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to become critics to adopt the same principle. A violent and actually resentful reaction to all books of a certain kind, or to situations of a certain kind, is a danger signal. For I am convinced that good adverse criticism is the most difficult thing we have to do. I would advise everyone to begin it under the most favourable conditions: this is, where you thoroughly know and heartily like the thing the author is trying to do, and have enjoyed many books where it was done well. Then you will have some chance of really showing that he has failed and perhaps even of showing why. But if our real reaction to a book is 'Ugh! I just can't bear this sort of thing,' then I think we shall not be able to diagnose whatever real faults it has. We may labour to conceal our emotion, but we shall end in a welter of emotive, unanalysed, vogue-words—'arch', 'facetious', 'bogus', 'adolescent', 'immature', and the rest. When we really know what is wrong we need none of these.

A Reply to Professor Haldane

Before attempting a reply to Professor Haldane's 'Auld Hornie, F.R.S.', in *The Modern Quarterly*, I had better note the one point of agreement between us. I think, from the Professor's complaint that my characters are 'like slugs in an experimental cage who get a cabbage if they turn right and an electric shock if they turn left', he suspects me of finding the sanctions of conduct in reward and punishment. His suspicion is erroneous. I share his detestation for any such view and his preference for Stoic or Confucian ethics. Although I believe in an omnipotent God I do not consider that His omnipotence could in itself create the least obligation to obey Him. In my romances the 'good' characters are in fact rewarded. That is because I consider a happy ending appropriate to the light, holiday kind of fiction I was attempting. The Professor has mistaken the 'poetic justice' of romance for an ethical theorem. I would go further. Detestation for any ethic which worships success is one of my chief reasons for disagreeing with most communists. In my experience they tend, when all else fails, to tell me that I ought to forward the revolution because 'it is bound to come'. One dissuaded me from my own position on the shockingly irrelevant ground that if I continued to hold it I should, in good time, be 'mown down'—argued, as a cancer might argue if it could talk, that he must be right because he could kill me. I gladly recognise the difference between Professor Haldane and such communists as that. I ask him, in return, to

recognise the difference between my Christian ethics and those, say, of Paley. There are, on his side as well as on mine, Vichy-like vermin who define the right side as the side that is going to win. Let us put them out of the room before we begin talking.

My chief criticism of the Professor's article is that, wishing to criticise my philosophy (if I may give it so big a name) he almost ignores the books in which I have attempted to set it out and concentrates on my romances. He was told in the preface to *That Hideous Strength* that the doctrines behind that romance could be found, stripped of their fictional masquerade, in *The Abolition of Man*. Why did he not go there to find them? The result of his method is unfortunate. As a philosophical critic the Professor would have been formidable and therefore useful. As a literary critic—though even there he cannot be dull—he keeps on missing the point. A good deal of my reply must therefore be concerned with removal of mere misunderstandings.

His attack resolves itself into three main charges. (1) That my science is usually wrong; (2) that I traduce scientists; (3) that on my view scientific planning 'can only lead to Hell' (and that therefore I am 'a most useful prop to the existing social order', dear to those who 'stand to lose by social changes' and reluctant, for bad motives, to speak out about usury).

(1) My science is usually wrong. Why, yes. So is the Professor's history. He tells us in *Possible Worlds* (1927) that 'five hundred years ago . . . it was not clear that celestial distances were so much greater than terrestrial'. But the astronomical text-book which the Middle Ages used, Ptolemy's *Almagest*, had clearly stated (I.v.) that in relation to the distance of the fixed stars the whole Earth must be treated as a mathematical point and had explained on what observations this conclusion was based. The doctrine was well known to King Alfred and even to the author of a 'popular' book like the *South English Legendary*. Again, in 'Auld Hornie', the Professor seems to think that Dante was exceptional in his views on gravitation and the rotundity of the Earth. But the most popular and orthodox authority whom Dante could have consulted, and who died a year or so before his birth, was Vincent of Beauvais. And in his *Speculum Naturale* (VII. vii.) we learn that if there were a hole right through the terrestrial globe (*terre globus*)

