The Gold Star Journal

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Advisor:
Dr. Suzanne Mabrouk
About the Editors

Joseph W. Rohe III

Joseph is a senior Business Administration major and Management Information Science minor from Augusta, Georgia. This is his second year serving as an editor for The Gold Star Journal. Joseph is a member of Hotel Company and is currently the Regimental Activities Officer at The Citadel. Upon graduation in May, Joseph will be moving to England to study Law of the European Union and International Trade, as well as working well as working towards a Masters degree in International Banking and Finance.

Joshua A. Wells

Joshua is a senior Electrical Engineering major from Cary, North Carolina. He was born in Seoul, South Korea and grew up in South Korea and Germany. Originally from Band Company, he is currently serving as the Regimental Academic Officer. His hobbies include ice hockey, racquetball, and anything involving computers. Upon graduation Josh will be commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army National Guard, as well as begin working as an Engineer at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Dahlgren, VA, where he will be working on next generation radar technology.

Thomas Rachelski

Thomas Rachelski is originally from Clifton, NJ. He is an English Major with a minor in Pre-Law. After graduation he plans on attending Law School and studying International Law. Some of his hobbies include: snowboarding, running, and writing for independent music webzines.

"The Question is not how far the question is, do you possess the constitution, the depth of faith, to go as far as is needed?"

— The Boondock Saints
Greetings from the Advisor

In 1994 a new tradition started at The Citadel; the publication of The Gold Star Journal. The Gold Star Journal features an array of the best nonfiction papers written for any course by Citadel students. The editors, all Citadel students, review all submissions, select the best-written research papers from varied disciplines, edit the papers and design the layout for the issue.

As our readers may have noticed, The Gold Star Journal has started its own traditions. In 2001, the editors established The Gold Star logo for the front cover: the Gold Star pattern and the Old English font. This year’s editors have decided upon three more traditions: the linen cover, the translucent cover page, and the back cover design. These visuals serve to complement the published scholarly work.

This year’s journal is a tribute to the diligence and dedication of three individuals:

Joseph W. Rohe, Class of 2003, Business Administration Major
Joshua A. Wells, Class of 2003, Electrical Engineering Major
Thomas Rachelski, Class of 2004, English Major

The editors have worked well as a team, known when to follow, and when to lead. With these necessary skills, they will make fine future leaders. They have made the tough decision of selecting only five papers to be published from the numerous submissions. The editors have adhered to the tight schedule that allows the journal to be available for Corps Day. Joseph, Joshua, and Thomas, you have done a wonderful job on the 2003 Gold Star Journal. Readers, please join me in congratulating this year’s editors on their accomplishment!

Best Regards,

Dr. Suzanne T. Mabrouk
Advisor and Founder of The Gold Star Journal
Associate Professor of Chemistry
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Terrorism from Abu Nidal to Carlos the Jackal to Osama bin Laden: Recurring Themes and Key Departures

Nicholas C. Sinclair is a senior double majoring in Modern Languages and Political Science. He is from Eastpointe, Michigan and will be commissioned in the United States Army after graduation.

Terrorism is an unavoidable fact of life in contemporary times. Much is known about the act, but little is said about the individual who orchestrates the attack. This paper profiles three of the most infamous terrorists the world has come to know. Despite examples the reader is given of radically different personalities between the men, the comparisons are strikingly present throughout. Similarities between these men have placed them above all other terrorists, giving them the title of super terrorists. These comparisons include: very unique upbringings in wealthy families, ability to coordinate operations with multiple states and organizations, and finally, very deadly and spectacular attacks meant to captivate audiences.

Terrorism has become a focal point of world interest in the 21st Century; however, its use as a political weapon has been around as long as civilization itself. Only recently has the world begun to regard terrorism as a widely used and destructive tool in world affairs. Most media attention focuses on experts and consultants who merely regurgitate the obvious: a bus exploded, or this group hates America (Stohl, 1998). The difficulty these authorities have is that terrorism is disturbingly apparent when it occurs, but it is hard to define. What these analysis fail to explain are the historical and political aspects of international and transnational terrorism (Feurtado, 2003). Terrorists span the globe; their methods of instilling fear among civilians to influence politics through the gun and the bomb are all basically the same. But what turns an individual towards a life of terror? What has affected him differently or what does he do specifically that sets him apart from his contemporaries? The profiles of three very influential individuals shed some light on the development of a terrorist and the motives for his actions. Abu Nidal, Carlos the Jackal, and Osama bin Laden have transcended to leaders of their field. They are super terrorists. These men have acquired a macabre reputation for their deadliness and their horrifying ability to seize media attention. Abu Nidal, Carlos the Jackal, and Osama bin Laden have developed common characteristics that have made them terrifyingly successful at their craft.

The first trait these men share is an upbringings that guided them towards a life of terrorism. Influences and events occurred in these men’s lives that had a profound effect on them. Moreover, something happened to each of these men to set them apart from their compatriots and turn them into radicals. Sabri al-Banna, also known as Abu Nidal, was born in May 1937 in Palestine. He was the son of a very wealthy orange plantation owner, his mother, one of his father’s thirteen wives, was the family’s teenage maid. Al-Banna received harsh treatment from his older half-brothers and half-sisters, becoming an outcast within his own family (Seale, 1992). When his father died in 1945, his mother was kicked out of the house, yet he had to remain with the family. He became even more neglected. He possessed no more than a third grade education and received hardly any nurturing from his older family members. The harsh treatment he received as a child played a significant role later in life as he developed a psychological need to dominate others as well as a propensity for cruelty and barbarism (Seale, 1992).

The event that most shaped Sabri’s life was the mass Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1947 (Seale, 1992). Palestinians maintained 1300 years of rule in the region before being forced out of their land by British and Jewish forces. The Jews were very successful in their occupation of Palestine. Often, they were accused of committing atrocities and massslaughter in Palestinian towns and villages (Seale, 1992). The Jews had modern weaponry at their disposal, personnel with prior military experience,
and most of all, the backing of the major Western powers and the United Nations. What the Jews saw as their "War of Independence" the Palestinians saw as a brutal conquest (Seale, 1992). The establishment of Israel created a searing hatred inside the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who lost their homes and loved ones. Israel's continued expansion and success has only made Arabs more furious. They believe their hatred can only be extinguished by revenge and through recovering their "lost state", Palestine. Sabri lived through the traumatic experience. He felt similar to the other thousands who had been displaced by the Jews. This event, in part, launched him into a life of terrorism focused on Israel and all others who support the nation. He also targeted moderate Palestinian and Arab organizations, like the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), that "make concessions" to the Israelis. For Nidal there were no concessions. The complete destruction of Israel and recovery of Palestine was his ultimate goal.

Illich Ramirez Sanchez, also known as Carlos the Jackal, was born in 1949 in Caracas, Venezuela. His parents were very wealthy and could afford to spoil their children with expensive clothing, music, and travel. Most important, his father could afford to educate them. His father became caught up in the changing ideologies that engulfed the world in the 1930s and was strongly influenced by the Venezuelan Communist Party (Smith, 1976). He was a Marxist, but neither a radical nor a member of the Communist Party. His sons, however, would be educated with the best Marxist education he could afford (Smith, 1976). Ramirez traveled to London to pursue his education at Langham College. He arrived in the middle of the women's liberation movement, which allowed him to find a life of sexual promiscuity. Ramirez loved the make-up, short skirts, and loose morals, which were fashionable among young women. His lust for women developed his reputation as a ladies' man (Smith, 1976). He would later use these female contacts to help store weapons and incorporate them in his terrorist plots. Ramirez continued his education at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. At the time, the Soviet Union offered scholarships to their satellites and Third World partners to send their students to Moscow to receive a Communist education (Follain, 1998).

