

[front cover]

# Anarchy 1

a journal of anarchist ideas

***ALEX COMFORT***

**Sex-and-violence**

**and the**

**origin of the novel**

***NICOLAS WALTER***

**the 'new wave'**

**in Britain**

***JOHN ELLERBY***

**Education, equality,**

**opportunity**

**Rescuing Galbraith**

**from the**

**conventional wisdom**

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*We have yet to see that not the total of resources but their studied and rational use is the key to achievement —J. K. GALBRAITH.*

*But as soon as we look at Political Economy from this point of view, it entirely changes its aspect. It ceases to be a simple description of facts, and becomes a science, and we may define this science as: The study of the needs of mankind, and the means of satisfying them with the least possible waste of human energy. —PETER KROPOTKIN.*

# Rescuing Galbraith from the conventional wisdom

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH'S *The Affluent Society* is the only modern book on economics to become a best-seller. Comparisons have been made with Tawney's *Acquisitive Society* and with Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, and praise has been lavished on the book from the political right, left and centre. The *Financial Times* found it "a stringent and stimulating piece of social analysis", the *Daily Telegraph* thought it might provide the 'sixties with "the popular tools of thought for handling the unfamiliar problems of our already rich society". Even the warring factions in the Labour Party were united in praise of it, from Mr. Crosland who declared that "I am wholeheartedly a Galbraith man" to Mr. Crossman, who believed it to be "the most entertaining and profound exposure of post-war Western society that has yet been published", and *Tribune* which saw in it a "magnificently iconoclastic assault on economic illusions". It even has its admirers on the other side of the iron curtain, where Galbraith himself is the only leading Western economist to have lectured on the economics of capitalism, and one of the only ones to seek an exchange of professional and personal views with his opposite numbers in Moscow, Warsaw and Belgrade.

The book's title has been bandied about so much as a description of contemporary Britain and America that we have already grown tired of it, while the phrase about "private opulence and public squalor" has provided the Labour Party with the succinct new campaigning point which it urgently needed. Ironically, since Galbraith so devastatingly attacks the Conventional Wisdom of accepted ideas, he has fallen victim himself to it. This part of his argument has been absorbed into the conventional wisdom of liberal thought, while his most radical, and from our point of view, most valuable, observations have been widely ignored.

This is partly his own fault. You cannot blame him for not being

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what he never set out to be, but when one week we see him on television, billed along with various beat writers and militant pacifists as a pillar of American dissent, while another week we learn of him as one of the eggheads in Kennedy's presidential campaign, we feel strengthened in our view that academic intellectuals are more useful as critics of politicians than as their aides. American liberals who voted for Kennedy on the strength of his intellectual entourage have only themselves to blame when they find their idols pushed into the background by the practical men of affairs. Margaret Halsey, in the October *Liberation* remarked that there was something rather touching about the belief that the qualities lacking in the presidential candidate could sneak in by the back door through his advisers. It reminds one, she said, of the Victorian theory that a drunkard can be reformed by the love of a good woman, and she observed that it is a theory that can work both ways. "Is there not an equal possibility that Jack and Bobby Kennedy's opportunism and ruthlessness might rub off on the Schlesingers, Galbraiths and Commagers?"

Now it is reported that Kennedy has decided to send Galbraith to India as American Ambassador, and the *Guardian* comments that "It is a tribute to Mr. Kennedy that a man of Professor Galbraith's calibre should be eager to serve under him." This is a different version of the Victorian theory, and we might again reverse it to say that it is no tribute to Professor Galbraith that he should be eager to serve under a man of Mr. Kennedy's calibre. Ambassadorships are one of the traditional spoils of office in the American political system, and while an economist of Galbraith's brilliance and unorthodoxy could be of service to India, this is the very role which as a diplomat he would be precluded from playing. And again, while his observations on the problems of a conspicuously non-affluent society would be valuable, they are the very observations which as a

diplomat he would be precluded from making—except to President Kennedy.

\* \* \*

Galbraith's dabbling in Democratic politics, his urbane and witty manner, and the relatively trivial nature of his more recent writings, have successfully concealed his book's revolutionary implications. Richard Crossman, in a recent review, regretting that *The Liberal Hour* is by no means the successor to *The Affluent Society* for which its readers had hoped, suggest that the new book's title

"is aptly chosen to explain how a man who is so rigorous and extreme in theory yet manages to remain the confidante of successive Democratic candidates. Like his predecessors, Hobson and Keynes, the two most subversive thinkers of our century, Galbraith shields himself from the logic of ideas by studying economics in isolation from politics and power. 'It is sufficient for me to master one discipline' he seems to tell us. 'I leave it to other academic revolutionaries to subject our political institutions to the kind of devastating analysis I have applied to the economic institutions of the Affluent Society'."

Crossman goes on to suggest that just as Hobson unwittingly provided Lenin with the ideas which "could be vulgarised into a revolutionary myth that destroyed the whole system of colonial imperialism" so Gal-

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braith may have already performed "a similar historical role by providing the prolegomena to any modern socialist theory of capitalism, while remaining, in his political attitudes, staunchly anti-socialist." Crossman is referring to the development of Galbraith's view of the *role* of governmental intervention in the economy, as evinced by *American Capitalism: The Concept of Countervailing Power* (1952), *The Affluent Society* (1958) and the essay on inflation in *The Liberal Hour* (1960), but his assumption about the particular historical role of Galbraith's book is as questionable as his assumption about Lenin. Its importance lies elsewhere.

What *is* the book about? It is about the end of scarcity. The second thing every student of economics learns is the assumption that "goods are scarce: economics is a study of scarcity and the problems arising from scarcity". But what happens when scarcity is no longer a necessary condition? America's productive capacity, Galbraith observes, is so much greater than its needs that a significant slice of the gross national product—eleven billion dollars worth of advertising—is devoted to the frantic manufacture of wants which the actual productive machine has subsequently to satisfy. Want-creation through advertising has become the key to the whole economic system, and *is* the most important industry, since it alone keeps people and factories at work. And production is vital, not for the sake of the goods produced, but because the worker's income, security and purchasing power depend on it. "Production has become the solvent of the tensions once associated with inequality, and it has become the indispensable remedy for the discomforts, anxieties, and privations associated with economic insecurity". It is also

"buttressed by a highly dubious but equally accepted psychology of want; by an equally dubious but equally accepted interpretation of national interest; and by powerful vested interests. So all embracing, indeed, is our sense of the importance of production as a goal that a first reaction to any questioning of this attitude will be, 'What else is there?' So large does production bulk in our thoughts that we can only suppose that a vacuum must remain if it should be relegated to a smaller role."

The shortcomings of economics, he says, are not original error but uncorrected obsolescence. In the interpretation of social phenomena there is a continual competition between what is relevant and what is merely acceptable, and in this competition "all tactical advantage is with the acceptable". Audiences of all kinds most applaud what they like best, and people approve most what they understand best—"we adhere as though to a raft, to those ideas which represent our understanding. This is a prime manifestation of vested interest. For a vested interest in understanding is more preciously guarded than any other treasure. It is why men react, not infrequently with something akin to religious passion, to the defence of what they have so laboriously learned". This consensus of acceptable ideas is what Galbraith has named the Conventional Wisdom. There is a conventional wisdom of the left as well as one of the right, and it

is to be found in economic theory as much as in any other field.

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Adam Smith's classical formulation of economic liberalism was viewed with alarm when first published, but soon afterwards it became the conventional wisdom and "there were solemn warnings of the irreparable damage that would be done by Factory Acts, trade unions, social insurance, and other social legislation". Now, the conventional wisdom accepts the welfare state and holds that these measures "softened and civilised capitalism and made it tenable" though there have never ceased to be warnings that the break with *laissez-faire* was fatal. It has been the same story with the gold standard and the balanced budget and again it was only circumstances which defeated the conventional wisdom. The American budget never balanced during the depression, but it was not until 1936 that Keynes made the unbalanced budget respectable. Keynesian theory itself has now turned into a body of conventional wisdom, the obsolescence of parts of which, in Galbraith's view is now well advanced. He makes fun of the different conventional wisdoms, from Social Darwinism to Marxism, which substitute acceptable ideas for observable facts, and in particular, of the economic shibboleths to which all right-thinking Americans subscribe—most of which, however, are "cherished almost exclusively either in the second person or in the abstract".

Rugged champions of free enterprise thus scorn the *quest* for security, having first insured their own, and the advocates of bold risk-taking are often those who have never, individually or corporatively, taken a risk in their lives. "The preoccupation of workers with unemployment insurance or old age pensions has usually seemed most supine and degenerate to business executives who would be unattracted by companies in which they were subject to arbitrary discharge or which lacked adequate pension arrangements." The conventional wisdom is, indeed, selective in its preoccupation with production. It lauds it when it is sanctified by profit and gratifies private acquisitiveness, but deprecates it when its purpose is to satisfy social needs; thus cars have an importance greater than the roads on which they are driven. Education is unproductive but the manufacture of the school toilet seats productive. Vacuum cleaners are praiseworthy but street cleaners are an unfortunate expense. "Partly as a result our houses are generally clean and our streets are generally filthy."

This disparity, he points out, is not accidental. The economy is kept at an inflationary level, and discrimination against the public services is an organic feature of inflation:

"The line which divides our area of wealth from our area of poverty is roughly that which divides privately produced and marketed goods from publicly rendered services. Our wealth in the first is not only in startling contrast with the meagreness of the latter, but our wealth in privately produced goods is, to a marked degree, the cause of crisis in the supply of public services."

The relevance of this line of argument to what Mr. Macmillan calls the opportunity state and what Professor Titmuss calls the irresponsible society is all too obvious, but this is not the most important thing about Galbraith's argument.

