

but they have. He leaves the question why unanswered." And, once again in Tribune (8 November 1946), he devoted something like half of his 'As I Please' column to a savage discussion of American fashion magazines.⁴ Before we get too excited by even this limited breakthrough, however, it is important to consider his unchanging attitude toward contraception, birth control and abortion. According to Christopher Hollis, one of Orwell's deepest beliefs had always been with 'the profound evil of contraception. He thought that even the views of the Catholic Church on this issue were too weak and that 'people who desired intercourse without children were guilty of a profound lack of faith in life.' In his *The English People*, published in 1947, but written in 1944, he put forward proposals that were as George Woodcock observes 'probably the most reactionary he ever made!' In order to counter a declining birth rate, he advocated the punitive taxation of the childless ('taxation will have to be graded so as to encourage child-bearing') and more active action to stop abortion, which he complained was today looked on as little more than a peccadillo. The idea that women having abortions, and the abortions procured by working-class women would have been dangerous 'backstreet' abortions, regarded it as in any way 'a peccadillo' is positively obscene. He even complained about the increase in the keeping of pets as affecting the birth rate! What of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*? I have argued elsewhere that there has been a neglect in discussion of the book, by both feminist critics and others, of the powerful stand it takes in favour of the sexual liberation of women, that Orwell attacks the double-standard in his portrayal of the relationship between Winston Smith and Julia. For Anne Mellor, Julia, 'sexually liberated, healthy, a creature of emotion but not intellect, is, 'a man-identified woman', in fact 'the stereotype of the ideal woman in patriarchal society.'⁴ This is certainly how she might appear in the early 1980s, but the battles being fought in the late 1940s were different battles. Placed back in the context of the time he wrote, Orwell's defence of Julia's defiant and subversive stand in favour of promiscuity and women's sexual pleasure as demonstrated by Winston Smith's endorsement of that stand is pretty much unique in the literature of the time. As Smith tells Julia, 'Listen, the more men you've had, the more I love you.'⁴ There is still an argument around whether or not and to what extent Julia was based on Sonia Brownell, who a very ill Orwell married on 13 October 1949. Sonia was by all accounts very much an intellectual whereas Julia famously falls asleep when Winston is reading *The Theory of Oligarchical*