and you dropped a stone into that hole, it would come to rest at the centre. In other words, the Professor is about as good a historian as I am a scientist. The difference is that his false history is produced in works intended to be true, whereas my false science is produced in romances. I wanted to write about imaginary worlds. Now that the whole of our own planet has been explored other planets are the only place where you can put them. I needed for my purpose just enough popular astronomy to create in 'the common reader' a 'willing suspension of disbelief'. No one hopes, in such fantasies, to satisfy a real scientist, any more than the writer of a historical romance hopes to satisfy a real archaeologist. (Where the latter effort is seriously made, as in *Romola*, it usually spoils the book.) There is thus a great deal of scientific falsehood in my stories: some of it known to be false even by me when I wrote the books. The canals in Mars are there not because I believe in them but because they are part of the popular tradition; the astrological character of the planets for the same reason. The poet, Sidney says, is the only writer who never lies, because he alone never claims truth for his statements. Or, if 'poet' be too high a term to use in such a context, we can put it another way. The Professor has caught me carving a toy elephant and criticises it as if my aim had been to teach zoology. But what I was after was not the elephant as known to science but our old friend Jumbo.

(2) I think Professor Haldane himself probably regarded his critique of my science as mere skirmishing; with his second charge (that I traduce scientists) we reach something more serious. And here, most unhappily, he concentrates on the wrong book—*That Hideous Strength*—missing the strong point of his own case. If any of my romances could be plausibly accused of being a libel on scientists it would be *Out of the Silent Planet*. It certainly is an attack, if not on scientists, yet on something which might be called 'scientism'—a certain outlook on the world which is casually connected with the popularisation of the sciences, though it is much less common among real scientists than among their readers. It is, in a word, the belief that the supreme moral end is the perpetuation of our own species, and that this is to be pursued even if, in the process of being fitted for survival, our species has to be stripped of all those things for

which we value it—of pity, of happiness, and of freedom. I am not sure that you will find this belief formally asserted by any writer: such things creep in as assumed, and unstated, major premisses. But I thought I could feel its approach; in Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, in Stapledon, and in Professor Haldane's 'Last Judgement' (in *Possible Worlds*). I had noted, of course, that the Professor dissociates his own ideal from that of his Venerites. He says that his own ideal is 'somewhere in between' them and a race 'absorbed in the pursuit of individual happiness'. The 'pursuit of individual happiness' is, I trust, intended to mean 'the pursuit by each individual of his own happiness at the expense of his neighbour's'. But it might also be taken to support the (to me meaningless) view that there is some other kind of happiness—that something other than an individual is capable of happiness or misery. I also suspected (was I wrong?) that the Professor's 'somewhere in between' came pretty near the Venerite end of the scale. It was against this outlook on life, this ethic, if you will, that I wrote my satiric fantasy, projecting in my Weston a buffoon-villain image of the 'metabiological' heresy. If anyone says that to make him a scientist was unfair, since the view I am attacking is not chiefly rampant among scientists, I might agree with him: though I think such a criticism would be oversensitive. The odd thing is that Professor Haldane thinks Weston 'recognisable as a scientist'. I am relieved, for I had doubts about him. If I were briefed to attack my own books I should have pointed out that though Weston, for the sake of the plot, has to be a physicist, his interests seem to be exclusively biological. I should also have asked whether it was credible that such a gas-bag could ever have invented a mouse-trap, let alone a space-ship. But then, I wanted farce as well as fantasy.

Perelandra, in so far as it does not merely continue its predecessor, is mainly for my co-religionists. Its real theme would not interest Professor Haldane, I think, one way or the other. I will only point out that if he had noticed the very elaborate ritual in which the angels hand over the rule of that planet to the humans he might have realised that the 'angelocracy' pictured on Mars is, for me, a thing of the past: the Incarnation has made a difference. I do not mean that he can be expected to be interested

in this view as such: but it might have saved us from at least one political red herring.

That Hideous Strength he has almost completely misunderstood. The 'good' scientist is put in precisely to show that 'scientists' as such are not the target. To make the point clearer, he leaves my N.I.C.E. because he finds he was wrong in his original belief that 'it had something to do with science' (p. 83). To make it clearer yet, my principal character, the man almost irresistibly attracted by the N.I.C.E. is described (p. 226) as one whose 'education had been neither scientific nor classical—merely "Modern". The severities both of abstraction and of high human tradition had passed him by.... He was ... a glib examinee in subjects that require no exact knowledge.' To make it doubly and trebly clear the rake's progress of Wither's mind is represented (p. 438) as philosophical, not scientific at all. Lest even this should not be enough, the hero (who is, by the way, to some extent a fancy portrait of a man I know, but not of me) is made to say that the sciences are 'good and innocent in themselves' (p. 248), though evil 'scientism' is creeping into them. And finally, what we are obviously up against throughout the story is not scientists but *officials*. If anyone ought to feel himself libelled by this book it is not the scientist but the civil servant: and, next to the civil servant, certain philosophers. Frost is the mouthpiece of Professor Waddington's ethical theories: by which I do not, of course, mean that Professor Waddington in real life is a man like Frost.