Ramirez was by no means a good student. He received poor grades, skipped party meetings, drank heavily, and partied most of the week. His parents supplied him with a comfortable living including Western clothes and music. While he was there, however, he developed a friendship with the Palestinian students. He spoke with them for hours, becoming increasingly intrigued with their struggle (Smith, 1976). Ramirez was fascinated with the conflict, perceiving the Jewish rule as a dictatorship. He sympathized with the Palestinians and felt that it was "in his Latin blood" to fight dictatorships wherever they may be. He likened himself to a Che Guevara, the Argentinean freedom fighter, fighting for the Palestinian cause (Follain, 1998). He left the university in Moscow after one year, but he pursued an education in another field, terrorism. He received training from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and acquainted himself with their radical leaders, George Habash and Dr. Waddieh Haddad, who guided Ramirez on a path of violence at the international level.

Osama bin Laden was born in 1957 in Saudi Arabia. He was the seventeenth son of fifty-one children born to a very wealthy Saudi construction entrepreneur. His father, Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden, was a strict Islamist and raised his children to be devoted to Islam (Alexander and Swetnam, 2001). Mohammed amassed the family fortune through extensive contracting with the Saudi government. His work spanned from building highways and bridges to rebuilding mosques at Mecca and Medina (Alexander and Swetnam, 2001). The Bin Laden Group is still heavily involved in business around the world. In 1980, Osama bin Laden graduated from King Abdul-Aziz University with a degree in civil engineering. Not long after his graduation came the turning point of young bin Laden's life.

The Russian invasion of Afghanistan angered many Muslim people around the globe, but it infuriated bin Laden. He traveled to Afghanistan with thousands of other young Muslims to join the mujahadeen (holy warriors) against the invading Soviets. He brought construction equipment and hundreds of millions
of dollars in cash to help finance his war against Russia (Alexander and Swetnam, 2001). He constructed his own training camps, paid for international military advisors, flew in recruits from all over Islam, and purchased weapons and machinery they would need to battle the Russians. He also built roads, hospitals, and other infrastructure absent from the region. The Afghans and many other Muslims developed a deep admiration for bin Laden. This man, totally devoted to Islam, financed a war against the invading Russians and helped the Afghani people in a way no other individual, or nation, had done during the war.

Another quality these three men share is their unique ability to draw support over a wide range of states and organizations. Abu Nidal did not ally with nations and organizations so much as he manipulated them. His terrorist network, the Abu Nidal Liberation Organization, stayed employed through feeding off of the conflicts in the Middle East. He drifted from country to country more as a mercenary looking out for his own interests than a man devoted to the liberation of Palestine. Often he would switch to the side that would benefit him most. Conflicts to which he contributed included Israel and Palestine, Arab States and Arafat’s Fatah, Iraq and Syria, Libya and Egypt, and the Arabs struggle with the West (Seale, 1992). His enemies included George Habash’s Popular Front, Arafat’s Fatah, and the Iranian Amal and Hizbollah (Seale, 1992). Although he targeted these groups in terrorist attacks, he has been known to ally with them when it was to his advantage.

To highlight his unreliability, he was accused of allying with the Israeli Mossad against Arafat’s Fatah movement as well as against his host country, Libya, during the US bombings in 1985 (Seale, 1992). His deceit extended to his own terrorist organization where, in 1987-1988, he purged it of one-third of its members. Paranoid of infiltrators in his highly secretive network, Nidal had his best leaders and hardest fighters tortured and killed. Most of these men were fresh recruits off the streets of Palestinian refugee camps. Their end included days of barbaric torture before being shot, stabbed, or buried alive (Seale, 1992).

Ramírez, now known as Carlos, first received his training from the PLFP. More important was the training and connections he made through the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (KGB). At his disposal were the Japanese Red Army, the Second of June Movement, the Turkish People’s Liberation Army, and the Italian Red Brigade (Smith, 1976). He was also the leader of his own terrorist organization known as Commando Boudia, named after Mohammed Boudia, the slain founder of the organization. Throughout the Cold War his biggest financier was the Soviet Union. He could also count on a number of Middle Eastern states for limited support in money, men, equipment, and refuge. With the fall of Communism, Carlos lost his most powerful supporter. He spent time in Syria, Iraq (as a guest of Saddam Hussein), Yemen, and finally Sudan. He was in constant flight, facing expulsion from country after country. He did not fare much better in Sudan, where the Islamic al-Turbi government became incensed with his unholy lifestyle. In a secret arrangement between Paris and Khartoum, the Sudanese handed Carlos over to the French authorities in 1994 (Follain, 1998). Indeed, it was his inability to hold the good favor of his host nation, Sudan, which led to his capture.

Osama bin Laden in contrast, gained both the respect and admiration of many Muslims through his personal struggle in Afghanistan where he established his al-Quaeda (the base) network. After the Soviet retreat, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia, but his radical stance against America and the Saudi regime, in what he saw as a Western incursion into the Holy Land, led to his alienation by his own nation (Alexander and Swetnam, 2001). In 1991 he fled to Sudan where he found comfort in the radical Islamic regime headed by al-Turbi. From his base in Sudan he planned his attacks on US interests. Bin Laden targeted US troops in Somalia in 1993, the first World Trade Center bombing also in 1993, and the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996. Under immense international pressure in 1996, bin Laden was forced to leave Sudan (Alexander and Swetnam, 2001). He relocated back to Afghanistan where he was the guest of the radical Taliban regime. From his base in Kandahar he continued his attacks on the US including the US embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, the USS Cole bombing in 2000, and the most
destructive World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks on September 11, 2001. Only through US military intervention did bin Laden have to leave his base in Kandahar, Afghanistan. His present location is still unknown.

Bin Laden’s strongest assets are his “deep pockets” and the rapid development and accessibility of information technologies (Bergen, 2001). Unlike Nidal or Carlos, bin Laden is not reliant on a sponsor state to finance his actions. Therefore, he is free to define his own threats and pursue his own missions. He needs a sponsor state only as a base of operations. Through the Internet he can recruit supporters as well as organize his worldwide network rapidly. Terrorist groups around the globe are seconds away from coordinating operations. Web pages and propaganda videos attract interested Muslims who offer their blind obedience to his Jihad. Like Carlos, he has combined several radical movements— from Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Kashmir— into his network. His organization numbers in the thousands and includes members from perhaps 55 countries (Alexander and Swetnam, 2001).

Finally, each of these men have personal qualities that, through their dramatics or uniqueness, have caused these men to rise above the rest as masters of their field. These men did not plan or carry out the typical car bombing or assassination. They performed daring and extremely deadly acts whose aftermath resounds throughout the world. Abu Nidal acquired a mystical quality through his ability to mysteriously change locations with relative ease. Almost no one, even those inside the elite circles of his organization, knew his exact whereabouts at any given time (Melman, 1986). This was due to his extreme paranoia of assassination and fear of infiltrators (Seale, 1992). He kept accountability of every individual in his network. He knew their personal life stories, their friends, and their families. He also strictly controlled their travel. Each man was faithful to their commander with the fear of execution looming if they were disloyal. His elusiveness combined with his cruelty made Abu Nidal extremely dangerous to his enemies. When Iraqi authorities found his body in the fall of 2001 in an apparent “suicide”, Nidal’s reign of terror came to an end. Even his extreme paranoia of death could not save him from an untimely end.

Carlos is known for his deadliness and audacity. Unlike Nidal or bin Laden, Carlos carried out most of his attacks personally. He lobbed the grenade, pulled the trigger, or hijacked the plane. In 1975 Carlos faced arrest by French counter intelligence agents at his girlfriend’s apartment at Rue Toullier in Paris, France. Carlos killed two agents and wounded a third in his escape. He also shot the man whom he suspected of turning him in. His most spectacular attack was his OPEC raid in December 1975 in Vienna, Austria where he kidnapped the world’s leading oil ministers and ransomed them off for a huge sum of money. Carlos loved the excitement he found in terrorism and was not afraid to brag about his adventures. Barry Woodhams, an acquaintance, said, “it’s a wonder he did not wear a T-shirt with ‘I’m a Terrorist’ stenciled on the front” (Smith, 1976, p.208). His life as a terrorist was just as exuberant as his personal life. Until his capture in 1994 at the age of 45, he was drinking heavily, going to dance clubs, and having relations with numerous women.