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The important thing is that the Professor of Economics at Harvard has come round to the point of view, not of the contemporary socialist economists, but of the "utopians", in espousing the principle of 'to each according to his need'. For he argues the case for divorcing income from employment, divorcing production from security. "We have seen," he says,

"that while our productive energies are used to make things of no great urgency—things for which the demand must be synthesised at elaborate cost or they might not be wanted at all—the process of production continues to be of nearly undiminished urgency as a source of income. The income men derive from producing things of slight consequence is of great consequence. The production reflects the low marginal utility of the goods to society. The income reflects the high total utility of a livelihood to a person."

You cannot seriously argue that we "miss" the goods which are not produced in a depression. It is the hardship due to unemployment which depresses us. Thus "good times" are identified with full employment rather than with high production. Galbraith therefore proposes to "break the

connection between security and production” and to eliminate the hazard of depression unemployment for the worker by what he calls Cyclically Graduated Compensation—unemployment compensation which, as unemployment increases, is itself increased to approach the level of the weekly wage, and diminishes as full employment as approached.

Even worse, from the point of view of the conventional wisdom, he is no longer impressed by the cult of productive efficiency:

“If the modern corporation must manufacture not only the goods but the desire for the goods it manufactures, the efficiency of the first part of this activity ceases to be decisive. One could indeed argue that human happiness would be as effectively advanced by inefficiency in want creation, as efficiency in production. Under these circumstances, the relation of the modern corporation to the people who comprise it—their chance for dignity, individuality, and full development of personality—may be at least as important as its efficiency. These may be worth having even at a higher cost of production. Why should life be made intolerable to make things of small urgency?

“Can the North Dakota farmer be indicted for failure to labour hard and long to produce the wheat that his government wishes passionately *it* did not have to buy? Are we desperately dependent on the diligence of the worker who applies maroon and pink enamel to the functionless bulge of a modern motor-car? The idle man may still be an enemy of himself. But it is hard to say that the loss of his effort is damaging to society. Yet it is such damage which causes us to condemn idleness.”

Now, if the cult of efficiency, like the cult of production from which it derives, is a hangover from the days of scarcity, what other social criteria are there? Galbraith suggests that “other tests—compassion, individual happiness and well-being, the minimisation of community or other social tensions”—now become relevant, and that what must now be counted one of the central economic goals of our society “is to eliminate toil as a required economic institution. This is not a utopian vision”.

It might be objected that Galbraith’s debunking of the religion of

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productivity ignores two important social facts: firstly that Western affluence is an island in a world of poverty, and secondly that in America itself there are large pockets of poverty. He has in fact a chapter on American poverty, pointing out that 7.7 per cent. of U. S. families had in 1955 incomes of less than 1,000 dollars, and that a very large number of individuals, not members of families, were in this income class, but he makes the point that neither the “case” nor the “insular” variety of poverty is susceptible to elimination merely by increasing production of goods and services. On the question of the poor countries and the responsibilities of the rich ones towards them, the point again is that the output of goods and services in America has, as such, little effect on their problems. He remarks that the obvious remedy to the “problem” of over-production of food in the United States is to give the surplus to people who can eat it, a solution regarded with horror by the conventional wisdom, which has invented the euphemism of “the soil bank” for its own remedy of taking acres out of production, while

“To wish to give milk to Hottentots became, for a while, a symbol of advanced economic irresponsibility. Ultimately the necessities of the case triumphed. Under the guidance of an impeccably conservative Secretary of Agriculture, world-wide gifts of food in large quantity became an established policy. But again elaborate disguise was essential. The receiving countries ‘bought’ the products with their own currency, which meant that they supplied money that cost them nothing and which the United States agreed not to use in appreciable amount.”

Even the sharing of surpluses has to be disguised as an “economic” transaction in terms of the conventional wisdom. The rational distribution of the products of industry is not a matter of productive capacity but of social attitudes, and the spread of the appropriate social attitudes is just what the conventional wisdom of economics inhibits.

Galbraith enunciates two principles which strike at the roots of economic thought: firstly that we should break the connection between income and production and secondly that we should cease to regard productive efficiency as the test of utility in production. There is nothing original about this of course; the important thing is that it comes from a twentieth century economist, not a nineteenth-century socialist. In immediate terms the implications of the first of these two principles are governmental—his idea about Cyclically Graduated Compensation as a new foundation for unemployment compensation. This in itself is simply a refinement or extension of Keynesian

remedies for depressions, and not one which would recommend itself to the ideologists of the present government of this country. Galbraith himself, in *The Liberal Hour* says confidently, “One day we shall remove the economic penalties and also the social stigma associated with involuntary unemployment. This will make the economy much easier to manage.” And he adds “But we haven’t done this yet”. When it comes, either in America or here, it will come for economic rather than for social reasons, but undoubtedly it will come. In the long term perspective, the popularisation of this view represents a big step towards the recog-

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inition of the “free access” principle which Kropotkin heralded seventy-five years ago in his essay *Anarchist Communism*, declaring that

“There is a tendency, though still a feeble one, to consider the needs of the individual, irrespective of his past or possible services to the community. We are beginning to think of society as a whole, each part of which is so intimately bound up with the others that a service rendered to one is a service rendered to all.” Its ultimate implication is of course, as Kropotkin emphasised, the abolition of the wage system itself.

The consequence of the second of Galbraith’s two neglected principles—the dethronement of “efficiency” is not of course to put a premium upon inefficiency, but to adopt a different test of efficiency, the test of human utility rather than that of economic utility. To the followers of his main theme it implies the irrelevance of arguments about the scope and nature of the public services based upon economic criteria, or arguments, for instance, about the railway system based on the idea that it should pay its way. To others it suggests taking a new look at the idea of industrial democracy—which is always written off because of its alleged (and unproven) inefficiency in economic terms. Others may observe that an acceptance of the idea is in such complete opposition to the realities of competitive capitalism that it is meaningless, in view of the unending pressure to reduce labour costs. To which students of productivity like Seymour Melman would answer that in unplanned societies a high rate of capital investment is only achieved by forcing the cost of labour above that of raw materials. To Galbraith’s more radical readers it must imply the irrelevance of the whole idea of a market economy in a society which has the productive capacity for an economy of abundance. But what happens when we weave these themes together and combine them with the various models of a planned economy postulated by Western Marxist economists, or with the ideas of Polish and Yugoslav economists about a “socialist market economy”? Various economic writers like Ben B. Seligman in America or Peter Wiles here, have sketched out the paradoxical relationships between “capitalist” notions of marginalism and a market economy, and the feasibility of workers’ control, but no modern writers have brought together the idea of industrial democracy, the idea of separating security from production, and the idea of an economy based on social needs without the intervention of the market. (Except perhaps Paul and Percival Goodman in their extraordinary and original book *Communitas* with its three alternative “paradigms” for (a) efficient consumption, (b) the elimination of the difference between production and consumption. and (c) planned security with minimum regulation.)

No-one is better fitted than Galbraith to undertake this new synthesis. But since it seems unlikely that he is going to elaborate these themes himself, we have to look for a new school of economic and social thinkers who will rescue his ideas from being submerged into the conventional wisdom of American liberalism or British Labour politics, and will develop and expand them with at least something of Galbraith’s own wit and lucidity.

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## Sex-and-violence

# and the origin of the novel

## ALEX COMFORT

A FEW YEARS AGO the respective critics of the *New Statesman* and the *Spectator* described an adventure story by Mr. Ian Fleming as “without doubt the nastiest book I have every read”<sup>1</sup> and as “providing sheer entertainment such as I, who must read many novels, am seldom lucky enough to find”<sup>2</sup>. Comment has been made on the popularity of this writer with Cabinet Ministers. George Orwell once wrote of the very different novels of Mr. Mickey Spillane and Mr. James Hadley Chase (who were supposed by Englishmen to have a similar social range of popularity in America) that “Freud and Machiavelli have reached the outer suburbs.”

Mr. Spillane and Mr. Chase specialise in affectless violence. Mr. Fleming is more gentlemanly (it was his upper-class hero who provoked the *New Statesman*) and specialises in masochistic fantasy in erotic settings—he has given Bulldog Drummond a sex life. All three have attracted hostile notice directed at a *genre*; I would describe the *genre* itself as the erotic comic-book for literate adults. The pictorial comic-book reflects so well the psychodynamic state of its parent society (which it is often accused of producing) that it is not surprising to find non-pictorial comic-books written for the literate, or read—if the remarks about Cabinet Ministers are correct—by those who are themselves engaged in writing the comic-book of contemporary history. (I recently read that “Monk” Lewis was a member of parliament). Such books belong to erotic literature, but the erotic literature of a culture which operates a selective censorship against normal eroticism. They therefore deal, as a rule, not with love but with hate, the cult of sexual and general violence, and the ghoulish. This cult is distasteful, though the

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violence of the attack on it in some quarters has itself the appearance of excitement at the matter attacked: it is also traditional: —Mario Praz’s catalogue<sup>3</sup> of the morbid preoccupations of the Romantics—sadism, diabolism, the character of woman as Medusa and bitch, the exaltation of suffering and corruption—is a statement of the emotional handicaps which have affected Western art intermittently since the Second century, not the Nineteenth. When there is a critical row about them, it is still directed at those authors who dilute them with references to normal sexuality. They are now the predominant matter of commercial entertainment: in the comic-book they are reduced to pictorial psychosymbols without the literary cover they have previously had; in the literary-comic the psychosymbols go back into literary form, still indecently exposed. The essence of this form is that its effect depends on *motif* not manner, and that the plot is a pretext for the incident: this is equally true of more pretentious literature, but in the case of the literary-comic the fact is frankly recognised by all; the novelist’s first need is a good knowledge or intuition for the natural history of human sexual response to situational symbols. Now and then he can be too good—part of the adverse comment on the three writers I have mentioned, especially Mr. Fleming, is due to their ability to free-associate (or read up and put in) really threatening psychoanalytical matter in a bare form. Part is due to uneasiness among liberal readers to see such matter made unpleasantly real at a

time when history and psychotic fantasy are dangerously convergent. For them, the comic-book threatens both social morals and polite fiction—which already contains the same material, but better-wrapped.