What, then, was I attacking? Firstly, a certain view about values: the attack will be found, undisguised, in *The Abolition of Man*. Secondly, I was saying, like St James and Professor Haldane, that to be a friend of 'the World' is to be an enemy of God. The difference between us is that the Professor sees the 'World' purely in terms of those threats and those allurements which depend on money I do not. The most 'worldly' society I have ever lived in is that of schoolboys: most worldly in the cruelty and arrogance of the strong, the toadyism and mutual treachery of the weak, and the unqualified snobbery of both. Nothing was so base that most members of the school proletariat would not do it, or suffer it, to win the favour of the school aristocracy: hardly any injustice too

bad for the aristocracy to practise. But the class system did not in the least depend on the amount of pocket money. Who needs to care about money if most of the things he wants will be offered by cringing servility and the remainder can be taken by force? This lesson has remained with me all my life. That is one of the reasons why I cannot share Professor Haldane's exaltation at the banishment of Mammon from 'a sixth of our planet's surface'. I have already lived in a world from which Mammon was banished: it was the most wicked and miserable I have yet known. If Mammon were the only devil, it would be another matter. But where Mammon vacates the throne, how if Moloch takes his place? As Aristotle said, 'Men do not become tyrants in order to keep warm'. All men, of course, desire pleasure and safety. But all men also desire power and all men desire the mere sense of being 'in the know' or the 'inner ring', of not being 'outsiders': a passion insufficiently studied and the chief theme of my story. When the state of society is such that money is the passport to all these prizes, then of course money will be the prime temptation. But when the passport changes, the desires will remain. And there are many other possible passports: position in an official hierarchy, for instance. Even now, the ambitious and worldly man would not inevitably choose the post with the higher salary. The pleasure of being 'high up and far within' may be worth the sacrifice of some income.

(3) Thirdly, was I attacking scientific planning? According to Professor Haldane 'Mr. Lewis's idea is clear enough. The application of science to human affairs can only lead to Hell'. There is certainly no warrant for 'can only'; but he is justified in assuming that unless I had thought I saw a serious and widespread danger I would not have given planning so central a place even in what I called a 'fairy tale' and a 'tall story'. But if you must reduce the romance to a proposition, the proposition would be almost the converse of that which the Professor supposes: not 'scientific planning will certainly lead to Hell', but 'Under modern conditions any effective invitation to Hell will certainly appear in the guise of scientific planning'—as Hitler's regime in fact did. Every tyrant must begin by claiming to have what his victims respect and to give what they want. The

majority in most modern countries respect science and want to be planned. And, therefore, almost by definition, if any man or group wishes to enslave us it will of course describe itself as 'scientific planned democracy'. It may be true that any real salvation must equally, though by hypothesis truthfully, describe itself as 'scientific planned democracy'. All the more reason to look very carefully at anything which bears that label.

My fears of such a tyranny will seem to the Professor either insincere or pusillanimous. For him the danger is all in the opposite direction, in the chaotic selfishness of individualism. I must try to explain why I fear more the disciplined cruelty of some ideological oligarchy. The Professor has his own explanation of this; he thinks I am unconsciously motivated by the fact that I 'stand to lose by social change'. And indeed it would be hard for me to welcome a change which might well consign me to a concentration camp. I might add that it would be likewise easy for the Professor to welcome a change which might place him in the highest rank of an omnicompetent oligarchy. That is why the motive game is so uninteresting. Each side can go on playing *ad nauseam*, but when all the mud has been flung every man's views still remain to be considered on their merits. I decline the motive game and resume the discussion. I do not hope to make Professor Haldane agree with me. But I should like him at least to understand why I think devil worship a real possibility.

I am a democrat. Professor Haldane thinks I am not, but he bases his opinion on a passage in *Out of the Silent Planet* where I am discussing, not the relations of a species to itself (politics) but the relations of one species to another. His interpretation, if consistently worked out, would attribute to me the doctrine that horses are fit for an equine monarchy though not for an equine democracy. Here, as so often, what I was really saying was something which the Professor, had he understood it, would have found simply uninteresting.