Osama bin Laden has appeared on the world’s stage as Islamic fundamentalism is rising, and worsening US-Arab relations have made the Middle East a center of attention for world conflict. Unlike Nidal and Carlos who terrorize for what appears to be their own personal gain, bin Laden has convinced people that he is truly a man of Islam (Bergen, 2001). He is a radical who exploits Muslim fears of Western encroachment in the region. Currently, he is trying to win their favor against the Israelis and the US. A head master of a large Pakistani school voiced his support for bin Laden saying, “bin Laden is a hero because he raised his voice against the outside powers that are trying to crush Muslims” (Bergen, 2001, p.31). His attacks on US interests are characterized as spectacular and extremely deadly. He has attacked military and civilian targets alike. In an interview with ABC News he said, “we do not differentiate between those dressed in military uniforms and civilians; they are all targets” (Bergen, 2001, p. 105). In his 1996 fatwah against the US he states, “Muslims should kill Americans, including civilians, wherever they can be found” (Bergen, 2001,
He is not concerned with individual assassinations, but he targets according to the largest number of casualties a single attack can produce. The attacks on the Khobar Towers, the East African embassies, the USS Cole, and the World Trade Center bombings demonstrate this disturbing characteristic.

These three men could not have more different personalities. Abu Nidal was extremely secretive and he exercised total control over the members of his organization. He had no remorse in killing those closest to him as he demonstrated in purges of 1987-1988. He also had no strong loyalties to nations or organizations. He moved from conflict to conflict contracting his services out to the highest bidder. Carlos the Jackal was known for his decadent private life and his boldness. He loved to drink, dance, and womanize. These actions enraged the radical Islamic Sudanese government who eventually turned him over to the French secret service. Although all three profess to be proponents of Islam and the liberation of Palestine, Osama bin Laden appears to be the most dedicated to the cause. Bin Laden is a radical Islamic terrorist wealthy enough to operate without the need for a support state funding his operations (Bayman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, & Brannon, 2001). He was hardened in the Afghan war against the Soviets and is inspired to battle the West and its allies against what he sees as an invasion of the Holy Land. He is true to his morals and he is loyal to his cause, unlike the other two. This religious extremism has given his attacks a profound impact (Hoffman, 1998).

These super terrorists have acquired a kind of celebrity status in their exploits. Their personalities and actions have placed them on a different tier from the rest of their contemporaries. Each of these men came from families whose socio-economic standing was much higher relative to their countrymen. This allowed them to be either well educated or gave them exposure to worldviews and opinions most of their countrymen did not have. Indeed, this higher education or insight to extreme movements radicalized them. Their personal finances and wealthy connections permitted them to focus on terrorism rather than everyday struggles such as work and tending to a family, that their countrymen had to endure. Although their characters contrast, their motives are very similar because their environments have nurtured them to a life of terrorism. They were able to draw on many nations and organizations for support, and their acts were very deadly and dramatic. The most difficult security issue the United States must contend with today is the upsurge in lethality of attacks and acquisition of increasingly sophisticated weapons that are difficult to detect. Equally as deadly is the inspiration a super terrorist gives to “ordinary” terrorists (Feurtado, 2003). As long as Osama bin Laden’s presence perpetuates, there is potential for individuals disconnected from his organization to follow his example and carry their own plans through. The most prominent similarity between these men in particular and many terrorists in the Middle East is simple: Palestine. This paper does not intend to assign blame, nor attempt to solve the problem, but a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will significantly curtail the development of terrorists like the ones listed above.
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Allegorical Aspects of Hawthorne's "The Celestial Railroad"

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Nathaniel Hawthorne's, "The Celestial Railroad", embodies a journey through life. Everyone is on this journey and it is human nature to do well throughout life in order to enter heaven. We are given free will by God and are born as innocent children in order to have the capability to make good decisions. Doing what is required to have true happiness after death or not paying attention and following the crowd to have endless anguish are simple choices that people must make. To illustrate this, Hawthorne uses obvious and questionable individuals to aid the traveler. The pilgrimage that we are on will lead us to the celestial city, heaven, or the city of destruction, hell. The choice is up to the person who wants everlasting life or eternal death. All Hawthorne does is set the stage.

As one goes through life, they can live the fast life of drugs, crime, sex, and partying or they can live a safe and secure life by staying on a straight and narrow path. No matter the life style, problems and setbacks will occur in people's lives. However, if one remains focused on the celestial city, they will prevail and not let anyone or anything prevent them from living a happy physical and spiritual after life. The main character in The Celestial Railroad is curious about the city of destruction and thus takes a trip that will show him how the city is. This person has the great pleasure of having the "native townsman" leading the tour.

While on this journey, one will encounter many people who are placed in their life to guide them. Some are good angels others are disguise as good angels. It is up to the individual to decide whether the person's objective is to help or hurt them. There are people like the native townsman, Mr. Smooth-it-away, who thinks he knows what is best for people, but the one that thinks they know what is best for everyone really knows nothing.

To use "volumes of French philosophy and German rationalism sermons, essays of modern clergymen, Plato and Hindu sages along with scriptures" to fill a deep hole and not read and practice the knowledge in the readings demonstrates the ignorance of Mr. Smooth-it-away and his fellow neighbors. This leads to Hawthorne urging that people investigate the information that they receive and pay close attention to what is being said. Those masterpieces are for the mind not to fill a hole. This is why Mr. Smooth-it-away is the devil, an angel in disguise. He is the king of the city of destruction, a person who chose the fast life and whose mission is to increase his population by taking pilgrims off the straight and narrow path and place them on a railroad to show them all the pleasures of the world by lying. This is the fast lane that leads to everlasting sadness.

When the passengers run into Christian's "old friend" Evangelist at the ticket office for the ride to destruction, Hawthorne suggests that there are weak minded people in this world who end up betraying those they lead. An evangelist is to spread the good news to people. They are to bring light to the darkness, food to the hungry, and clothes to the naked. To cease in those activities and start increasing sin by supporting religion being "thrown tastefully into the background" of conversations, shows that evangelists can be misused. However, the true evangelist will continue to be used for good by traveling place-to-place helping others.

Despite the new activities of the Evangelist, people like Mr. Great-heart roamed the earth to correct people. He has been on the dark side and it is often to find people that decided to live in sin and then matured to leave their childlike ways behind. They start to act like an adult by taking care of their responsible and make intellect choices. At that stage, they begin to spread the good news and show light to those wandering in the dark. Because they have learned from
their mistakes they want to prevent others from taking a dead end road and be with them in enjoying the pleasures at Celestial City. This is why Mr. Great-heart is no longer the chief conductor of the railroad. He is now a true angel steering those in darkness to light. For Mr. Great-heart to grow “preposterously stiff and narrow” in his old age is an example of him growing up to do the right things in life (2).

While living the fast, rough, and deadly life one will observe the faithful pilgrims “groan and stumble” at times (3). To those on the railroad, this may appear to be a bad thing, but it is not. True pilgrims, like Mr. Great-heart, know that they must take their time and move to the beat of their maker. Those traveling by train, miss out on opportunities to learn and grow. This is another example of being on the path that leads to destruction verses the path that leads to a constructive way of life. It is best to experience the ups and downs of life compared to only having encounter happiness. Pilgrims know that they are doing the right thing because their needs are provided. They understand that joy will come their way and that one must suffer at times in order to appreciate the goodness that life offers in order not to take things for granted. It is wrong for those on the railroad and Apollyon, Christian’s old enemy, to “roar with laughter” at hard working faithful pilgrims (3).

