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The Poor of 1984: The Roots of George Orwell's Final Novel

James M. Lang
Assumption College

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The Poor of *1984*



THE ROOTS OF GEORGE ORWELL'S MOST FAMOUS NOVEL

JAMES M. LANG
ASSUMPTION COLLEGE
@LANGONCOURSE

George Orwell on Twitter



Cold War 2.0 @coldwar20_en · Aug 26



British surveillance state 'worse than #Orwell's 1984' – UN privacy chief



↻ 10

★ 1



George Orwell on Twitter



Doomsday's CW @DoomsdaysCW · 23h

North Dakota becomes first state to legalize weaponized police drones
csmonitor.com/Technology/201... #BigBrother #Orwell



1



2



[View summary](#)



Shamus Brown @ShamusBrown1 · Aug 29

[@Tintie4](#) [@CBCNews](#) I really feel like we're living in #Orwell's #1984. It was a depressing read! It's terrifying living it!



1



2



[View conversation](#)

Invisibility



How the Poor Die



- “And then ear after ear . . . pressed against your back, relays of fingers solemnly but clumsily tapping, and **not from any one of them did you get a word of conversation or a look direct in your face.** As a non-paying patient, in the uniform nightshirt, you were primarily *a specimen*, a thing I did not resent but could never quite get used to.”

Invisible People



- **“All people who work with their hands are partly invisible, and the more important the work they do, the less visible they are . . . They rise out of the earth, they sweat and starve for a few years, and then they sink back into the nameless mounds of the graveyard and nobody notices that they are gone. And even the graves themselves soon fade back into the soil.”**

The “Utter Silence” of the Poor



- “When I think of antiquity, the details that frightens me is that those hundreds of millions of slaves on whose backs civilization rested generation after generation **have left behind them no record whatever**. We do not even know their names. In the whole of Greek and Roman history, how many slaves’ names are known to you. I can think of two, or possibly three . . . **The rest have gone down into utter silence.**” (1942)

“Not Counting Niggers”



- **““The unspoken clause is always ‘not counting niggers’ . . . What we always forget is that the overwhelming bulk of the British proletariat does not live in Britain, but in Asia and Africa.”**

Economic Classes in *1984*



Inner Party: 2%



Outer Party: 13%



Proles: 85%

“Not Counting Niggers”



- **“In terms of our earlier classification, the proles are the Low, for the slave populations of the equatorial lands, who pass constantly from conqueror to conqueror, are not a permanent or necessary part of the structure.”**

The Poor of *1984*



- **“In reality very little was known about the proles. It was not necessary to know much. So long as they continued to work and breed, their other activities were without importance.”**

Outsiders in *1984*



- “Foreigners, whether from Eurasia or from Eastasia, were a kind of strange animal. One literally never saw them except in the guise of prisoners, and even as prisoners one never got more than a momentary glimpse of them.”

The Destruction of Winston



- “The chessboard was always waiting for him, his corner table was always reserved; even when the place was full he had it to himself, since nobody cared to be seen sitting too close to him . . .”
- Winston was like a “ghost fading at cock-crow.”

Immersion



SEEING INDIVIDUALS

How Can We *See* Individuals?



- “Passing up a horrible squalid side-alley, saw a woman, youngish but very pale and with the usual draggled exhausted look, kneeling by the gutter outside a house and poking a stick up the leaden waste-pipe, which was blocked. I thought how dreadful a destiny it was to be kneeling in the gutter in a back-alley in Wigan, in the bitter cold, prodding a stick up a blocked drain. At that moment she looked up and caught my eye, and her expression was as desolate as I have ever seen; it struck me that she was thinking just the same thing as I was.”
(1936)

Immersion



- “It is altogether curious, your first contact with poverty . . . You **thought** it would be quite simple; it is extraordinarily complicated. You **thought** it would be terrible; it is merely squalid and boring. It is the peculiar *lowness* of poverty that you **discover** first; the shifts that it puts you to, the complicated meanness, the crust-wiping.”

The Singing Prole



- “As he looked at **the woman in her characteristic attitude** . . . it struck him for the first time that she was beautiful. It had never before occurred to him that the body of a woman of fifty, blown up to monstrous dimensions by childbearing, then hardened, roughened by work . . . Could be beautiful. But it was so.”

1984



- “What mattered were **individual relationships**, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself. The proles, it suddenly occurred to him, had remained in this condition. They were not loyal to a party of a country or an idea, they were loyal to one another.”

Invisibility of the Poor



“We haven’t eliminated the visual impact of homelessness. When visitors come here, they want to see their paradise. They don’t want to see homeless people sleeping in parks or on sidewalks or on the beach.”

**Mayor of Honolulu
2014**

Invasion Communities



Community Service Learning

Spanish 381

- “In class, my students and I considered the theater stage as a space for representation and reflection on a variety of social issues in Latin America. One of these issues was the need for ordinary people to tell their own life stories.”

Photography Exhibit