I am a democrat because I believe that no man or group of men is good enough to be trusted with uncontrolled power over others. And the higher the pretensions of such power, the more dangerous I think it both to the rulers and to the subjects. Hence Theocracy is the worst of all governments. If we must have a

tyrant a robber baron is far better than an inquisitor. The baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity at some point be sated; and since he dimly knows he is doing wrong he may possibly repent. But the inquisitor who mistakes his own cruelty and lust of power and fear for the voice of Heaven will torment us infinitely because he torments us with the approval of his own conscience and his better impulses appear to him as temptations. And since Theocracy is the worst, the nearer any government approaches to Theocracy the worse it will be. A metaphysic, held by the rulers with the force of a religion, is a bad sign. It forbids them, like the inquisitor, to admit any grain of truth or good in their opponents, it abrogates the ordinary rules of morality, and it gives a seemingly high, super-personal sanction to all the very ordinary human passions by which, like other men, the rulers will frequently be actuated. In a word, it forbids wholesome doubt. A political programme can never in reality be more than probably right. We never know all the facts about the present and we can only guess the future. To attach to a party programme—whose highest real claim is to reasonable prudence—the sort of assent which we should reserve for demonstrable theorems, is a kind of intoxication.

This false certainty comes out in Professor Haldane's article. He simply cannot believe that a man could really be in doubt about usury. I have no objection to his thinking me wrong. What shocks me is his instantaneous assumption that the question is so simple that there could be no real hesitation about it. It is breaking Aristotle's canon—to demand in every enquiry that degree of certainty which the subject matter allows. And not *on your life* to pretend that you see further than you do.

Being a democrat, I am opposed to all very drastic and sudden changes of society (in whatever direction) because they never in fact take place except by a particular technique. That technique involves the seizure of power by a small, highly disciplined group of people; the terror and the secret police follow, it would seem, automatically. I do not think any group good enough to have such power. They are men of like passions with ourselves. The secrecy and discipline of their organisation will have already inflamed in them that passion for the inner ring

which I think at least as corrupting as avarice; and their high ideological pretensions will have lent all their passions the dangerous prestige of the Cause. Hence, in whatever direction the change is made, it is for me damned by its *modus operandi*. The worst of all public dangers is the committee of public safety. The character in *That Hideous Strength* whom the Professor never mentions is Miss Hardcastle, the chief of the secret police. She is the common factor in all revolutions; and, as she says, you won't get anyone to do her job well unless they get some kick out of it.

I must, of course, admit that the actual state of affairs may sometimes be so bad that a man is tempted to risk change even by revolutionary methods; to say that desperate diseases require desperate remedies and that necessity knows no law. But to yield to this temptation is, I think, fatal. It is under that pretext that every abomination enters. Hitler, the Machiavellian Prince, the Inquisition, the Witch Doctor, all claimed to be necessary.

From this point of view is it impossible that the Professor could come to understand what I mean by devil worship, as a symbol? For me it is not merely a symbol. Its relation to the reality is more complicated, and it would not interest Professor Haldane. But it is at least partly symbolical and I will try to give the Professor such an account of my meaning as can be grasped without introducing the supernatural. I have to begin by correcting a rather curious misunderstanding. When we accuse people of devil worship we do not usually mean that they knowingly worship the devil. That, I agree, is a rare perversion. When a rationalist accuses certain Christians, say, the seventeenth-century Calvinists, of devil worship, he does not mean that they worshipped a being whom they regarded as the devil; he means that they worshipped as God a being whose character the rationalist thinks diabolical. It is clearly in that sense, and that sense only, that my Frost worships devils. He adores the 'macrobes' because they are beings stronger, and therefore to him 'higher', than men: worships them, in fact, on the same grounds on which my communist friend would have me favour the revolution. No man at present is (probably) doing what I represent Frost as doing: but he is the ideal point at which certain lines of tendency already observable will meet if produced.