Pilgrims must be aware of those around them. When on solid ground, one has time and insight needed to observe people and be mindful of their situation and actions they take. The passengers would not have participated in the crime of murder if they truly knew what was going on. When people are on a railroad, jet plane, or even in a racecar, there is little or no time to evaluate people and make sound decisions. It is pleasant, in the eyes of the pilgrims maker, that they became martyrs. Contrary to the cruel passengers who thought they killed the travelers, they merely strengthen them. These faithful workers choose to suffer death rather than renounce their religion. Quick decisions are made and as a result wrong choices develop from making fast decisions. Thus, harsh consequences follow. This is another reason for the pilgrim to remain focused and not get side tracked by the foolishness of Mr. Smooth-it-away and Apollyon.

The Interpreter’s House was placed in the path of explorers to give them the opportunity to have their questions answered. It served as a church. The head of the house/church would is to aid pilgrims on their journey by providing guidance through valuable information. Now, this once prominent place is used as a club where liquor is sold and people come together to have fun and party.

It is no longer a place to gather together to get information and exchange ideas in order to be full of the energy needed to continue the adventurer one is on.

The traveler must rest in order to have the momentum needed to remain stable on their journey. Being able to regroup, sleep, and relax provides energy needed to remain alert. At each stop, those on the road will get off to use what they feel is better, faster, and a more secure means of transportation. In reality, their original means of transportation was at the right pace to get them to the right location safely and on time. Even those taking the so-called better, fast, and secure path move to a slower pace in order to change their direction to a better course. They realize that their old way of life was not just, pure, or good. Both groups will change their life direction from time to time. The final move must be the one that leads to the Celestial City, and not the city of Destruction. Hawthorne points out three traits, besides relaxation, that pilgrims will encounter for enjoyment. Common sense, religion reverence, and helping people are the characteristics and tools pilgrims need to enhance their spirit and aid them in their quest to live in the Celestial City. Having common sense allows pilgrims to think about situations and calculate the pros and cons in order to make right decisions. Without common sense, people cannot observe the obvious and act accordingly. Having religion reverence is the foundation that pilgrims need. It consists of the strength and desire needed on the voyage that few take. Without a solid religious reverence, the basic instructions before leaving earth would be left untold and if one is not on solid foundation, they are sure to fall. A traveler must help those who struggle at times and those who are less
fortunate then they. The more the explorer gives the greater the blessing will be in return. If people do not make these essential characteristics and tools part of their way of living, the city of destruction will be their everlasting dwelling place. For Mr. Smooth-it-away to refer to prudence, piety, and charity as "old, starched, dry, and angular", continues to provide the evidence that make him a terrible leader (3).

In the mist of humiliation, difficulty, and death if pilgrims practice prudence, piety, and charity, they will survive the difficult times. Whether on a hilltop or down deep in the valley, those who are faithful and those who are walking in the light will be protected from severe harm and danger. Those on the other side will always be in darkness encounter heartache, suffering, and pain. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, it is best to have problems while on the proven road to Celestial City than dealing with trials and tribulations being on the road devastation. Hawthorne argues this by saying, anyone who has ever traveled through the dark valley, will have learned to be thankful for any light. For Mr. Smooth-it-away to suggest the opposite clearly defines his intent and way of thinking. Only an immature person with no positive direction and outlook would come to that conclusion.

The main pilgrim in this story has not been totally brainwashed. This person saw people that got off the road heading for heaven to partake in hell. The people near this place looked "wild and smoky" while doing nothing (5). The main character even called one gentleman an "indolent good-for-nothing fellow" (5). This fellow name is Mr. Take-it-easy. People like him have the same mentality as Mr. Smooth-it-away. Unlike, Mr. Great-heart who changed for the better, there are those like Mr. Take-it-easy in this world who are lazy and start off well, but fall to the side. The tool of common sense comes in handy because a pilgrim must guard themselves from people like this in order not to fall into the pit hole of darkness. They must read between the lines and realize that a "thrumming of church music from morning till night" is good to build the religious reverence to be encountered during the journey (5). As this excursion to seek truth and obtain love and joy continues, more stumbling blocks are placed in the path of the explorer that is seeking peace.

The closer one gets to their dream the harder they must work to remain focused and determined because things can become more difficult. The journey must be taken slowly and the traveler must be consisted in doing what is necessary and right and not follow false prophets.

Hawthorne places the city of Vanity as a stop before going to the Celestial City. It appears that this is a good place since prosperity is high. This is hard to believe since there is no harmony between the townspeople and pilgrims. Shady deals are made which causes the uproar between the townspeople and the pilgrims. When one looks deeply at the Vanity Fair the truth surfaces. This place is worthless. The passengers from the railroad brings with it great trade that is fake. It is here that people fall into the trap of lying and stealing. Therefore, many passengers stop to take their pleasure and make their profit in the Fair, instead of going onward to the Celestial City. To add to the worthlessness and madness, almost every street has its church where the "reverend clergy are nowhere held in higher respect than at Vanity Fair" (6). This goes back to the Evangelist being used in an inappropriate manner instead of performing the duties assigned. These clergymen have used their position for fame and fortune and Hawthorne has clearly explained these questionable leaders through their names. Rev. Mr. This-to-day is one who does what he wants to do on his time. His focus is on doing what is best for him on irregular days. Rev. Mr. That-to-morrow put things off. Instead of dealing with situation at the moment, he waits. When this happens the problems get worst before it will get better. Rev. Mr. Bewildement is confused. He does no have the common sense needed to lead people. He would be a terrible over-see at the Intrepreter's House. Rev. Mr. Clog-the-spirit is also confused. He is suppose to spread the spirit not block it. The worst of this flock is Rev. Dr. Wind-of-doctrine. He comes and goes with the wind and time. He doesn't stick to anything. He is the biggest con artist because he is going to say whatever comes his way in order to get what is in his interest. These men lack the prudence, pity, and charity that come with the title reverend. They have been able to fool their followers into believing in them. Hawthorne is pointing out the lack of prosperity in this city through
the actions of the ministers. He wants the truth to be seen so the passengers can continue to move forward and not be held back at the Vanity Fair.

As the railroad continues on the path to Celestial City, the main pilgrim recalls the treatment that he, the other passengers, and Apollyon gave to the two pilgrims who were traveling by foot. When he sees them entering the city gates, he is puzzled by the triumphant welcome they received. Hawthorne refers to the greeting as it they were people “who had fought the good fight and won a glorious victory” (9). This saying means that those who use their tools wisely through life, will overcome the obstacles placed before them. These individuals have done a good job by being on the straight and narrow path. They have indeed won the war and are enjoying the pleasures of the Celestial City. This is something that all pilgrims are seeking, a secure place in heaven.

Nevertheless, this pilgrim will keep moving towards the city gates without Mr. Smooth-it-away because he has been forbidden to enter the Celestial city after being kicked out. While now traveling by boat, this eager pilgrim wants to fling on shore. When this attempt is made, a cold dash of spray went upon him.

Hawthorne wants the readers of “The Celestial Railroad” to picture themselves as the pilgrims on the journey. He wanted people to see them being tempted by false leader to do wrong like Mr. Smooth-it-away and Apollyon were doing, but still think before acting in order to make the right choices. This story is truly a representation of people using their free will and innocent nature to do what is necessary to have a successful and informative pilgrimage. The underlying message that is being conveyed is that everyone must be mindful of the people they meet and their situations in order to fight the good fight and win a glorious victory. Clearly the city of Destruction is interesting, but it is in The Celestial City people yearn to dwell.
Max Frisch’s *Herr Biedermann und die Brandstifter* as a Modern Mortality Play

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Max Frisch’s *Herr Biedermann und die Brandstifter* parallels the model of the medieval morality play often used in German drama. Frisch utilizes allegorical references in his play to criticize the moral weakness he observed in his own time, just as morality plays illustrated the concepts of good and evil in the Middle Ages. *Herr Biedermann und die Brandstifter* dramatically suggests the belief that those who do nothing to stop evil are just as responsible as those who practice evil.