Gothic *Schauerromantik* is by now a popular dissertation subject. The interesting thing about the literary “comic-book” is that it owes little to Gothicism—less than the modern serious or “unpopular” novel. The writers of the literary-comic are going further back, if not for their inspiration, at least for their precedent, for the novel did not generate the literary-comic: phylogenetically, the literary-comic generated the novel, in the society of second- and third-century Alexandria, which also generated our literary morals. Alexandrine novels include the most likeable of all erotic stories, *Daphnis and Chloe*, but the manner of Longus assorted ill with the growth of Christendom: the modern literary-comic mimics in incident, though not in spirit or style, other romances of the same period which are far more familiar in key. I am not so sure of Mr. Spillane, but Mr. Fleming has his ancestry there—possibly in Achilles Tatius, whose *Cleitophon and Leucippe* is the best and most characteristic of literary-comics, with something of the modern pace, and almost all of the familiar psychosomatic obsessions. This particular romance generated not only *Candide* but, by way of Sidney’s *Arcadia*, a sizeable number of modern European novels. The effect of the original is neither Hollywood nor, as it could easily be, Evelyn Waugh; the whole performance is by modern standards quite un-nasty even when it is sophisticated, and never satirical, though now and then it is quietly ironic. Some episodes recall the disturbing

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but fabulous matter of the nursery tales, in which decapitated and revived princesses have their ancestry—others have echoes of *The Magic Flute* and the sham ordeals of the Masonic initiation: the sufferings of the lovers are a game, evoking no more protest than a children’s game of captives and executions where the heroine will be called in from the stake to tea.

Yet compared with other romances, compared with Apuleius or Heliodorus, or even Xenophon of Ephesus—whose hero is crucified, falls into the Nile cross and all, and sails down the river on it, while his heroine is put in a pit full of wild dogs—Tatius is tangibly nearer the comic-book tradition. The comic-book is a story which is a pretext for sexually-coloured psychosymbolic incidents where the theme, not the treatment, is the selling point. Tatius is also closer to the comic than Longus or Apuleius in what he leaves out. This is supposed to be a love-story, but unlike *Daphnis and Chloe*, or *The Golden Ass* and the *Satiricon*, which are not love stories at all in principle, it is strikingly asexual. Tatius foreshadows the literature of conventional chivalry. but he also foreshadows the modern and pre-modern literature of impotence. This has been called a “panegyric of chastity,”<sup>4</sup> and one is aware off-stage of a virulent contemporary monasticism which regarded women as evil and suffering as an acceptable substitute; in which martyrdom as a prelude to resurrection was the only decent form of sexual excitement, and in which Origen castrated himself physically as well as emotionally. Tatius rather than Longus sets the key of the literary-erotic tradition of Christendom: it is with suffering, not women, that his readers are already expected to be in love. In his choice of Andromeda and Prometheus to preside over the story, Tatius has accurately selected the tutelary deities of European Romanticism, and of the emotional disabilities which have perpetually haunted it. For Andromeda is not only the captive princess of chivalry who is there to be rescued—she is de Sade’s *Misfortunes of Virtue*; she symbolises the ambivalence of literature towards tormented maidens. Tatius makes Prometheus Andromeda’s male twin. They are unjustly condemned, male and female. In their constructive moments they have been pity and liberty, chivalry and revolution; but they have a number of darker avatars as the gratuitously ill-used heroine, and the victim of the tormentor-father—the revolutionary and erotic images which alternate so disconcertingly in *The Revolt of Islam*.

In Shelley, the gallery of unfortunate virtue is complete—Prometheus punished by Zeus, Beatrice Cenci exposed as victim, not of a decently reticent monster, but to the incestuous assaults of a father who talks very like de Sade; and finally the lovers of *The Revolt of Islam*, translated from

the stake to a Baroque landscape in a fantasy of really alarming intensity, where sexual excitement, masochism, lyrical poetry and revolutionary politics are inextricable and interchangeable. This mixture was evidently not to everybody's taste: Shelley defended the work against the protests of his friends with the same well-justified candour as Flaubert—"The poem was produced by a series of thoughts

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which filled my mind with sustained and unbounded enthusiasm. I felt that it was in many respects a picture of my own mind." The same psychosymbolic material is exploited in *The Cenci*, and finally tamed in *Prometheus*, but it is in the extended form of *The Revolt of Islam* that the self-identification is most whole-hearted. There is certainly no better example of a work, or a series of works, in which a compulsive fantasy has produced great literature. By the end of the century, the *motif* of shared bondage and death as a decent and more ecstatic form of coition has become completely explicit—in *Hassan*, or *Les Noyades*—and is even present in a muffled form in improbable works like *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Pegasus, the symbol of imaginative literature, sprang from the blood of the Gorgon. In psychoanalytical terms this seems to be abundantly true, at least of our own literature, but Freud might also have pointed out that it is this particular Gorgon which petrified the emotional development of an entire culture, to make Andromeda's chains more desirable than her person.

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So much for the ancestry of the literary "comic"—what of its present and future? If Freudian concepts account for the content of literary forms, the reasons for their prevalence at a given time seem to be chiefly social.

The sub-sexual pulp novel, with or without an exotic cast, and still more its middle-class equivalents, seem to represent a thoroughgoing return of the European novel to one of its origins, and the arbitrary plot linking a series of sexually-coloured but technically chaste episodes, the displacement of physical sexuality by torments and misfortunes, and the typical irrelevance of the linking commentary, which are the features of this commercial *genre* today—were present in the works which set the key of the European novel. The Hays Code and its literary progeny were born together. There is no hokum in Hollywood which these early novels do not anticipate, and strikingly little difference in the formula they had to fill, apart from an added requirement of stylistic elaboration.

Hokum is the stock-in-trade of the story teller. It is as necessary to Hemingway as to Heliodorus. It never fails, even with those too highbrow to admit its appeal, and if it appears in Alexandrine rhetoricians it does so as freely in the *Arabian Nights* and in Shakespeare. When literary forms lose interest as literature, there is always hokum to fall back on, and it has played a quite remarkable part in providing inspiration for serious writers. The similarity between the late Alexandrine novel and the matter of pulp fiction and television—as well as the cause of its germinal influence on European fiction generally—is in the selection of permissible fantasies.

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The natural history of the response to hokum, especially sexual hokum, in our society is more interesting than speculation about its psychodynamics. The cathexis attached to suffering, and especially masochism, seems to be more intense in the audience of "serious" than of popular literature. (A side effect of this is that the tragic dénouement has now a strong prestige significance—it is evidence of "serious" intention, even if it has to be dragged in quite as arbitrarily as the last-minute rescues of romance.) The "serious" work must end on a note of frustration—"happy" endings are stigmatic of a lower form of literature. The algolagnia of popular literature is by

contrast of a robust kind. It prefers fights, beatings, bindings and danger-situations which are physical and have to that extent a genital reference: it avoids the much less healthy refinements of purely mental suffering; and masochism is popular only if it does not go too far. Popular self-identification will stand up to a threat of combustion or drowning in aphrodisiac circumstances, and find it agreeable, but it knows where to stop—ecstasies pushed to the point of deace, like those of Laon or *Les Noyades*, have no future in them. Women, perhaps for physiological reasons, seem willing to venture further: they will accompany the heroine up to and including her actual demise—“What a lovely death to die!”, as Nellie Wallace used to sing—but there must be at least a celestial choir between them and the darkness of annihilation.

These sex differences in response and readership have an important effect on popular erotic iconography. Kinsey pointed out that women do not respond erotically to printed matter anything like as predictably as men, and consequently do not read for direct physical stimulation—there is a whole literature addressed to them in which the erotic element is social. Many of the excesses of the “tough” commercial romance are due to the fact that it is addressed only to men: the heroines are expendable, and not for self-identification, while the two-seater fantasy of Tatius and the cinema, by contrast, is to some extent modified by the fact that it must suit readers of both sexes. Other heroines are sacrificed, quite arbitrarily, to an extension of the Hays convention on adultery: the wages of sexuality are death. Even Hemingway’s Catherine goes this way.

We seem in one sense, so far as popular fiction is concerned, to be going back, in the inverse sequence which produced the dying lovers of Tatius and Shelley. They are losing popularity: we are back with Andromeda and, in place of Perseus or Prometheus, the gangster-policeman-special agent born under her constellation. Sometimes he will love her, sometimes he will kill her—not infrequently he will do both, and to a succession of women. We are also back (far more significantly) with a limited amount of genital sexuality among all the killings. The *genre* has been called “sex-and-violence” fiction. It is arranged pyramidically: soft-backed novels on newsprint at the bottom, glossy paper-covers for the middle class, hard-backs for Cabinet Ministers and the established, and even literature at the top.

At the bottom of the pyramid, rape now supplements murder—near

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the top, Bulldog Drummond has gone into partnership with Lautréamont and developed an explicit sex-life. With the second of these events I for one would not quarrel. From the point of view of mental health the objectionableness of the modern version lies not particularly in the erotic significance it gives to violence, and least of all in the return of some normal love-making, but in its quality of affectlessness in brutality. This is alarming because we have seen it recently in real life. Indeed, not all sadistic imagery is cruel, and not all cruelty is sadistic: a good deal of the violence in question is spiteful rather than erotic. The authors of paper-backs do not need to manufacture machinery to revive their corpses—the corpses are perfectly acceptable dead. These corpses, moreover, are not Elizabethan, or even Gothic—they are mechanically and affectlessly produced; they purge no emotions because they excite none. They are simply required as décor to produce potency. In older erotic romances, the plot, however arbitrary, is a means of preserving the decencies, and showing that the game, even if it is bloodthirsty, *is* still a game. The modern romance has no use for nursery games. Accordingly the better it is done, the more alarming it becomes. It may be that there is greater sincerity in accepting the fact that if, in real life, you shoot your woman she will die without benefit of coincidence: modern readers would probably be insulted by mummery with fake bullet-holes, though I think Mr. Fleming, who is nearest of his contemporaries to the spirit of Tatius, would consider them if he had to.

