Party members has been negligible. Implying both of these interpretations but making the latter more likely are the motif of non-games and the many narrative improbabilities. Unexplained, these seem to be major technical and aesthetic faults; understood as explained above, they add immensely to the withering force and daring technical brilliance of this novel. Rather than being technically imperfect and therefore aesthetically inadequate, *Nineteen Eighty-four* is a remarkable example of what Mark Schorer long

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[17]In this reading, I disagree with Gorman Beauchamp, who contends that Winston is "an Adam-like protagonist" who "for the love of an Eve defies the godlike state and falls from the new Eden" (285).

ago called "Technique as Discovery" but in the sense of leading, even pushing, the reader—who has all along been cast in the role of detective—to make a discovery that solves a challenging mystery. In this regard, Orwell shows in this great novel a degree of forbearance and respect for the reader's intelligence that we more readily attribute to James Joyce.

Epilogue: The Fate of Julia

We know what Room 101 means for Winston, but what does it mean for Julia? On this question literary criticism has been silent. What was her greatest fear, which she renounced inner freedom and love of Winston to escape? O'Brien tells Winston that she betrayed him "Immediately—unreservedly" and adds, "I have seldom seen anyone come over to us so promptly" (271). Whether or not this is true, Orwell indicates that in the Ministry of Love she was forced to undergo a full hysterectomy, in which the ovaries are removed along with the womb. When Winston later saw her, "her waist had grown thicker … had stiffened" (304), and it seemed to him that "The texture of her skin would be quite different from what it had been" (305). When Orwell was writing, these were known to be symptoms of a full hysterectomy (Schering 23-24).[18] Women as young as Julia who undergo such procedures lose sexual drive. We do not know whether she knew that in advance of the operation, though it is hard to imagine O'Brien not telling her. The operation gives a crude irony to Julia earlier saying, "They can't get inside of you" (174). She may have undergone a hysterectomy rather than renounce Winston—but since she underwent the operation (assuming that her interrogation follows the pattern of Winston's)—it cannot have been her worst fear. What, then,

[18]These are the symptoms of "menopausal syndrome," their cause not then clearly understood though associated, even then, with decreased production of estrogen; but Julia is too young to have gone through menopause.

was the fear that induced her to betray him? My guess is genital mutilation. That would certainly be frightful for a young woman who claims to "adore sex" (132). For her, moreover, such threatened mutilation may not be clinically surgical but, in a variation of Winston's greatest fear, the attack of a gnawing rat. Earlier in the novel, she had abhorred rat attacks on unattended babies: "It's the great huge brown ones that do it. And the nasty thing is that the brutes always—" (151), and here an appalled Winston makes her stop. What is "the nasty thing" the rats do? Richard Smyer recalls that "with Julia everything came back to her own sexuality" (134) and suggests that "she was referring to infants' genital mutilation" (147).

It may seem possible that, instead of all this, Julia has been a member of the Thought Police all along and has deliberately entrapped Winston.[19] When they last meet, her "thicker … stiffened" waist and "different" textured skin would then be the result of cosmetic disguise—like that imagined for Winston by O'Brien (180) and that adopted by the Thought Policeman Charrington (233).[20] She could have been similarly altered in appearance for her final meeting with Winston. Her being a member of the Thought Police would generate dark ironies: as when she says, "I expect I'm better at finding things out than you are" (126), "I'm good at games" (128), and "I'm good at spotting people who don't belong" (128). One of the first things Winston says to her is, "I imagined that you had something to do with the Thought Police" (127). So Orwell probably entertained

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[19]Philip Henshler proposes this idea in a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* (10 Feb. 2012), 6.

[20]When pretending to be in the Brotherhood, O'Brien says of Winston, "We may be obliged to give him a new identity. His face, his movements, the shape of his hands, the colour of his hair—even his voice would be different" (180). Charrington is really younger than he was made to appear—at Winston's arrest, he "was still recognisable, but he was not the same person any longer. His body had straightened, and seemed to have grown bigger. His face had undergone only tiny changes that had nevertheless worked a complete transformation" (233).

this possibility, but there are a number of reasons she cannot be a member of the Thought Police, one of them decisive. There is no conceivable purpose in cosmetically altering her appearance and arranging a final meeting with Winston. Even as a final test, it would be pointless, since Winston is already broken and does not realize what her changed appearance indicates. If he was meant to react to her ostensibly having endured a hysterectomy for his sake, the Thought Police would have ensured that he knew its symptoms. But the decisive reason she cannot be a member of the Thought Police that is, for a moment, the novel's limited omniscient point of view shifts to her, allowing us access to her thoughts: "In a way she realized that she herself was doomed, that sooner or later the Thought Police would catch her and kill her, but with another part of her mind she believed that it was somehow possible to construct a secret world in which you could live as you chose. All you needed was luck and cunning and boldness" (142). She is not, alas, pretending to have had a full hysterectomy.

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