The protagonist, Herr Biedermann, a successful bourgeois “everyman” living in the fictional city of Seldwyla, interacts with, and even helps, the arsonists who destroy his home and city. The arsonists, both lower-class individuals, set fires for the enjoyment of the destruction and excitement they bring. They invade Biedermann’s home, initially allowed in as homeless vagrants, but later they openly prepare the house for their blaze. Biedermann, in a constant state of denial, refuses to believe that the men are arsonists. He feeds them and tries to befriend the men, even while he ignores the suicide of an employee he recently fired. To emphasize the moral dilemma of the play, the author acts as narrator, often addressing the audience and conversing with the protagonist. The author discusses a modern Austrian morality play, Max Mell’s *Apostelspiel* (1923), with Biedermann. In his futile efforts to maintain the status quo, Biedermann brings about his doom and through his inaction against the evil of the arsonists destroys the city of Seldwyla.

Morality plays were developed in the Middle Ages as an educational tool of the church. They were intended to instruct the audience on moral behavior through allegorical drama that personified the abstract virtues and vices for easier understanding of complex subjects. Concepts such as shame, mercy, conscience, and greed were dramatically depicted to allow uneducated audiences to understand their meanings. These plays almost always involved a struggle between the forces of good and evil for possession of the soul of man.

The morality plays dealt with religious themes, but not in the “pious air of the faith for Sundays only.” They were meant to be applicable to everyday life and not only to issues concerning Christian faith. The strength of the morality play was based on its successful application to both the faithful and nonbelievers. The plays were meant to be straightforward, strong, and full of devotion, although “not of a sickly or sentimental kind.” The power of the plays was their effect on everyday people, like Herr Biedermann, and their treatment of generally shared vices, like Biedermann’s hypocrisy and complacency. Frisch is able to reproduce not only the model of the morality play but also its effect. Instead of focusing only on the audience that could easily grasp his concepts, like the religious members of the audiences of the Middle Ages, Frisch goes one step further. Just as a medieval morality play spoke to nonbelievers as well as the faithful, “His work is too open, his reader appeal too broad to attract les preceuses ridicules.” Frisch goes beyond preaching only to the literate spectrum of society and provides a moral that appeals to all listeners.

In this way the narrator in *Herr Biedermann und die Brandstifter*, played by Frisch himself, introduces Max Mell’s *Apostelspiel*, a religious morality play written in Frisch’s time. He discusses the story with Biedermann, recalling “zwei Halunken” just like the two that are intruding in Biedermann’s home. In Mell’s play a child witnesses two thieves breaking into her home and perceives them as apostles, since they are shabbily dressed and bearded similar to the images of Jesus’ disciples. Moved by the innocence and faith of the child, the two burglars leave the home unharmed. This obvious parallel to Biedermann’s situation suggests to him that if he shows good faith to the arsonists, they will, like Mell’s two scoundrels, be moved by his faith and spare his home. This
revelation occurs directly after an admission by Biedermann that he was harboring arsonists in his home, but since all his friends "hatten ja auch solche Halunken unter ihrem Dach," it was acceptable. Biedermann shows the audience that he is just like everyone else, he is everyman, and then he reflects on Mell’s Apostelspiel, and the strategy he took to protect himself. He assumed that he was as faithful as the innocent child spared in Mell’s play. Frisch clearly shouts a warning to his audience that they cannot rely on their innocence to protect them. If Biedermann is everyman, then everyman’s faith is just as weak and unsupported as his. Biedermann’s faith is actually so morally weak that it cannot save him from the arsonists.

Frisch intends his play as “an indictment of stupidity, psychological blindness, and moral cowardice in any sphere of human activity.” Although Biedermann’s faith could not save him, he still had an opportunity to save himself by action. He could have refused to allow the men into his home, reported the arsonists to the authorities, or taken any number of other actions to protect himself, but he prefers to persist in his self-deception and in the end destroys himself.

By making Biedermann like everyone else, an everyman, Frisch shows that everyone is responsible for resisting evil. In this way the suicide of Biedermann’s recently fired employee, Herr Knechtling, is important. Knechtling is dealt with in a horribly ruthless manner. By his treatment of his employee, Biedermann loses what little affection the audience may have had for him. In the beginning of the story, when the first arsonist, Schmitz, enters his house, Biedermann dismisses Knechtling’s legitimate grievance. Throughout the play he stands by idly while Knechtling kills himself. This suicide does more than alienate the audience from Biedermann; it contrasts with Biedermann’s treatment of the arsonists. The arsonists are treated respectfully and are helped by Biedermann, not out of the good faith he claims but out of fear. He has no fear of Knechtling, and so offers him absolutely nothing, but the arsonists are aided in every aspect of their plot.6

Herr Knechtling’s actions, or lack there of, parallel Biedermann’s. Like Herr Biedermann, Knechtling is forced to deal with a situation that will destroy his way of life and he does nothing to stop it. Knechtling loses his job, and he only meekly attempts to regain his position. He calls Biedermann on the phone and is rejected by Biedermann in a moment. He gives up without any fight while at the same time Schmitz forces his way into Biedermann’s home. Knechtling’s inaction is just like his boss’s, and his end is also similar. He commits suicide rather than stand up to the evil of Biedermann and, in a way, Biedermann hands over the matches, destroying his home rather than combat the arsonists.

In 1959 Frisch added a Nachspiel to the play, depicting Biedermann and the other characters in Hell, unchanged by the tragedy of the play. Despite many similarities, Max Frisch rejected ideas that his play was an allegory of the Nazi seizure of power. Instead in his Tagebuch 1966-1971 he argues that “Literature that is deserving of its name does in fact mirror the metamorphoses of our consciousness, but it only mirrors them; the impetuses toward the metamorphoses of one’s world view come from elsewhere.”7 Frisch believed that literature could reflect reality, but he did not think it could create it. In this way he uses Biedermann to reflect the moral failures he observed in reality. Though he claims it holds no political significance, it really does not matter either way. The true importance of his play, like historical morality plays, is the struggle for man’s soul. Frisch’s moral is that inaction against evil is like committing evil itself. His hope is far broader than merely reflecting the Nazi’s reign or showing “the way fascism feeds off an apathetic, cowardly or self-deceiving middle class.”8 His message is larger and far more important that political criticism. Frisch’s play illustrates the waveling morality and the dwindling goodness of not just Biedermann but of everyone.

Ultimately Frisch all but accuses a seemingly innocent party of inaction against evil. In an ironic discussion about their faith in God, Biedermann and Schmitz discuss God’s inaction to the evil that exists in the world. Schmitz asks: “Die Sinfut, zum Beispiel, wie lange so etwas auf sich warten laesst.” Schmitz
has trouble with the concept of God because he has not sent the flood to wipe out humanity. Ironically, it is fire not water that God is supposed to cleanse the earth with. Schmitz and Biedermann, and by extension Frisch, do not accuse God though. Instead they reveal that He has not been absent from combating the evil Seldwyla faces. The promised fire does in fact come, cleansing the morally corrupt from the earth, showing the moral necessity of actively resisting evil. God destroys Biedermann’s home through the arsonists, but Biedermann could have easily saved it, had he not been so concerned with maintaining the status quo he enjoyed. Essentially if Biedermann, or everyman, was not concerned with saving himself but instead was concerned with doing the morally responsible thing he would have been saved. His aiding of the arsonists and abandonment of Knechtling condemn him to the fate he suffers, and the cowardice and self-denial that prevent him from acting against the evil that surrounds him eventually destroys him.

The climax of the play comes when the arsonists ask Biedermann for a match. The match seals his fate and destroys his community. The match is Biedermann’s last chance at redemption. Even when Schmitz and Eisenring are preparing to set the fire, Biedermann could have stopped them. Without a match they could do no damage. Biedermann gives them the matches without any struggle, but tries to conceal the fact from his wife. This shows that he realizes his mistake but is too afraid to confront the arsonists. Once he turns the matches over, the play concludes with Seldwyla exploding. The author again addresses the audience, giving credit to the actors and actresses. As he speaks, the explosions sound in the theater. This draws the audience into the play, as characters. Frisch uses this to show that the audience is also guilty for not acting to stop the burning of Seldwyla.