It is worth looking more closely at the sadistic component in this literature, for in reality critical anger over such matter still depends on the content of sex, not the proportion of violence. Let me make it clear that “sex-and-violence” is in all respects an improvement, in my view, on violence alone, even if sex has entered the firm only as a junior partner. Much of literary history

since the time of Tattius has been taken up with the attempts of the public to get, and writers to give them, an erotic literature dealing with adult sexual behaviour, and the efforts of a disturbed minority to keep normality out in favour of decent sadism and masochism—to which, as long as they have no genital references, there is no moral objection. If Mr. Spillane had written a contemporary *Daphnis and Chloe* it would have been banned. *Chastelard* was indignantly attacked by our grandfathers, not for the hero's erotic rhapsody over decapitation, but because he hid under Queen Mary's bed; and the art of the pornographer, if one can call it that, has long consisted in trying to introduce among decent, patriotic, and even devout abnormality, the elements of normal sex which make it sell.

Sadistic fantasy in a frankly sexual content is itself less mischievous, since less likely to erupt in overt behaviour, than rationalised literary production of sadistic fantasy, and much less infectious by example. There are not many people who imitate Jack the Ripper, and those who do can be segregated; but there are a great many Conservative Party congress delegates who yell their support for flogging, as there are disturbed Americans who regret the decline of the Klan—and they can neither be segregated nor shamed.

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We can see another and more specifically sexual origin for pulp novel violence in the stereo-type of the heroines—or the lay figures—with whom the routine of sex-and-violence is enacted. At least they are responsive. They rub themselves against the impending ravisher like cats; they throb, bite, scratch and emit ecstatic cries—they are the women of the Sanskrit erotic textbooks, which classify with great thoroughness several dozen varieties of love-bites, excitatory scratch-marks, erotic blows, and exclamations in intercourse. These women behave, in short, as women of some cultures appear to have behaved, as the reader's girl friend or wife does not behave, and as he very probably wishes she would. Geoffrey Gorer remarks of sex-and-violence literature that “despite all the prohibitions of convention and law people do acquire sexual experience, and for the greater part find out that they have been stuffed with lies—that though pleasant it is not such lasting ecstasy and final solution as art would leave us to suppose; and then they are ready for the other half of our myth, violence”. (*Bali and Angkor* 1936).

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It looks as if the hard-back and soft-back readers have one anxiety in common, whether they ravish women or only bite them: the object of the violence in each case is to secure response, unnecessary, one would have thought, with such provocative women, unless it is only a game. But whereas in real life these lovers would recover their breath, a little bruised and embarrassed by their own vehemence, the characters of fiction keep up the same pre-orgasmal frenzy in their other activities.

These activities are brutal, and either criminal or justified because the persons assaulted are criminals. This consequence flows directly from the other sources of the popularity of the *genre* at all levels of society. Society conscripts the unestablished reader and kicks him around—if we were not too well brought up we would kick society back: established or unestablished respectability has an ill-defined association with the disappointing frigidity of our women: rough stuff, in our folklore, at least makes women respond, if only by protest. Therefore let us imagine ourselves gangsters, able to kick society, occupationally brutal, whose women are disreputably responsive—if not the misfortunes of virtue, at least the prosperities of vice. Better, if we have something substantial to lose from gangsterism, let us be a law above the law—we can then beat the gangsters (who deserve it) and enjoy their women, with a genuflection to righteousness—we have a civilised dislike for violent criminals in real life, and in any case we do not want to be sent down as delinquents.

Erotic sub-fiction is getting steadily more sophisticated, and, at the same time, coming to reflect middle-class tastes in fantasy:—masochism instead of sadism, and modern plumbing. The heroines of paper novels

in the 1900's were seduced by their creator's idea of a rich waster in their audience's idea of a Mayfair flat. The new conventions are increasingly those of readers with some experience of love-making in conditions of privacy and with running hot water. At the top of the pyramid the backs are no longer paper, and the experience of the fictional heroes greater. Mr. Fleming's "James Bond", the most experienced of these heroes, and an ex-Naval Commander, does not—I think I am right in saying—commit rape, nor imagine that he can conveniently undress a woman by brute force. He confines himself to willing subjects and has the sense to ask first if they are virgins, though he may bite them as a purely erotic stimulus. The rest of his time is occupied, not so much in killing people, as in being tortured. It is the tone of officerly experience which does the damage here, for it extends to all the masochistic routines which the eponymous hero undergoes, often in confined spaces which suggest a Rankian birth-trauma—or, more probably, memories of engine-room duty. That it is masochism, rather than sadism, is itself an indication of a *genre* rising in the world and covering-up a little; recently the fantasy is schizoid rather than doggedly mechanical. The soft-back reader, by contrast, still has a realistic perception that in matter of fact it is more blessed to give than to receive, whatever happens in fantasy.

I cannot help feeling that the masochism of the Establishment is not so much decency as cover. It has the ominous half-in-earnest air which "interrogated" persons describe in real-life tormentors. Mr. Fleming's hero chivalrously plays the victim, but I would not trust him to question any Cypriots, of either sex. The Alexandrine hero was spineless, perhaps, but decent and unofficial. The Elizabethan villain—Aaron or Vargas—was painfully moral in his Crowleyan protestations of deliberate wickedness. He does not stand for the approved conduct of society, nor represent the product of a bad upper-class school. But the "special agent" who tortures suspects, ravishes women and for preference shoots them afterwards, is the emissary of Society—or at least he stands for authority and its uses, for the unlimited rights of aggressive behaviour which it confers, and he is expected to carry the admiring acquiescence of his readers. The modern erotic hero at the establishment level is a professional, official, and, in Britain, upper-class bully with enough masochism in him to make him obedient and a little less aware of other people's feelings. When he is cynical, as in Mr. Spillane, one can take him as a satire; he is at his least loveable when he is attached to illiterate, contemporary political stereotypes—Bulldog Drummond's "pacifists" or Mr. Fleming's "Russians" and "chingroes" (half-Chinese, half-Negro), even in a schizophrenic background. Unfortunately he is also at his most realistic; history is anticipating fantasy. If John Buchan's Richard Hannay was a secret agent and a gentleman, his duties did not in those days include conducting "interrogations" on the Algerian pattern, and taking turns at undergoing them, or inflicting them on his colleagues, by way of training. The world demand for such heroes seems to be increasing rapidly,

as henchmen for chaster and better-rationalised delinquents. Literature will not create them, but it could conceivably educate them. No well-read adolescent, even if he has never been trained to fight "terrorists", would now need to go back to Damhouder's *Praxis Rerum Criminalium* to find out how to torture somebody. The attitude of such hero-villains to women is of a piece with the rest of their activities. The Greek Perseus left Andromeda on her rock while he haggled with her parents—Mr. Fleming's hero would certainly rescue her, but might make love to her *in situ*: Mr. Spillane's hero, who "specialises in shooting women in the belly" would presumably rape her first and give her to the monster afterwards.

Much has been made of the class background of the official hero. I doubt if he has any political planning behind him. He has appeared, like all literary figures, in response to the general climate of the times, even if that includes the class anxieties which George Orwell saw in him. But

he meets a need of government (all government) which a genuinely erotic literature—one, that is, concerned primarily with the physical expression of love rather than hate—cannot meet. The selectivity of censorship towards sex and in favour of violence has for the most part unconscious origins—but, at the same time, it is no accident that the sort of people who demand an asexual literature are often also the sort of people who control governments and are willing to condone violence by proxy—the springs of prudery, of brutality and of ambition are very often the same. And even if leaderships are not drawn, like volunteer censorships, from emotionally-handicapped people, obedient violence will in any case be more popular with administrations than love. They need manly (and unscrupulous) men; it is not easy to fit the individual who “hugs his kicksy-wicksy here at home, that should sustain the bound and high curvet of Mars his fiery steed” into the machine of comic-book politics. He is lacking in proper offensive spirit—mushy, in fact. Men who get more pleasure from beating up Cypriots, Algerians or Hungarians than from staying at home with the girls are an administrative godsend—men in love, by contrast, tend to be at once tiresomely unwarlike in the cause of Civilisation and violently combative in resisting civic privileges such as conscription or deportation. In fact, when a man does hit back at the machine, love, not principle, is usually behind it.

To this extent the change from last century’s recipe of violence alone, the prescribed material for generating manly youths with no sentimental nonsense about them, seems to represent an advance in erotic fiction if only a small one. If the authors of literary comics are working off abnormal preoccupations, I doubt if their readers are—to anything like the same extent. There are several possible reasons other than endemic formal sadism for the popularity of literary violence with the audience—conscripts, young industrial workers, clerks—who are the chief readers of paper-backed novels. (I am less satisfied about the readers of hard-backed novels.) One is the exasperation of current affairs, of life in a society which is two-faced, run by advertisers

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and confidence men who talk glibly about terminating human history if necessary, and who are equipped with powers of conscription—a society nonetheless in which, through the advent of order and of humane ideas, there are no accessible heads to punch. The bears, dogs and cocks which our ancestors maltreated are protected today against transferred aggression as effectively as Prime Ministers and Secretaries of State, and much more justly. Zeus had a police escort—even the vulture has the Wild Birds Protection Act behind it.