A Reply to Professor Haldane

The first of these tendencies is the growing exaltation of the collective and the growing indifference to persons. The philosophical sources are probably in Rousseau and Hegel, but the general character of modern life with its huge impersonal organisations may be more potent than any philosophy. Professor Haldane himself illustrates the present state of mind very well. He thinks that if one were inventing a language for 'sinless beings who loved their neighbours as themselves' it would be appropriate to have no words for 'my', 'I', and 'other personal pronouns and inflections'. In other words he sees no difference between two opposite solutions of the problem of selfishness: between love (which is a relation between persons) and the abolition of persons. Nothing but a *Thou* can be loved and a *Thou* can exist only for an *I*. A society in which no one was conscious of himself as a person over against other persons, where none could say 'I love you', would, indeed, be free from selfishness, but not through love. It would be 'unselfish' as a bucket of water is unselfish. Another good example comes in *Back to Methuselah*. There, as soon as Eve has learned that generation is possible, she says to Adam, 'You may die as soon as I have made a new Adam. Not before. But then as soon as you like.' The individual does not matter. And therefore when we really get going (shreds of an earlier ethic still cling to most minds) it will not matter what you do to an individual.

Secondly, we have the emergence of 'the Party' in the modern sense—the Fascists, Nazis, or Communists. What distinguishes this from the political parties of the nineteenth century is the belief of its members that they are not merely trying to carry out a programme, but are obeying an impersonal force: that Nature, or Evolution, or the Dialectic, or the Race, is carrying them on. This tends to be accompanied by two beliefs which cannot, so far as I see, be reconciled in logic but which blend very easily on the emotional level: the belief that the process which the Party embodies is inevitable, and the belief that the forwarding of this process is the supreme duty and abrogates all ordinary moral laws. In this state of mind men can become devil-worshippers in the sense that they can now *honour*, as well as obey, their own vices. All men at times obey their vices: but it is when cruelty, envy, and lust of power appear as the commands of a great super-

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personal force that they can be exercised with self-approval. The first symptom is in language. When to 'kill' becomes to 'liquidate' the process has begun. The pseudo-scientific word disinfects the thing of blood and tears, or pity and shame, and mercy itself can be regarded as a sort of untidiness.

[Lewis goes on to say: 'It is, at present, in their sense of serving a metaphysical force that the modern 'Parties' approximate most closely to religions. Odinism in Germany, or the cult of Lenin's corpse in Russia are probably less important but there is quite a . . . '—and here the manuscript ends. One page (I think no more) is missing. It was probably lost soon after the essay was written, and without Lewis's knowledge, for he had, characteristically, folded the manuscript and scribbled the title 'Anti-Haldane' on one side with a pencil.]

empirical knowledge that this is impossible, our intermittent awareness that it is not even really desirable, and (octaves deeper than all these) a very primitive feeling that the attempt, if it could be made, would be unlawful and would call down the vengeance of the gods. In both books the wild, transporting, and (we feel) forbidden hope is aroused. When fruition seems almost in sight, horrifying disaster shatters our dream. Haggard's version is better than Morris's. Morris makes his heroine too human, too wholesome. Haggard, truer to our feeling, surrounds the lonely she-Prometheus with terror and misery.

Haggard's best work will survive because it is based on an appeal well above high-water mark. The fullest tides of fashion cannot demolish it. A great myth is relevant as long as the predicament of humanity lasts; as long as humanity lasts. It will always work, on those who can receive it, the same catharsis.

Haggard will last, but so will the hatred of Haggard. The vindictiveness with which adverse critics attacked him in his own day had, no doubt, some local and temporary causes. His own truculence was one. Another was the natural jealousy of the Gigadibs who can produce only a *succès d'estime* for the writer who produces 'popular'—but also living and viable—work. The author of a *Gorboduc* always has a keen eye for the faults of a *Tamburlaine*. But there was, and there always will be, a deeper cause. No one is indifferent to the mythopoeic. You either love it or else hate it 'with a perfect hatred'.

This hatred comes in part from a reluctance to meet Archetypes; it is an involuntary witness to their disquieting vitality. Partly, it springs from an uneasy awareness that the most 'popular' fiction, if only it embodies a real myth, is so very much more serious than what is generally called 'serious' literature. For it deals with the permanent and inevitable, whereas an hour's shelling, or perhaps a ten-mile walk, or even a dose of salts, might annihilate many of the problems in which the characters of a refined and subtle novel are entangled. Read James's letters and see what happened to him for some weeks after the war broke out in 1914. He presently builds up the Jamesian world again; but for a time it seemed to have 'left not a wrack behind'.

George Orwell

Now that the rumpus about the performance of Orwell's *1984* on television is dying down, it may be opportune to raise a question which has exercised my mind for a considerable time.* Why is it that, even before the recent spate of publicity, I met ten people who knew *1984* for one who knew *Animal Farm*?