In this manner Herr Biedermann und die Brandstifter is a warning, just like the morality plays of the Middle Ages. The play allegorically suggests Frisch’s belief that moral behavior is required to combat evil. Although Frisch’s message is often interpreted as a reference to the lack of resistance to Nazism, it needs to be taken as a warning for the future, not a comment on the past. As Edmund Burke said, the “only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” In this way Frisch illustrates that inaction against evil, no matter why, results in the passive party being just as responsible as the one that committed the evil act.

Notes


2 E. Martin Browne, Religious Drama 2 (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1977) 306.


4 James Hardin and Donald Daviau, eds., Dictionary of Literary Biography 81: Austrian Fiction Writers 1875-1913 (Detroit: Bruccoli Clark Layman, 1989) 188.


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The Sharpening of Language

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When George Orwell set out to be a writer, he wished not only to write for a specific purpose, but also to send out a message through his style and diction. Orwell believed that the only way to express an idea is to give the reader a concrete yet simple image that could convey his thoughts. At this point in time, in Orwell’s eyes, the English language had become something of vagueness and ambiguity. Writers of his age wished to create great works of art but only succeeded in destroying the language that Orwell held most pure. Through studying Orwell’s beginnings, two of his essays on writing, and a few passages from his masterpiece 1984, an understanding of Orwell’s position on the use of the English language will be reached. He dedicated his life writing to a political purpose, but with that came his wish to create beauty with words. For Orwell, the key to this was providing clear and sharp language.

George Orwell, the pen name of Eric Blair, was born on June 25, 1903 in Motihari, India. He was the child of wealthy civil servants, working in India to increase the influence of the British Empire. Although his family had little material assets while in India, Orwell describes them as having lived comfortably as members of the “lower-upper middle class”. A year after his birth, however, the entire Blair family returned to the comforts of England, mainly because Eric’s parents wanted him and his older sister Marjorie to be brought up in a safer, more traditional Christian environment (Meyers, Orwell 1-6.). At the age of fourteen Orwell was admitted to Eton College, a prestigious school where students would often graduate and go on to Oxford or Cambridge. After leaving Eton, however, Orwell decided not to continue his education but instead traveled to Burma, a nation just to the southeast of India, in 1922 to join the Indian Imperial Police (Meyers, Orwell 39-48).

Orwell’s experiences in the Imperial Police had a major impact on his future writings. He had his first real view of the “poor and downtrodden” of the Indian peoples. He had several different assignments, ranging from training other police officers, protecting an Indian oil refinery, to overseeing the town of Katha, the setting of Orwell’s Burmese Days, a book on his experiences with the police (Meyers, Orwell 57-61). Over this time period from 1922 to 1927 in Burma, Orwell became increasingly reclusive. He had come to detest his position with the police. His supervisors scorned him for his education and youthfulness, and he found them hateful in their imperialistic views and for the beliefs and values, or lack thereof, they had tried to instill in him (Meyers, Orwell 63-66). Jeffrey Meyers summed up Orwell’s feelings when he stated “He resented the job above all because it had turned him into a brute” (62). In 1927, being miserable with his position as the “hand of the oppressor,” he resigned from the Imperial Police and returned to England (68). The lasting impression of the police gave Orwell his main purpose for writing, which will be discussed later.

From a very early age... I knew that when I grew up I should be a writer” (Orwell, Why I Write p. 1). In his younger years he made several attempts at writing, from his first poem at six dictated to his mother about a tiger, another one which was published in the local newspaper, to his short story attempt a few years later that was a “ghastly failure.” As he aged he continued with his literary activities, writing mostly poems for magazines and the like. He ended this period of his life, self titled “my non-literary years,” at the age of twenty-five. Orwell had been on a search for words, a “descriptive effort almost against my will, under a kind of compulsion from outside.” It began when he was sixteen, while reading a passage from John Milton’s Paradise Lost, that he discovered the beauty of words and their associations. He knew from this point forward that his writing would be something of beauty, but he still needed a purpose, a cause. In his essay “Why I Write” Orwell goes on to further explain the “four great motives for writing”, they being sheer egotism, the desire to be talked about and adored, aesthetic enthusiasm, to share with others the beauty of language, historical impulse, to discover the truths
and lessons of the past, and finally the political purpose in which a writer wishes to “push the world in a certain direction” (Orwell, Why I Write 1-2).

Although Orwell believed in the creation of beauty with words, the ultimate purpose for his writing was political. His experiences with the Imperial Police had given him a subject to write on that he would continue with for the rest of his days: the injustice of totalitarianism, or absolute state authority. Without this drive to illustrate the evil nature of totalitarianism, Orwell’s writing, in his own words, would never have been the powerful literary tool we know today: “...looking back through my work, I see that it is invariably where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed into purple passages, sentences without meaning, decorative adjectives and humbug generally” (Orwell, Why I Write 2-4).

In Orwell’s essay, “Politics and the English Language”, he describes the basic problems with the English language, the causes of such problems, and the responsibilities of each individual to change it for the better. He begins the essay stating most people’s view that “the English Language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything about it”. He relates this problem to that of “sentimental archaism,” that is the preference of the past for its sentimental value, though impractical. To place language in such a category is unfair; the language of a people can be altered for the better, but it takes a conscious effort for this to occur (Orwell, Politics 1).

Orwell goes on to outline some of the major problems with the English Language, they being “dying metaphors, verbal false limbs, pretentious diction, and meaningless words (Orwell, “Politics” 3-5). The purpose of a metaphor is to bring life to a scene, to give the reader an image that creates a concrete thought about what the author is trying to convey. Commonly used metaphors, such as “play into the hands of,” “toe the line,” and “Achilles’ heel,” have been utilized so frequently that they have lost their power. Many writers have gone so far as to use these metaphors without carefully looking at the meaning, thereby the phrase becomes useless. These metaphors have settled into that nether-region of dull words and phrases that readers pass over without an original thought or sparkling image. In essence, they have become “dead” (Orwell, “Politics” 3).

Following “dying metaphors” is the equally troubling class of “verbal false limbs.” These phrases “save the trouble of picking out appropriate verbs and nouns, and at the same time pad each sentence with extra syllables which give it an appearance of symmetry” (Orwell, “Politics” 3). Phrases like “render inoperative, be subjected to, and exhibit a tendency to” allow the writer to appear profound and intelligent while actually creating a banal statement that merely wastes space on a page (3-4).

The third problem with language that Orwell discusses is “pretentious diction” (Orwell, “Politics” 4). This can be described as “excessive or unnecessary use of words.” Pretentious diction, one example being the use of foreign words and phrases to enhance the intellectual value of a work, does not provide a clear image of the author’s point, just an important sounding foreign one. Another use of pretentious diction is the use of unnecessary prefixes and suffixes on words such as “deregelonize, impermissible,” and so forth. Instead of finding a clear message with English words the author has added a prefix to a Latin or Greek word. “The result, in general, is an increase in slovenliness and vagueness” (Orwell, “Politics” 4).

The final category that Orwell covers is that of “meaningless words.” His main example is the use of the words Fascism, democracy, socialism, etc. In modern English these words having been used in exorbitant amounts, having no concrete meanings. Fascism could be used to represent almost anything that is “undesirable” in terms of government. The problem with the word democracy is that it has several definitions, not one of which is it securely tied to. The user of the word may have one intention in mind, but his/her listener may discern a different meaning from the same phrase (Orwell, “Politics” 4-5).

Orwell’s point in all of this is that “the whole
tendency of modern prose is away from concreteness” (Orwell, “Politics” 6). Below is a passage from Ecclesiastes and beneath that passage is Orwell’s “translation” of it into modern English:

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. (qtd. In Orwell, “Politics” 6)

Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account. (Orwell, “Politics” 6)

The second passage, while containing more high-level language, does not evoke the same solid images that concrete words like “bread” and “battle” produce. The language is vague and there is not one forceful image to illustrate the point of the passage.