This is the result of a real and important gain in humane sensibility and in civilised behaviour. The ages of faith discharged their irrational aggressions in austerity and persecution; the eighteenth century, to judge from its sports and punishments, in public brutality. We have largely renounced these activities—the super-irrationalities and nuclear weapons and the Cold War do not replace them, because these are primarily the fabrication of a very small minority of persons in office, foisted by them on publics which are at least uneasy and at the most quiescent. There is no private outlet for irrational aggression compatible with our self-respect. The proper alternative is to transmute it into rational direct action, purposive and if possible level-headed resentment against abuses, and if necessary against persons, which will bring the rest of society into line with its own moral pretensions. But this is much too hard a discipline for most intellectuals, and the eighteen-year-old conscript, facing the entire apparatus of stage-management, beset by the traps set for him by political leaders, and unused to concerted action without orders, finds this task of transmuting mere resentment into political action intellectually difficult, personally dangerous, and often beyond him altogether. Could one help him? One could certainly try. Commercial popular art studies the natural history of its audience very carefully. More dedicated writers might learn to do the same.

Nordau predicted that humanity would eventually cease to produce art altogether and took as an example the way in which dancing, which is the most important and significant cultural activity in primitive societies, has steadily lost significance until it has become an amusement. Nordau was

not a very amiable critic, and I think this view greatly mis-conceives the nature of art, but what Nordau says here of art in general is certainly true of individual art forms, and I think it might well be true of the novel. We now produce two kinds of literature, popular and unpopular. While in our public mind most of us wish to write unpopular literature, because it is honourable to do so, we hope at the same time that its unpopularity will not be enough to prevent it from being sold, or at least from being published. Art forms are subject to natural selection, and it is a matter of eventual fact that work which cannot be published will not be written: writing for a non-existent audience is as barren a satisfaction as praying to a non-existent God. Several factors are now conspiring to increase the unpopularity of fictional *genres* which could formerly hold their own—the economics of publishing, the disappearance of the audience to whom

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the former novels were addressed, and the change of public taste.

The novel is a story with some reference to real life—which may not be more than a starting point. I think there are fundamentally only three kinds of novelistic story, special cases apart—three essences, if you like, which can be used to flavour it. There is the social novel, the prose equivalent of comedy or of tragedy, which makes its effect by appealing to our sympathy and experience of ourselves and our neighbours: there is the picaresque novel, which appeals to our need for adventure and rebellion—and there is the erotic novel, which appeals to our sexuality, with its shadow, the anti-erotic novel. The blends and permutations of these themes have been sufficient to sustain the novel as an art form through its whole development. There is a fourth, which is getting common, and which it is in fact increasingly hard to avoid writing: that is the novel which is realistic, but the reality which it depicts is fantasy come to life and enacted in history. In our lifetime a writer possessed by an incubus—the obsessive-compulsive fantasy of Kafka, for example, or the sadistic fantasy of Mirbeau—does not need to invent a situation in which it can be expressed; other similarly preoccupied people in positions of authority are already busy expressing these fantasies in current affairs. Kafka depicting his prison camp, digging his burrow, or trying to get into the castle is relying on his imagination, but today he could equally well be writing documentaries. Mirbeau's erotic torture does not now need to be set in the imaginary Orient. He could almost be writing recent history or biography, and I suspect that one could find current documentary parallels within one day's flying-time of London.

The social ingredient in fiction has helped in the past to keep it on the rails, but it is becoming harder and harder to use, because it depends to some extent on a settled state of society and values. People today read the social novels of the past. If in a contemporary setting one substitutes individual psychology for manners, the result approaches one of the other *genres* I have mentioned. The picaresque ingredient, in so far as it concerns adventure, particularly the adventures of rebels and masterless men, is again being overtaken by actuality—and actuality is more to the taste of modern readers.

The neotechnic society may well have very little interest in the social novel based on class and character. It seems quite possible that it will prefer to polarise its literary interests between actuality on the one hand and comic-book fantasy on the other. If so Nordau's analogy with dancing will be more than apt, for the only social use which dancing retains, out of its many former uses, is erotic. That does not mean that society will be able to do without other serious art forms—*Brave New World*, in fact—it might well read the novels of the past, as we read epic poetry of the past, and re-use them in its own tradition. But for anyone to write epic poetry today is evidence of a lack of literary judgment: the unpopular novel of today may be written tomorrow only as the analogue to morris-dancing.

Huxley's prediction was perceptive, because his *Brave New World*

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had nominally got rid of psychopathology in private life and of psychopathology in office, albeit by means which reflect Huxley's own scepticism about the possibility of doing so. Future society with nuclear weapons must control both in fact if it is to survive at all, but its success may be partial only—the most frightening risk is that the fantastic-realistic *genre* of the future will go on being written as now in actual events, not ink, by deranged people who are enacting fantasy instead of discharging it in literature.

The characteristically modern *genre* of the fantastic is, I suppose, science-fiction. This was originally no more than an imaginative forecast of the possibilities of science, but it has been captured by its literary ancestors, just as the non-scientific romance has been captured by the erotic comic. At one extreme the two are not very different, with jargon playing the part of magic in pre-industrial fantasy, space travel as an erotic setting, and the mad scientist, who is a compound of Prometheus and Faust, playing the part of the wizard at the other, science fiction has become the vehicle through which more than one scientist who is not mad has tried to draw attention to the social activities of non-scientists who are. Nobody has yet made quite this use of the comic—except Voltaire. There is no room here to pursue the ancestry of Utopias and of science fantasy turned satire—it begins perhaps with Lucian and with the *Golden Ass* and reaches us *via* More and Gulliver, who stand in the same relation to comic-book science as *Candide* does to comic-book romance: both owe their sting to the convergence between fantasy and history. Just as Kafka and Mirbeau now sound unpleasantly factual, it is hard to tell whether some of the fantasies of science fiction are paranoid or merely satirical—the slug-like invaders from outer space who parasitise the will and intelligence by attaching themselves to the base of our skulls come from the same source as the electrical waves by means of which unseen enemies influence the certifiably insane—until we read that as a protection against their activities the U.S. Senate agrees to meet stripped to the waist<sup>5</sup>, and we find ourselves if not in real life at least close to it,

As I see it, the novel-writer today faces this problem: he has an audience which is increasingly demanding a literary separation of actuality from imagination, but he has also to cope with a triangular relationship between fiction as a vehicle for pure fantasy, fantasy-fiction as a vehicle for satire on society, and a society which is compelled by its leaders to enact pathological fantasies in fact. I have been talking about popular fiction—it may well be that those who wish to write unpopular fiction will opt out, and we shall have the same situation as exists in poetry, which now makes little attempt to address any audience outside the lecture room. There is a certain amount of self-satisfaction to be had from accepting the Third Programme as a ghetto, but the tenure of a literary form which lives on these terms is, to say the least, shaky.

The alternative is to write popular fiction. I think it is safe to say that there is no functioning art form, however poor its execution,

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which cannot be exploited if one has enough ingenuity. And in any case the process is already in train. If the erotically comic-book *genre* is growing up from below, the unpopular novel is coming down from above to meet it. Ever since Freud, *motif* has been steadily gaining at the expense of manner. The notion of writing “popular” fiction as edification suggests the cleaned-up comic-book, in which, instead of secular bloodshed, David slaughters Goliath and Joan of Arc is burned at the stake. My intention here, though less specific than that, is more promising: if only the romance will be read, if *motifs* are to matter more than treatment, if literature is to be got in edgeways between them, at least the requirements are not more stringent than those stylisations which myth and ceremony imposed on Greek, or Elizabethan taste and politics on Tudor, drama. We need to study the natural history of literature today, not to acquire riches, or not only to acquire riches, but to accept the challenge which social changes always impose on writers; when the philistine says “You must,” to reply “I have—see how you like that!”

If I knew how to write the type of fiction which would fulfil these requirements today, I would write it—making the assumptions which I have made here, that neurotic anxieties and immaturity

are common property, but that my audience is saner than its censors and its leaders, and that the destructive emphasis in literature, as well as in history, are to some extent imposed upon it. Godwin tried to do precisely this in *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon*. If he did not make anarchism popular, at least he inspired Shelley. Graham Greene has attempted the same thing, but without using the crudely fetishistic techniques which the medium really demands. I would rather write like Longus than like Mr. Fleming, but if editors, readers or censors compel me to write like Mr. Fleming in order to be heard—or for that matter like the conformist colleagues of Pasternak—I would make a fair offer to turn any imposed restrictions into horrid arms against their originators.

Not all writers will share my assumptions. But most of them will recognise the symptoms I have described, the depletion, as it were, of the novel and the tendency for it to break up into its component literary *genres*, and to become a habit-forming drug. The novel has been the literary form *par excellence* of the period which gave us liberalism and science, but also industrialism and totalitarianism. How much it contributed as a social influence to these gains and losses I would not like to say. Any social influence it had might now be transferred elsewhere. At the same time, as long as stories are read, regardless of what is in them, fiction is still a possible medium.

If, moreover, like so many good people, we are depressed by popular fiction today, or by some alarming things in it, we should remember that Prometheus is not the only signal of cruelty, and Faustian competition to enact the fantasies of deranged people is not the only function of science. Shelley's answer is the right one. Science has made it possible for us to understand some of the relations between psychosymbolism in literature and behaviour in society, or at least

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to look for them. It has also, by the same token, made it possible to envisage turning psychopathology out of history, whether or not we can or should turn it out of literature. What we require is the will. And if indeed the audiences for whom we write are saner than their leaders, and saner than their literature, the writer today, like the doctor and the psychiatrist, has a duty of incitement as well as consolation—for, in Tattius' terms, if Herakles can unbind Prometheus we will not have to worry about the misfortunes of virtue.

<sup>1</sup> *New Statesman*, 5 April, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> *Spectator*, 4 April, 1958.

<sup>3</sup> Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (O.U.P. 1951).