Here we have two books by the same author which deal, at bottom, with the same subject. Both are very bitter, honest and honourable recantations. They express the disillusionment of one who had been a revolutionary of the familiar, *entre guerre* pattern and had later come to see that all totalitarian rulers, however their shirts may be coloured, are equally the enemies of Man.

Since the subject concerns us all and the disillusionment has been widely shared, it is not surprising that either book, or both, should find plenty of readers, and both are obviously the works of a very considerable writer. What puzzles me is the marked preference of the public for *1984*. For it seems to me (apart from its magnificent, and fortunately detachable, Appendix on 'New-speak') to be merely a flawed, interesting book; but the *Farm* is a work of genius which may well outlive the particular and (let us hope) temporary conditions that provoked it.

To begin with, it is very much the shorter of the two. This in itself would not, of course, show it to be the better. I am the last person to think so. Callimachus, to be sure, thought a great book a great evil, but then I think Callimachus a great prig. My

* An adaptation of *1984* was televised by the BBC on 12 December 1954.

appetite is hearty and when I sit down to read I like a square meal. But in this instance the shorter book seems to do all that the longer one does; and more. The longer book does not justify its greater length. There is dead wood in it. And I think we can all see where the dead wood comes.

In the nightmare State of 1984 the rulers devote a great deal of time—which means that the author and readers also have to devote a great deal of time—to a curious kind of anti-sexual propaganda. Indeed the amours of the hero and heroine seem to be at least as much a gesture of protest against that propaganda as a natural outcome of affection or appetite.

Now it is, no doubt, possible that the masters of a totalitarian State might have a bee in their bonnets about sex as about anything else; and, if so, that bee, like all their bees, would sting. But we are shown nothing in the particular tyranny Orwell has depicted which would make this particular bee at all probable. Certain outlooks and attitudes which at times introduced this bee into the Nazi bonnet are not shown at work here. Worse still, its buzzing presence in the book raises questions in all our minds which have really no very close connection with the main theme and are all the more distracting for being, in themselves, of interest.

The truth is, I take it, that the bee has drifted in from an earlier (and much less valuable) period of the author's thought. He grew up in a time of what was called (very inaccurately) 'anti-Puritanism'; when people who wanted—in Lawrence's characteristic phrase—'to do dirt on sex'* were among the stock enemies. And, wishing to blacken the villains as much as possible, he decided to fling this charge against them as well as all the relevant charges.

But the principle that any stick is good enough to beat your villain with is fatal in fiction. Many a promising 'bad character' (for example, Becky Sharp) has been spoiled by the addition of an inappropriate vice. All the passages devoted to this theme in 1984 ring false to me. I am not now complaining of what some would

* 'Pornography and Obscenity' in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. MacDonald (1936).

call (whether justly or not) a 'bad smell' in the erotic passages. At least not of bad smells in general only of the smell of red herring.

But this is only the clearest instance of the defect which, throughout, makes 1984 inferior to the *Farm*. There is too much in it of the author's own psychology: too much indulgence of what he feels as a man, not pruned or mastered by what he intends to make as an artist. The *Farm* is work of a wholly different order. Here the whole thing is projected and distanced. It becomes a myth and is allowed to speak for itself. The author shows us hateful things; he doesn't stammer or speak thick under the surge of his own hatred. The emotion no longer disables him because it has all been used, and used to make something.

One result is that the satire becomes more effective. Wit and humour (absent from the longer work) are employed with devastating effect. The great sentence 'All animals are equal but some are more equal than others' bites deeper than the whole of 1984.

Thus the shorter book does all that the longer does. But it also does more. Paradoxically, when Orwell turns all his characters into animals he makes them more fully human. In 1984 the cruelty of the tyrants is odious, but it is not tragic; odious like a man skinning a cat alive, not tragic like the cruelty of Regan and Goneril to Lear.

Tragedy demands a certain minimum stature in the victim; and the hero and heroine of 1984 do not reach that minimum. They become interesting at all only in so far as they suffer. That is claim enouth (Heaven knows) on our sympathies in real life, but not in fiction. A central character who escapes nullity only by being tortured is a failure. And the hero and heroine in this story are surely such dull, mean little creatures that one might be introduced to them once a week for six months without even remembering them.