Orwell realized that the major problem with this vague and ambiguous language is that it could be used for a negative political purpose. No sane person in his or her right mind would willingly submit to total state control. But if propaganda in favor of a totalitarian society were to gloss over the negatives and emphasize the positives, many men and women may come to favor such a governmental system (Orwell, “Politics” 6-7).

This is the key to Orwell’s book 1984. The redefinition of language for the Newspeak dictionaries, the processes of doublethink where one knowingly believes in conflicting alternatives at the same time, and the use of ironic inversions are some of the main tools the Inner Party uses to keep total control over the people (Young 42-45). The literature and language of the past had been beautiful and clear. In 1984 that same English language has become a tool. “By contrast, the Party would kill thought…. To that end it not only for all practical purposes abolishes the literature of the past, but cultivates in its members a degrading and dehumanizing form of speech” (Young 46). This “form of speech,” Newspeak, allows for limitless control by the government of Oceania. One of the features of Newspeak that allows this control is that every word associated with or used to characterize the Party involves grandness and power. If the Party can only be described in such terms as “all-powerful” and “immortal”, than how could one realize its evil, not being able to express it? That is Orwell’s point, you can’t. Your language would be so inhibited you wouldn’t even be able to decipher good from evil when thinking about the Party (Young 46-48).

While the topic of Newspeak is a dominant one in the discussion of the power of language in 1984, there is another somewhat intertwined topic that, for the purposes of this essay, is even more important. This is the language of Orwell in the book. Not the properties of Newspeak or the ideas behind it, but the actual words and phrases that Orwell uses to not only speak out against the danger of totalitarianism, but also to illustrate how modern language “threatened the subjugation, not the liberation, of the human mind” (Bolton 15).

Even on the first page of the book Orwell’s need to create clear, efficient language is seen. “The hallmark smell of boiled cabbage and old rag mats” (Orwell, 1984 5). The reader can almost discern the pungent smell of the cabbage and the rot and moldiness of the mats. The key is the ability to accurately visualize what the author is trying to say. Another example of this is during the scene of the “Two Minutes Hate”. The following is an excerpt from the scene:

It was even possible, at moments, to switch one’s hatred this way or that by a voluntary act. …Winston succeeded in transferring his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl behind him…. He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. (Orwell, 1984 16)

This passage, although violent and hateful, leaves no room for vagueness. Orwell clearly explains his
message and then leaves the topic, as no more words are necessary. He, like many of the linguists and psychologists in the 1930’s, disagreed with the “mechanistic” view of language that the sounds produced are more important than the meaning (Bolton 37-38).

The entire novel is written in the clear, crisp style seen in the above passage. To study every example of Orwell using concrete language and images would be to study the entire book. Some passages do, however, stand out more than others. Winston’s encounter with O’Brien in the Ministry of Love is one of the most violent and thought-provoking passages in all of literature. “The most quoted symbol is O’Brien’s picture of the future: ‘Imagine a boot stamping on a human face-forever.’” (Meyers, Reader’s 147-148)

This brutal image gives a clear understanding to the reader of the viciousness of O’Brien, and more importantly, totalitarianism. Another such illustration is the unforgettable scene involving rats in Room 101 (149-151). The entire scene is filled with such lucid pictures after reading the scene these images will never be forgotten:

In some streets a woman dare not leave her baby alone in the house.... The rats are certain to attack it. Within quite a small time they will strip it to the bones.... They show astonishing intelligence in knowing when a human being is helpless. (Orwell, 1984 234)

When Winston and Julia met in the secret room, rats invaded their privacy. The rats, for Winston, represent something “dreadful and unendurable”. Orwell’s clear language allows Winston’s fear to be transferred into the reader (Meyers, Reader’s 149-150).

In summary, one question must be answered. What is Orwell’s point? When considering his views on the English Language, it is more than just being clear in one’s thoughts and images. In 1984 nearly all of the images were precise and accurate, yet he had a purpose for them being so. Orwell realized that “political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness” (Orwell, “Politics” 8). By creating language that veered from concreteness, subversive political ideas can become mainstream by easing their way into people’s minds. Orwell stated himself that his purpose for writing was political, but not necessarily to assert a certain political state onto his readers, but to make them realize how language can deceive them.

It is clear that Orwell wishes people to not only recognize that there is an inherent problem with the English language, but to take steps to correct it. This problem has obvious implications in the politics of today’s world, as “Political language... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind” (Orwell, “Politics” 11), but this is not the full reason. Orwell believed that English should be something of beauty, where the author’s words inspire thought and provoke the imagination. Its design is to present to the reader a theme, and to be able to accurately describe that theme with no alternate perceptions or meanings. To be truly free in mind is also to be free in communication. Language should be “an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought” (10). George Orwell set out on a quest to levitate the English language to its most beautiful expression by cutting it down to its simplest form. Through his violent and nightmarish 1984 and his beliefs in “Why I Write,” to his straightforward and critical essay “Politics of the English Language,” Orwell has mastered the use of the English language, and may man learn from his simplicity.

References

Existentialism in Early 20th Century American Literature

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The expansion and development of the Industrial Revolution in the mid 19th century ushered in an “era of change” in science as well as in philosophy and literature. With the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, people almost immediately began to view the world in terms of evolution and natural selection. One of Darwin’s supporters includes British social philosopher Herbert Spencer who expanded Darwin’s theory and established “Social Darwinism.” In this belief, man is in an unvarying social competition known as the “survival of the fittest.” With these worldviews in mind, a new form of philosophy emerged in Western thought commonly recognized as “Evolutionary Philosophy.”

Other contributors to Evolutionary Philosophy include revolutionists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who took into account man’s degradation in the working classes. These political philosophers observed the ill effects of the Industrial Revolution as a result of a “flawed capitalist system.” They subsequently wrote the *Communist Manifesto*, which introduces Communism as a means of social reform. One of the most influential, yet underrated, Evolutionary Philosophers of the time include German philosopher, poet, and philologist Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche is recognized as the “Father of Existential Philosophy.”

Nietzsche and his philosophy for the *Will to Power* has influenced many, including psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung; however, his influence in American literature is often left unnoticed. One of the most influenced writers from Nietzsche’s philosophy includes the American author and Socialist, Jack London. The choices that one makes constitutes his/her existence as reflected by Jack London and his influence from Evolutionary Philosophy, including Friedrich Nietzsche’s Existentialism, and is evident in the most “fully realized” character of Existentialism in American literature; *The Sea-Wolf*’s, Wolf Larsen.

Due to its “diversity of positions,” giving an exact definition to Existentialism is often difficult. Since it involves man’s position in the universe and the changes he faces, Existentialism is often classified as Evolutionary philosophy and is associated with Friedrich Nietzsche. Evolutionary philosophy itself is derived from “…the expansion of the Industrial Revolution, the growth of materialism, increased secularization as well as the emergence of realism, art, and literature.” Although its origins can be easily traced to ancient philosophers, including Plato, it was 19th century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard who defined its modern interpretations and is the first writer to call himself “existential.”

In its simplest of explanations, Existentialism professes, “existence proceeds essence.” In other words, humans and things exist, yet they are meaningless unless one creates meaning by acting upon them. Existentialism can be easily understood through its four basic tenets of moral individualism, subjectivity, choice and commitment, and dread and anxiety. These four tenets include that personal experience is fundamental to arriving at truth. Furthermore, Existentialists believe that morals are relative to each person and time period, and each person’s choices are what creates one’s destiny. In addition, Existentialism professes “nothingness” as a source of universal fear, which produces “anxiety and discomfort.” It is clear to see that this philosophy is quite nihilistic and cynical in its view of man and the universe.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

The most recognizable figure in existential philosophy is Friedrich Nietzsche. Influenced from Arthur Schopenhauer’s “Theories of Irrational Will,” and Darwin’s “Theory of Evolution,” Nietzsche takes an
apprehensive view of the world and exploits the constraints of man. He states that Christianity has lost its original powerful influence over people, whom he labels as “the herd.” Nietzsche is infamous for professing his “God is dead” philosophy.