<sup>4</sup> F. A. Todd, *Some Ancient Novels* (O.U.P. 1940).

<sup>5</sup> R. Heinlein, *The Puppet-Masters* (New York: Doubleday, 1951).

## Censor gives pleasure to all

The news that a television adaptation of ARISTOPHANES'S *Lysistrata* has been banned by four West German broadcasting stations on grounds varying from pacifism and political bias to artistic failure and dubious morality will give satisfaction all round. In the first place it will please all who like to see things banned on principle, all haters of literature, and all for whom the faintest suggestion of immorality suffices, without further investigation, for an instant proof of guilt. Then it will please connoisseurs of the ridiculous. It will also please the anti-Germans, and it will please patriots, who will have an occasion for comfortable reflections on the superiority of our own brand of freedom to that enjoyed anywhere else in the "free world". It will please lovers of ancient Greece by its demonstration of the continued potency of Aristophanic satire; the great man was feared then, and he is still feared today. And it will please those who wish to see the message of the play more widely propagated.

—*Times Educational Supplement*.

## Tender Trap

I would make little distinction in value between talking about middle-class youths being groomed for \$10,000 "slots" in business and Madison Avenue, or underprivileged hoodlums fatalistically hurrying to a reformatory; or between hard-working young fathers and idle Beats with beards. For the salient thing is the sameness among them, the waste of humanity. In our society, bright lively children, with the potentiality for knowledge, noble ideals, honest effort, and some kind of worthwhile achievement, are transformed into useless and cynical bipeds, or decent young men trapped or early-resigned, whether in or out of the organized system. My purpose is a simple one: to show how it is desperately

hard these days for an average child to grow up to be a man, for our present organized system of society does not want men. They are not safe. They do not suit.

—PAUL GOODMAN: *Growing Up Absurd*.

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# Education, equality, opportunity

## JOHN ELLERBY

ULTIMATELY THE SOCIAL FUNCTION of education is to perpetuate society: it is *the* socialising function. Society guarantees its future by rearing its children in its own image. In traditional society the peasant rears his sons to cultivate the soil, the man of power rears his to wield power, and the priest instructs them all in the necessity of maintaining a priesthood. In modern governmental society, as Frank MacKinnon put it in *The Politics of Education*:

“The educational system is the largest instrument in the modern state for telling people what to do. It enrols five-year-olds and tries to direct their mental, and much of their physical, social and moral development for twelve or more of the most formative years of their lives.”

To find a historical parallel to this situation you would have to go back to ancient Sparta, the principal difference being that the only education we hear of in the ancient world is that of ruling classes. Spartan education was simply training for infantry warfare and for instructing the citizens in the techniques of subduing the slave class, the helots, who did the daily work of the state and greatly outnumbered the citizens. In the modern world the helots have to be educated too, and the equivalent of Spartan warfare is the industrial and technical competition between nations which is sometimes the product of war and sometimes its prelude. The year in which Britain's initial advantage in the world's industrial markets began to wane, was the year in which, after generations of bickering about its religious content, universal compulsory education was introduced, and every significant development since the Act of 1870, had a close relation to the experience, not merely of commercial rivalry, but of war itself. The Acts of 1902, 1918 and 1944 were all born of war, and every new international conflict, whether in rivalry for markets or in military techniques, has been the signal for a new burst of concern in different countries over the scale and scope of technical education among the rival powers. Thus the explosion by America of the first atomic bombs was a signal to Russia to hasten the pace of technical and scientific education, and Russia's success in putting the first sputnik into space, led to an outburst of self-criticism in America about the shortcomings of the American educational system, and to a concern about the quality and availability of technical education in both Britain and America which is still in full swing.

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There is no evidence that the distribution of intelligence either between nations, or among the social classes within nations is anything but random. We cannot really speak of the inhabitants of one country or one social class as being more or less intelligent than those of another. But the intelligence of an individual at birth exists not as a fact but as a potential which has yet to be developed (as the histories of so-called feral children show). The conditions for the greater or lesser development of this potential depend however, on social, economic or political factors. Access to education is unevenly distributed. If a society aimed at the maximum development of the latent talent of every member of its population for some supposed national or social end, it would have to

reveal and foster it as early as possible in the individual's life. The principal obstacle to this is the existence of the family, which is one reason why the educational systems of elitist and totalitarian societies are hostile to the family as an institution.

The family is the basic social group, and within it members share the same social status and standard of living, which are determined by the position of the breadwinner in the social and occupational hierarchy. The children thus enjoy or endure a position in this hierarchy which they "inherit". But social and economic status derive in modern society from occupation which in turn derives from education and thus when the children cease to be children their status derives from their access to education. But those with high status have a parental vested interest in preserving the education considered appropriate to their status for their children. We see this very clearly in our own society, and it is equally obvious in theoretically more equalitarian societies. We cannot assume, in any case, that every individual child will put education, or the social fruits of education, high on its list of priorities in life. It has therefore to be presented to the child as a means to economic, or status rewards, or as a rewarding end in itself. The family which has these values will use them to motivate its children. The family which has other values—early earning and independence, working-class solidarity, non-postponement of satisfactions—will not. We may thus say that absolute equality of opportunity and the utmost exploitation of the nation's brain-power—the "pool of ability" as it is called, are not compatible with the continuance of the family system.

This explains why J. M. Pringle's article on the English "public" school system in the February issue of *Encounter* is called "The British Commune". Mr. Pringle notes that "in every age and in every country, those who have wanted to create loyal and disciplined servants for some cause or party or organisation have recognised that families—and especially the women in the family—are the great obstacle which must be circumvented". The obvious starting point for this argument is Sparta and those ideas in Plato's Republic which derived from Sparta. He sees the most successful of such attempts to be the Roman Catholic Church with its celibate priesthood and its monasteries. And he suggests that the English "in their own typical, unthinking, half-hearted, but efficient way" have evolved their own version of the Platonic idea.

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"In the 19th century, when they began to realise the need for a loyal, disciplined class of public servants to rule their rapidly growing empire, they did not insist that the members of this class should remain celibate or should hold their wives in common. More gently—but quite as effectively—they simply took them away from their homes and families from the age of 9 or 10 to 18. They were rightly confident that, after four years in a preparatory school and five years in a public school, these boys would not only be reliable public servants: but would be immune to the persuasion of mothers, sisters and wives who might tempt them to put the interests of their families above the interests of their country. The English version of Plato's republic and the Chinese Commune was the Public School."

He describes the system as "one of the most striking and successful *political* devices ever conceived by a ruling class." Now you might suppose that, with the decline of empire, the widening of the franchise, and the gradual development of a state system of secondary education, the public schools would be in a state of decline. But this is very far from the case. With new endowments—and the 3½ million pound industrial fund for providing them with science laboratories—they are flourishing as never before. People do not pay three or four hundred pounds a year to place their children in the diminishing ranks of the empire-builders, they pay for the provision of a place in the élite for their children.

Education must always have been one means of upward social mobility for some individuals: the slave scribe in ancient society who became a free man, the young man in ancient China who was selected as qualified to study for the examinations leading to a place in the bureaucracy, the poor boy in mediaeval society who became a priest and the poor boy in the nineteenth century who became a pupil teacher. It is a commonplace that the more the barriers to mobility are removed, the greater the striving for mobility, and now that we have a theoretically complete educational mobility, people are very sensitive to the limits placed upon it. Hence the various investigations during the last ten years demonstrating that the middle-class child has more chance of attending a

grammar school than the working class child, that the public school boy has a very much greater chance of attending one of the older universities than a grammar school boy, and that he has an infinitely greater chance of becoming a top civil servant, a captain of industry, an MP, a cabinet minister or a bishop. Here three of the functions which education plays in our society are in conflict: the notion of the maximum use for the state's purpose of the pool of ability, the use by one social class of education as a means of upward social mobility, and the determination of another social class to maintain its hold on the citadels of occupational privilege.

But let us suppose that the privileged private sector of the education system were abolished or transformed or absorbed in some way. Those whose passion was for equality of opportunity would then have to fall back on the "home background" argument which is already used to explain why the middle class draws so much more from the grammar schools than the working class. The next step, both in the interest of equal opportunity and of maximum use of the pool of ability, would

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be to withdraw children from home backgrounds which did not show the required level of aspiration, presumably by extending the already flexible notion of children being "in need of care and protection" to include being in need of an appropriate educational background, *i.e.* a middle-class home.

On January 9th the television programme *Panorama* described a private school which exists to cram children for the 11-plus examination, claiming 75% success in obtaining grammar school places for its products. "The earlier they start to live in a competitive spirit the better" said one parent. "It's too early for art and all that" said another. Art and all that—the basis of primary education in the progressive school has in fact become a consolation for the non-starter. Thus in a "streamed" primary school, the A-stream children bring home in the evening books of tests in arithmetic, English and "intelligence", while the B-streamers bring home models, puppets, baskets—art and all that, for it isn't only private schools which are affected by the parental urge for cramming. A whole series of reports on secondary education, from the Taunton Commission of 1868, the Hadow Report of 1926, the Spens Report of 1938 and the Norwood Report of 1943 have laid down what *secondary* education should be like, and the primary schools have developed accordingly. The Norwood Report divided the children of the country into three sorts, with three types of mind and three kinds of ability, which conveniently fitted the three types of secondary education available in this country, which were in essence the three grades of school recommended by the original Taunton Commissioners of 1868, who in turn declared that the distinctions between their three grades correspond "roughly but by no means exactly, to the gradations of society."

English education, quite apart from its built-in class bias, is as Michael Young put it, an obstacle race from start to finish, an endless process of selection and rejection with the implied question all the while: Will this horse run well enough to justify his place in the stable? In his radio investigation of "Pressure at Eighteen-Plus", Dr. Young concluded:

"If a child is put at the top table when he is five, he still may not get into the A stream at seven. If he is in the A stream at seven he still may be weeded out later. Many compete but most are rejected, and the sense of failure that results is sometimes psychologically crippling. The way things are going, the schools are in danger of making the Britain of 1960 a nation of failures with only a thin elite of super-trained people at the top."