In *Animal Farm* all this is changed. The greed and cunning of the pigs is tragic (not merely odious) because we are made to care about all the honest, well-meaning, or even heroic beasts whom they exploit. The death of Boxer the horse moves us more than all the more elaborate cruelties of the other book. And not only moves, but convinces. Here, despite the animal disguise, we feel

we are in a real world. This—this congeries of guzzling pigs, snapping dogs, and heroic horses—this is what humanity is like; very good, very bad, very pitiable, very honourable. If men were only like the people in 1984 it would hardly be worth while writing stories about them. It is as if Orwell could not see them until he put them into a beast fable.

Finally, *Animal Farm* is formally almost perfect; light, strong, balanced. There is not a sentence that does not contribute to the whole. The myth says all the author wants it to say and (equally important) it doesn't say anything else. Here is an *objet d'art* as durably satisfying as a Horatian ode or a Chippendale chair.

That is why I find the superior popularity of 1984 so discouraging. Something must, of course, be allowed for mere length. The booksellers say that short books will not sell. And there are reasons not discreditable. The weekend reader wants something that will last till Sunday evening; the traveller wants something that will last as far as Glasgow.

Again, 1984 belongs to a genre that is now more familiar than a beast-fable; I mean the genre of what may be called 'Dystopias', those nightmare visions of the future which began, perhaps, with Wells's *Time Machine* and *The Sleeper Wakes*. I would like to hope that these causes are sufficient. Certainly, it would be alarming if we had to conclude either that the use of the imagination had so decayed that readers demand in all fiction a realistic surface and cannot treat any fable as more than a 'juvenile', or else that the bed-scenes in 1984 are the flavouring without which no book can now be sold.

The Death of Words

I think it was Miss [Rose] Macaulay who complained in one of her delightful articles (strong and light as steel wire) that the dictionaries are always telling us of words 'now used only in a bad sense'; seldom or never of words 'now used only in a good sense'. It is certainly true that nearly all our terms of abuse were originally terms of description; to call a man *villain* defined his legal status long before it came to denounce his morality. The human race does not seem contented with the plain dyslogistic words. Rather than say that a man is dishonest or cruel or unreliable, they insinuate that he is illegitimate, or young, or low in the social scale, or some kind of animal; that he is a 'peasant slave', a *bastard*, a *cad*, a *knav*, a *dog*, a *swine*, or (more recently) an *adolescent*.

But I doubt if that is the whole story. There are, indeed, few words which were once insulting and are now complimentary—*democrat* is the only one that comes readily to mind. But surely there are words that have become merely complimentary—words which once had a definable sense and which are now nothing more than noises of vague approval? The clearest example is the word *gentleman*. This was once (like *villain*) a term which defined a social and heraldic fact. The question whether Snooks was a gentleman was almost as soluble as the question whether he was a barrister or a Master of Arts. The same question, asked forty years ago (when it was asked very often), admitted of no solution. The

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On Stories and Other Essays on Literature

C.S. Lewis
Edited by Walter Hooper



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B C D E

To Priscilla Collins this collection of Lewis's essays is dedicated by the Trustees of his Estate in token of their respect and admiration, and in gratitude for the unfailing support they have enjoyed from her in the endeavour to fulfill that trust in a manner worthy of its object.

Owen Barfield
Walter Hooper

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Preface

'You can't get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me', said C. S. Lewis; a remark which could almost be used as an epigraph for this short one. He certainly meant what he said, for at that moment I was pouring his tea into a very large Cornish-ware cup and he was reading *Bleak House*.

The theme of the collection is the excellence of Story. And particularly those kinds of story specially dear to Lewis—fairy tales and science fiction. In the essays printed here the author discusses certain literary qualities which he felt critics overlooked, or, the whirligig of fashion being what it is, dismissed too automatically. When most of the pieces were first published in 1966 under the title *Of Other Worlds* (with four stories now reprinted in Lewis's *The Dark Tower and Other Stories*) the most vocal of the literary critics were encouraging readers to find in literature almost everything, life's monotony, social injustice, sympathy with the downtrodden poor, drudgery, cynicism, and distaste: everything except *enjoyment*. Step out of line and you were branded an 'escapist'. It's no wonder that so many people gave up taking their meals in the dining-room and moved into the nether parts of the house—as close as they could get to the kitchen sink.

Lewis heard them, stayed where he was, and proved immune to the whole thing. Hence, the most enduring property of this collection lies with those pieces Lewis wrote about his seven *Chronicles of Narnia* and his science-fiction trilogy. Still, I have