The three common themes in his works include a rejection of traditional religious and philosophical ethics, the concept of Übermensch (superman or “overman”), and the will to power.” Nietzsche believes man has betrayed himself through the “submission to the fictitious demands of an imaginary god” and the only hope for man is a return to a primitive sense of strength as epitomized by the Übermensch, or “overman.” The overman is the epitome of the independent and secure individual who “reflects the strength and independence of one who is liberated from all values.” Existentialism, as expounded by Nietzsche, is atheistic in nature and amoral which places mankind alone in the universe to create his/her own destiny through one’s choices and experiences.

Nietzsche’s works and bleak views have influenced early psychologists as well as writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of the prominent Existentialist authors include Russian author Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Austrian Jewish writer Franz Kafka. Since existentialism is commonly represented in the prevailing idealism of German philosophy, “many critics have overlooked one writer; American author Jack London.” The life and experiences of London reflects the common themes of Nietzsche as evident in The Sea Wolf.

Jack London and The Sea-Wolf

In order to understand the existential perspective in his works, one must understand the life and influences of Jack London. Born in San Francisco on January 12, 1876, John Griffith London was raised not ever knowing his real father, the wandering William H. Chaney who abandoned London’s mother while she was three months pregnant with Jack. Three months later she married John London and Jack was named after him at birth. Throughout his early years, London was a part of the working-class and by the time he was eighteen, he was involved in many dangerous jobs. Many of the work experiences and social observations of his youth, as well as his time as a seaman, are evident in many of his works including The Sea-Wolf. Joining organized groups of the unemployed, such as “Kelly’s Army,” London found himself supporting the cause for economic reform after the panic of 1893. It is obvious that at early age, London was aware of the oppression from a capitalist system and the suffrage of the working classes, which will eventually lead to his sympathy towards a socialist government.

Deciding to change his itinerant ways, London enrolled in high school in 1895 and was admitted to the University of California at Berkley as a special student. It was from his time at Berkley that London became involved with the Socialist Labor Party which he advocated and recruited new members. He unsuccessfully ran twice for mayor of Oakland as a member of the Socialist Party as well. At this time, London was fascinated with the “utopian socialism of Marx and the darker views of Nietzsche and Darwinism.” As a result, London embraces the concepts of Evolutionary philosophy and the destined victory of the working-class. London incorporates the themes of Nietzsche’s Übermensch, and the Will to Power, as reflected in many of his works, including The Sea-Wolf and The Call of the Wild.

London’s The Sea-Wolf is perhaps the greatest example of Nietzsche’s Existentialism in American literature, as supported from the experiences of the “temperamental idealist” Humphrey Van Weyden and the personification of the Übermensch in Wolf Larsen. It is important to take into account the existential factors that are evident throughout the story. For instance, the environment is depicted as indifferent as the vast, pitiless ocean demonstrates. In addition, the fog at the beginning of the story causes the sinking of the Martinez and is illustrated as “…the gray shadow of infinite mystery.” The “incertitude and fear” of the environment thrusts the reader into an atmosphere of dread and anxiety, the nihilistic theme of Nietzsche’s works. Nature’s wrath against man is a typical theme in Evolutionary philosophical literature and is evident in London’s The Call of the Wild as well. The lack of
religious themes in the book can be interpreted as the lack of involvement from a benevolent God. Instead, the men aboard the **Ghost** are left to the mercy of their self-determined captain, Wolf Larsen.

**The Sea-Wolf's “Overman”**

The Nietzschnian hero of the story, the **Übermensch**, is illustrated in one of the most “fully realized characters” of American literature, Wolf Larsen. The **Übermensch**, as set forth by Nietzsche in his epic poem **Thus Spoke Zarathustra**, is portrayed as the “heroic pagan ideal” and the “creator of master morality.” The overman creates his own destiny by triumphing over oppressive traditional ideals. It does not matter if the liberation from traditional ideals is for the greater good or evil. Some of the overmen throughout history, as indicated by Nietzsche, includes Jesus and emperor Napoleon I. This self-determining individual is apart from customary morals. “Moral Individualism” is a prominent theme and one of the main components of the Nietzschean overman. Indeed, the **Übermensch** of the **Sea-Wolf** is amoral since traditional reasoning is insufficient for the materialistic Wolf Larsen.

The captain of the sealing schooner **Ghost**, Wolf Larsen, navigates through life without the conventional “moral compass.” Instead, Larsen is expressed as a man that creates his own destiny and determines for himself what is ethical. It is the captain’s independent nature and strength that sets him apart from the rest of the crew and establishes him as the overman. His treatment of the crew is exceptionally brutal and far from what any other man would deem as moral. In the many philosophical arguments with Van Weyden, who is now forced to serve as a meager cabin boy, Larsen argues that all life is inevitably useless. However, Larsen continues and states that weak life forms are for the service of other creatures to use for their personal benefit. Larsen takes full advantage of this “survival of the fittest” belief in using his crew for his own profit. Moreover, he does not have any remorse for his actions. The many philosophical debates between Van Weyden and Larsen are the author’s way of expressing his own observations and opinions of the world at the time. Morality, as defined by Nietzsche and reflected through Wolf Larsen, is relative to each person and his/her understanding.

In his own observations, Van Weyden depicts Larsen’s strength as “apart from his physical semblance.” Van Weyden’s account of Larsen’s strength is mentioned four times in one paragraph alone. London intentionally stresses Larsen’s physical strength as a means of authenticating the strength of Larsen as the overman. Not only is Larsen strong, but he hates the strength of others as well, “The Wolf is strong, and it’s the way of a wolf to hate strength.”

Throughout the story, Larsen’s strength is related not only physically, but mentally as well. Larsen is self-educated and is a genius amongst his ignorant and simple-minded crew. One of the reasons Larsen provokes Van Weyden during conversations is to be able to engage in discussions about philosophy, politics and literature; areas that Larsen’s crew lacks in understanding. Van Weyden notices that although Larsen is self-educated, he tends to pick at philosophy to suit his needs, “Wolf Larsen, evidently, had sifted [Spencer’s] teachings rejecting and selecting to his needs and desires.” Larsen judges what is “useful” since existentialism teaches that morals and experiences, including wisdom, are relative. In regards to Larsen’s strength, Van Weyden observes “[Larsen’s physical] massiveness seemed to vanish and a conviction to grow of a tremendous and excessive mental or spiritual strength that lay behind, sleeping in the depths of [Larsen’s] being.” Larsen’s education reflects another of Nietzsche’s interpretations of the overman, although strong, his “passions are rationally controlled.”

London incorporates the Nietzschnian overman as the ideal hero of mankind. Wolf Larsen, although rough towards his crew, is an independent and rationally controlled individual. Setting his own course, and charting his own destiny, Larsen is the epitome of the truly “free man.” Larsen’s role in the story as the liberated and self-determined character is influential at the time that **The Sea-Wolf** was written. He gave hope to the oppressed and presented views for liberating not mankind, but the individual in a corrupted society.
The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a time that can be characterized as an era of change. The many discoveries in science, particularly biology, and the extensions of philosophy, gave to Western thought a new perspective known as Evolutionary Philosophy. The works of Nietzsche and his Existential perspective are often associated with the “prevailing idealism of German philosophy.” As a result, many underestimate the influence of Nietzsche on American authors, namely the Socialist Jack London.

London’s works reflect many of the issues concerning Evolutionary Philosophy; however, it is London’s exploration of the Nietschzian concept of the Übermensch, as illustrated in the fully realized character of Wolf Larsen, which places the novel as an influential piece of Existential literature. London’s works subsequently influenced many writers of the early 20th century to include Ernest Hemingway and Jack Kerouac and helped influence the newly rising literary phenomena known as American Pragmatism.


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