In his *Rise of the Meritocracy*, a satire, the point of which consists in projecting into the future the pursuit of the doctrine of equality of opportunity, he looks back on our own day as one where "two contradictory principles for legitimising power were struggling for mastery—the principle of kinship and the principle of merit." Merit wins in the end, and with the perfection of intelligence testing, and consequently with earlier and earlier selection, a new non-self-perpetuating elite is formed of "the five per cent of the population who know what five per cent means." The top jobs go to the top brains, and Payment by

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bottom people. The people at the bottom are not only treated as inferior: they *know* they are inferior. But to select the few is to reject the many, and in the meritocratic society new social tensions arise. Although the new working class no longer has men of outstanding intellectual ability, since these have been creamed off by selection, a Populist movement arises, consisting of dissident intellectuals, mainly women, who declare in the Chelsea Manifesto of the year 2009:

“The classless society would be one which both possessed and acted upon plural values. Were we to evaluate people, not according to their intelligence and their education, their occupation and their power, but according to their kindness and their courage, their imagination and sensibility, their sympathy and generosity, there could be no classes. Who would be able to say that the scientist was superior to the porter with admirable qualities as a father, and civil servant with unusual skill at gaining prizes superior to the lorry-driver with unusual skill at growing roses? The classless society would also be the tolerant society, in which individual differences were actively encouraged as well as passively tolerated, in which full meaning was at last given to the dignity of man. Every human being would then have equal opportunity, not to rise up in the world in the light of any mathematical measure, but to develop his own special capacities for leading a rich life.”

This is regarded as merely sentimental by the meritocrats of the future. Today it sounds platitudinous to the mind nourished by the classical socialist and anarchist thinkers, but the immense distance that we are from such a society illustrates how the fertile aspirations of educational reformers have been perverted by social and governmental pressures in the opportunity state, and how disastrously we have lost sight of the *individual* functions of education.

How far the notion of the “pool of ability” is from the idea of enabling the individual “to develop his own special capabilities for leading a rich life”. Who is to go fishing in the pool of ability? The state. For whose purposes is the pool to be dredged? The state’s. Are we really worried about pursuing equality of opportunity if it simply means the opportunity to become Top people? How can we possibly talk of parity of esteem, when a grammar school child receives 70% more per year in expenditure than a child in a secondary modern school and nearly double per school life? Especially when we remember that four-fifths of the population attend secondary modern schools and not grammar schools.

We need to affirm *today* the values implied in the imaginary Chelsea Manifesto. It is not a matter of whether or not a classless society is possible or whether status can be divorced from occupation, but simply one of affirming that “the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as much as the greatest he”. It means questioning the social functions that education plays in our society, and stressing the individual functions that it could play. It means affirming the autonomy of the pupil as a person, and not as a tiddler in the pool of ability, the autonomy of the teacher for what he can give his pupil, not for what he can produce to the specification of the government or Imperial Chemical Industries. It means focussing our attention on the classroom at the bottom of the educational hierarchy and not on the room at the top.

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## The ‘new wave’ in Britain

### NICOLAS WALTER

A NEW WAVE IS BREAKING on the shores of English literature—or, to be more precise, a new tide has been coming in during the last decade, and its waves are rushing up the beach one after the other. This is not to say that the traditional writers have in any way been superseded—in fact many pre-war writers are still producing work that shows no perceptible falling off at all. There are also many new writers who work in traditional or entirely personal patterns and have produced some of

the best work to appear since the War. In the same way, the current vogue for the verse of John Betjeman shows the stamina of poetic tradition despite all the work of Eliot and Pound, Lawrence and Auden, the “Apocalyptic” and the “Movement”. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe certain new literary methods and preoccupations coming into use, especially in fiction and drama, and it may be illuminating to see what—if anything—they have in common.

The two key novels in the New Wave are generally thought to be Kingsley Amis’s *Lucky Jim* (1954) and John Braine’s *Room at the Top* (1957), but it would be highly misleading to suppose that they are the only significant ones. They are actually both very good novels, with strong plots and straightforward characters and situations, but their significance lies chiefly in the very wide publicity they attracted. It was in a review of *Lucky Jim* that Walter Allen first pointed out that “A new hero has risen among us”—the intellectual tough or tough intellectual, who has retreated from aestheticism into philistinism, from political commitment into non-committal dissent, from exquisite sensibility into simply decency, and who is sensitive not to what is cruel or wicked, but to what is bogus or phoney. This New Hero rides on the crest of the New Wave.

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It was odd that Mr. Allen, who is himself a provincial writer of some distinction—his *All in a Lifetime* (1959) is an excellent novel—and who rightly compared *Lucky Jim* with John Wain’s *Hurry On Down* (1953), did not also point out that the New Hero almost always comes from the Provinces and is often obsessed by the idea of London. (It should be noted that most of the writers in the New Wave themselves come from the Provinces, especially the Midlands and the industrial north.) And it was odd that he did not compare *Lucky Jim* with another earlier novel, *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1950) by William Cooper (the pseudonym of Harry Hoff, who is five years younger than C. P. Snow but is in every other way very much like him in his career and literary ideas). The sad thing is that none of these three writers has ever done anything as good as his first novel, though Amis and Wain have also written some good poetry and criticism.

Yet another novel with a New Hero before *Lucky Jim* was *Under the Net* (1953) by Iris Murdoch, who differs from the other writers in the New Wave not only by being a woman but also by subsequently writing more conventional novels of a very high standard. Even *Under the Net* was different, its hero being rather like Gulley Jimson in Joyce Cary’s *The Horse’s Mouth* (1944) and more like Murphy in Samuel Beckett’s *Murphy* (1938). (This takes us back to the years immediately before the War, which is also the period in which the *Scenes from Provincial Life* take place—for the New Wave, the War exists only as an empty gap). It is possible at this point to make out two sides to the New Hero—the provincial *ingénu* who drifts, and the metropolitan *pícaro* who explores. The former appears as the hero of *Scenes from Clerical Life* and *Lucky Jim*, and then in Thomas Hinde’s *Happy as Larry\** (1957), Keith Waterhouse’s *Billy Liar* (1959) and Stan Barstow’s *A Kind of Loving* (1960); the hero of *Hurry on Down* is an *ingénu* who turns into a *pícaro*; and it is the *pícaro* who appears in *Under the Net* and then in J. P. Donleavy’s *The Ginger Man* (1955) and Colin MacInnes’s *City of Spades* (1957) and *Absolute Beginners* (1959).

The picaresque tradition is of course an old one in English literature, going back to the pioneers of the novel in the 18th Century and even further to the Elizabethans; so when the New Hero appears as a *pícaro* he is simply an old hero in modern dress. His importance in the New Wave is that in this guise he can represent an Outsider more thoroughly and convincingly than either the rather negative provincial *ingénu* or Colin Wilson’s unoriginal invention. He may be an American in Dublin, or an Irishman, African or teenager in London; he may be a real person, like Brendan Behan or Frank Norman; and it is no coincidence that Angus Wilson and Simon Raven write, as it were,

mental picaresque. With a little more courage Lucky Jim would become a *pícaro* himself. In every New Hero there is a rogue struggling to get out; and it is when he does so that some of the best post-war fiction has been written.

\*where he is a Londoner, for a change.

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As well as going out, the New Hero may go up. Give him a dose not of courage but of ambition, and you get John Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957). This remarkable New Wave novel harks back to great work like *Le Rouge et le Noir* and has been very successful. What makes it even more interesting is that the right-wing journalist George Scott has already described his own life in *Time and Place* (1956), revealing himself as a person not at all unlike Joe Lampton. Braine, alas, is yet another author who has never produced anything as good as his first novel. There is no doubt that the "mechanics of success", described by such different people as Colin Wilson and John Osborne, have a damaging effect on the later work of a successful young writer.

It is here that journalists have played their part in the New Wave. At first it looked as if the theatre was unaffected by changes in fiction. Up to 1955 the biggest sensation on the British stage since the War was *Waiting for Godot*, and semi-nonsensical fantasy has been booming ever since. As well as the work of Ionesco and Beckett himself, there have been many plays by new writers—Nigel Dennis's *Cards of Identity* (1956) and *The Making of Moo* (1957), N. F. Simpson's *A Resounding Tinkle* (1958) and *One-Way Pendulum* (1959), John Mortimer's *The Dock Brief* (1958) and *I Spy* (1958), Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1958) and *The Caretaker* (1960). But in 1956 John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* brought the New Wave roaring into the theatre, and it was at this point that the idiotic Fleet Street tag—"Angry Young Man"\*—was adopted and used freely when any writer under the age of 40 wrote anything at all unconventional. Exactly the same thing has happened more recently with the word "Beatnik", and very much the same fate overtook the young writers in the Thirties. The really irritating thing is that while Osborne *is* an angry young man, very few of the other people who have been given the title deserve it at all; Kingsley Amis and John Braine, for example, could be called impatient or conceited, but hardly angry in the way Lawrence and Orwell were angry. One genuinely angry young man is Dennis Potter, whose revealing book *The Glittering Coffin* (1960) showed a real New Hero coming from the provinces to Oxford and also showed how bad anger is for coherent writing (though Osborne can do it, as in his contribution to *Declaration*). In general the New Wave is not really an angry movement at all.

There is another angry young man, though, who has written good stuff. This is Alan Sillitoe, whose *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) and *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* (1959) are two of the best things in the New Wave. His heroes have the courage to be *pícaros*, but they prefer the bloody-minded life of semi-delinquents (sometimes not so "semi" either). His attitude is revolutionary anarchism verging on sheer nihilism, more extreme than any other New Wave writer except Osborne; but, significantly, they both remain individualists, giving full allegiance to no party or ideology. Indeed one of the most interesting things about the New Wave is that, while most of its

\*which did not apparently come from Leslie Paul's book of that name.

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members are left-wing and some give qualified support to the Labour Party or the nuclear disarmament campaign, there is no organised political philosophy to be found among them—they are what Amis called "political romantics", instinctive nonconformists. Dissent is far more characteristic of the New Wave than anger.

*Look Back in Anger* was the first play in the New Wave, and one of the worst. Osborne

followed up his success with *The Entertainer* (1957), which was even worse and was saved only by its nostalgic topicality and Olivier's acting. Since then his work—represented by a musical and a television play—has been more interesting than impressive. Probably his best work is to be found in his journalism (which resembles that of Kenneth Tynan) and in an earlier play written in collaboration with Anthony Creighton, *Epitaph for George Dillon*. Incidentally, it is worth noting that, had *The Ginger Man* been published in London rather than Paris, Donleavy might have received much of the publicity that went to Osborne, for he described a situation much like that of *Look Back in Anger* much more convincingly; the dramatised version of his novel didn't have nearly as much impact in 1959 as it would have had in 1956.

Osborne had been forestalled in another way too, for Brendan Behan's *The Quare Fellow* (1956), which opened in the same month as *Look Back in Anger*, was a better play and subsequently had more influence. The London theatres which produced these two plays—the Royal Court in Sloane Square and the Theatre Royal in Stratford—have been the double cradle of the theatrical New Wave (though the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry has also done valuable work). It is ironical that the predominantly provincial novelists and dramatists of the New Wave owe their success to publishing and theatrical companies in London.

Despite Osborne's example, things only began moving in 1958—the year of Behan's *The Hostage*, Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, Arnold Wesker's *Chicken Soup with Barley*, John Arden's *Live Like Pigs* and Willis Hall's *The Long and the Short and the Tall* (as well as plays of other kinds by Doris Lessing, Bernard Kops and Peter Shaffer, who are on the fringe of the New Wave). In 1959 came Frank Norman's musical *Fings Ain't Wot They Used t'Be*, John Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* and Arnold Wesker's *Roots*. In 1960 the tide fell a little, but there were still Arnold Wesker's *I'm Talking About Jerusalem*, Alun Owen's *Progress to the Park* and Shelagh Delaney's *The Lion in Love*. No doubt many of these plays will never be produced again, since they often depend more on being lively than on being well-written, but at least the deathly cosy hush of the ten years following the War has been shattered.

Many of these plays have been foolishly criticised for dealing with low life—middle-class adultery is still thought to be more elevating than working-class fornication. The simple reply to attacks on “kitchen sink drama” is that there is still plenty of drawing-room french-window nonsense in the West End to satisfy all the people who are offended

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by Brendan Behan or Shelagh Delaney. It might also be worth inquiring why murder and sudden death are preferable to crime and prostitution.

It has been far more difficult for the New Wave to invade the cinema than the theatre, partly for commercial and partly for social reasons—films involve large sums of money and large audiences. In general the British cinema is deplorably deficient in good creative work. There have been some recent films like *Woman in a Dressing Gown* and *The Man Upstairs*, but farce and melodrama usually win—as in *I'm All Right Jack* and *The Angry Silence*. Nevertheless, there have been the Free Cinema productions, linked in particular with the names of Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz, and there have been films of some of the novels and plays of the New Wave. On the whole these have been disappointing; the Osborne plays sound dreadfully artificial on the screen, and *Lucky Jim* is best forgotten; but *Room at the Top* was good, and many others are on the way. By far the best to date is Karel Reisz's production of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, which is certainly one of the best British films ever made. What one hopes for in the future is not so much a series of screen versions of books and plays as some creative film work along the lines of Free Cinema and the American film *Shadows*. The same is true of television, which could make up for the fact that serious fiction and drama are tabu for most of the population of the country, but shows few signs of doing so.

The first thing to say about what I have called the New Wave is that it is not in any way an organised movement—even less so than the Bloomsbury group or the left-wing poets in the

Thirties. More than any comparable literary movement, perhaps, its members are highly individualistic writers and people; though there are of course some cliques, notably that surrounding Colin Wilson (but then he scarcely belongs to the New Wave anyway). But the names I have mentioned do have more in common than being born mostly between 1922 and 1932 and becoming successful between 1950 and 1960. To begin with, they write mostly novels and plays (though Christopher Logue is a poet), and—as we have seen—they tend to come from the provinces and to write about provincial people. Geoffrey Gorer has noted that their heroes tend to marry above themselves. Many people have pointed out that they like to cock a snook at the Establishment but appreciate the approval of the Establishment if they can get it; Somerset Maugham called them “scum” but they are glad to get his prize if they can.

They are constantly preoccupied with certain problems, such as nuclear and colonial war, the tension between generations and that between classes. It will be objected that these are old problems, but the point is the way they are handled—the generation-struggle is not the open war of *Ann Veronica*, but more a matter of bewildered incomprehension; the class-struggle is not between capitalists and workers (or prefects and fags), but between the cultured and the uncultured; the accentless and the accented, the whites and the coloured—the haves and

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the have-nots defined in a subtler sense than Marx ever knew; and the attack on war is made not in the direct terms of Sassoon or Aldington, but in indirect and often allegorical terms.

The plays are, as might be expected, more poetic and rhetorical than the novels, and they tend to be more urgent and disturbing. Even so their messages are usually oblique—*The Hostage* and *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* are quite different from *Death of a Hero* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. (When, however, we are given realism, it is frighteningly realistic—compare *The Long and the Tall* and *the Short* with *Journey's End*). It is true to say that nearly all comment in the New Wave is oblique. The only thing that is always condemned outright is the bogus; the worst thing a New Hero can say about someone is, after Holden Caulfield, that he is “strictly phoney”. And even this condemnation must be spontaneous, for sophistication is nearly as bad as phoneyism—the New Wave owes more than it knows to Lawrence and Orwell. Its tone is personal rather than general, emotional rather than intellectual, insular rather than cosmopolitan (remember Amis's *I Like It Here*), wary rather than bold, ironical rather than idealistic.

But although the New Wave is not orthodox *littérature engagée*, it is “committed” all the same. It has already been noted that the authors are mostly left-wing, tending towards pacifism and individualism. Their commitment is essentially autonomous and antinomian, adhering to no ideology and demanding no shibboleths—it is commitment in the age of the Cold War, the Welfare State and the Affluent Society. The New Wave is above all an unorganised and muddled phenomenon. Even when it produces something more specific, the message is still highly personal—*I'm Talking about Jerusalem* is an odd socialist play, *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* is an odd revolutionary story, Mankowitz's *My Old Man's a Dustman* (1956) is an odd anarchist fable and required reading for anyone interested in modern anarchism. Everything is likely to be stood on its head: failure is interpreted as a form of unexpected success; laughter is better than tears; irony is better than anger.

I think the New Wave may turn out to be important. It represents an attempt to bring literature back into contact with life as it is lived (this is a particular concern of Arnold Wesker), and in effect to free English literature from wholly aesthetic preoccupations and—as John Holloway has pointed out—from continental influences. By rejecting recent tradition, its members have unwittingly returned to a tradition older in this country than either artistic elegance or thorough-going commitment—the tradition of Dekker and Defoe and Dickens, a narrow but deep tradition, red-blooded and rich, obstreperous and soft-centred, noisy and affectionate. Teenagers and the New Left and the Aldermaston Marches are more human and humane than Bright Young Things and the Popular Front and the Hunger Marches. Perhaps the rather confused and careless writers of the New

Wave have helped to make Britain itself more human and humane. The *picaro* with the heart of gold may for all we know be one of the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

[inside back cover]

**Paul Eltzbacher**

## **ANARCHISM**

Eltzbacher's *Anarchism*, though it has appeared in many languages, was last published in English fifty years ago. This new edition of Steven Byington's translation is edited by Dr. James J. Martin (author of *Men Against the State*) who has re-written and brought up to date the biographical sketches of the seven thinkers analysed by Eltzbacher, while in order to round out the picture of anarchism, and to introduce a current of anarchist thought not included in his study, an essay on "Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism" by the late Rudolf Rocker has been appended.

The seven thinkers studied are WILLIAM GODWIN, the 'father of anarchism', whose *Political Justice* published in 1793 was the first systematic exposition of anarchist thought; PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON, the first man to describe himself as an anarchist; MAX STIRNER, the German apostle of 'conscious egoism'; MICHAEL BAKUNIN, the Russian revolutionary, whose disputes with Marx in the First International marked a turning-point in socialist history; PETER KROPOTKIN, the most influential of anarchist thinkers, author of the sociological classic *Mutual Aid*, and founder of the anarchist paper "Freedom"; BENJAMIN R. TUCKER, a representative of the 19th century American school of individualist anarchism; and LEO TOLSTOY, whom many would be surprised to see classified as an anarchist, but whose philosophy of non-violent resistance to authority qualifies him for inclusion.

The writings of some of these thinkers are so inaccessible today that Eltzbacher's comparative study is invaluable to the student simply as an anthology of verbatim quotations of their ideas.

Those who seek a statement of modern anarchist views in the fields of the family, education, sexual, social and industrial relations, will not find it in Eltzbacher. But what they will find, in a period which calls for radical re-thinking and re-appraisal in political philosophy, is an objective analysis of a point of view which runs counter to every school of contemporary political thought.

The book was written at a time when the popular stereotype of an anarchist was that of a bomb-thrower. Half a century later, in the century of the total state, when the bomb and its possession is the determinant of the politics of the modern state, this study of seven thinkers whose common factor is opposition to the state as an institution, is more timely and more important than when it first appeared.

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