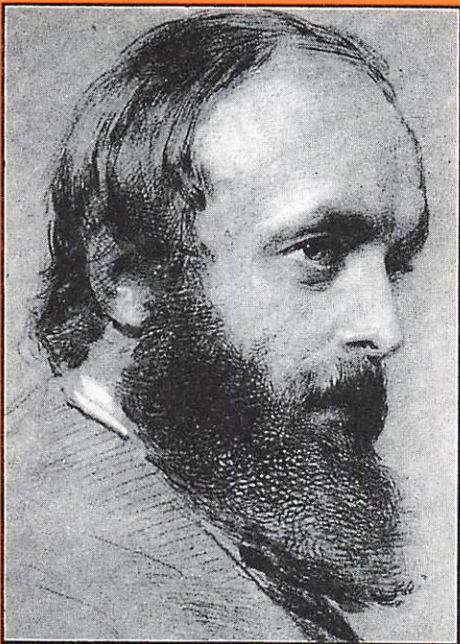


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The Third Marquess of Salisbury
1830 - 1903

The Cult of Novelty

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Homosexuality

E.J. Mishan

Philip Larkin

Keith Jacka

Political Correctness

Frank Ellis

Treason in Maastricht

Rodney Atkinson

The Death of Swiss Education

Manuela Freihofer

The Claridge Press

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Conservatives recoil from the thought that culture, religion and morality might expire in one generation, and not be passed to the next. For conservatives are social Lamarckians, who believe in the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Unfortunately, modern societies tend in the opposite direction. The three principal institutions through which our culture has been transmitted – school, family and church – are now in a state of crisis, and it often seems as though the crisis is deliberate.

Consider the disease of ‘political correctness’, described here by Frank Ellis. It is increasingly assumed by university teachers that the purpose of education is not to transmit knowledge, still less to preserve and justify a culture, but to bring about the kind of conformity in speech and sentiment that was described by Orwell in 1984. Manifest falsehoods concerning race, sex and culture have been programmed into the system, to become unquestioned and unquestionable axioms of the new curriculum. Students are encouraged to renounce their native English in favour of an academic Newspeak, using ‘she’ in place of ‘he’, ‘gender’ in place of ‘sex’, ‘gay’ in place of ‘homosexual’, and sprinkling their ungainly prose with such neologisms as ‘empower’, ‘engender’, ‘homophobia’, and of course the ubiquitous ‘racism’ and ‘sexism’, which meaningless words express the force of a new pseudo-morality.

Viewed from outside this development has its comic aspect; and the feeble-mindedness of those who support it may persuade us to ignore the phenomenon as a passing fashion. However, when the rising generation is routinely told that traditional society was patriarchal and oppressive, that women have been de-natured and rendered ‘invisible’ by men, that homosexuality is morally indistinguishable from heterosexuality, that ‘gender’ is a ‘social construct’, and monogamous marriage the nearest thing to sexual perversion – and a thousand other things which are in truth the flimsiest of speculations but which must nevertheless be accepted on pain of social ostracism – it is surely reasonable to fear that university education is at an end. Certainly, in the atmosphere induced by Political Correctness, it is hard to envisage a return to the ‘set books’ so eloquently advocated by Bruce Charlton, even though, as every conservative realizes, it is formal and disciplined study of this kind that

is the gateway to intellectual freedom.

Manuela Freihofer’s reflections on the Swiss system of schooling make abundantly clear that the ‘crisis’ in British education is not confined to Britain, and ought not to be attributed, as it is so often attributed, to the peculiarities of our system. It infects the entire ‘Western’ world – the world whose laws and institutions grew from some version of the Christian religion, and whose culture is founded on respect for the individual as the image of incarnate God. The will to educate has everywhere given way to an abject flattery of childhood, a reluctance to appear ‘judgemental’, and a radical questioning of all traditional forms of knowledge.

Even if we cannot treat the causes, but only the symptoms, of this malaise, we can at least try to understand those causes. Aleksander Solzhenitsyn shows us, in his poignant essay, a profound truth about the modern condition. Novelty has stormed the modern psyche, and finally overwhelmed it. The need to be ‘distracted from distraction by distraction’ has made us heartless and headless, indifferent alike to those who come after us and those who went before. Pleasure vanishes in the instant, and novelty exists only for the moment in which it ceases to be new. Yet such unreal goals are everywhere pursued and recommended, as though they were the key to lasting happiness.

‘Neophilia’ and hedonism are the roots of the ‘gay’ culture described by Ezra Mishan. It is now politically incorrect to doubt that the homosexual act is comparable to the act of love between man and woman; what was once a source of shame has become an object of pride and defiance. Moral knowledge has been wilfully jettisoned for pleasure’s sake. However, far more depended upon traditional sexual morality than it is politically correct to mention. If, as seems likely, public debate continues to be censored by those ‘gay’ activists who have most to lose by it, monogamy and marriage will come to seem as quaint as plus-fours and pony-traps. The monogamous marriage will become the preserve of ‘savages’, as Huxley called them in *Brave New World*. The ordinary citizen will then side with Plato, and press for battery farms in which children will be reared by the state. After all, it is the state which pays for these monsters, and it is the state that is obliged to protect the ordinary citizen from their violence.

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Conservative Journals: *Calvinism Today*

Calvinism has had a bad press, and has still not quite recovered from James Hogg's devastating assault in *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. It is easy to forget (and especially easy for an Englishman, for whom Calvinism will always be associated with the most intractable features of Scottish culture, to forget) that Calvinism has been a bastion of law, morality and Christian values throughout the modern period of our civilisation. More than any other protestant thinker, Calvin took seriously the need to sustain a legal and political order, and to make full allowance for man's social nature when calling him to God. Those parts of the world which have depended upon the Calvinist version of Christianity for their faith and moral discipline – including much of Scotland, Holland and Switzerland – are now greatly in need of a Calvinist revival. And this renewal will in turn depend upon a revival of the fine tradition of theological speculation and Christian casuistry by which the Calvinist churches have been distinguished.

Calvinism Today addresses this need, in vigorous and scholarly articles which never lose sight of modern realities. As the editor, Stephen Perks, writes in the issue for April 1992: 'In our day the Christian world-view is giving way to

a multi-cultural emphasis accompanied by a moral relativism; the only uniting factor in our society is a godless humanism. The result is increasing anarchy, since without belief in a moral order based on ultimate principles of right and wrong, law and order inevitably break down...'. The journal does not merely take a stand against this moral anarchy, and against the revival of paganism in such fads as the Green movement; it attempts to explore the foundations of Christian belief from a Calvinist perspective, and to show the dependence of the rule of law on an underlying theological conception of human society.

You do not have to be a Calvinist to relish articles with such titles as 'A Critique of Christian non-theonomic conceptions of civil government'; nor do you have to be a Christian to see the point of 'Thinking Biblically' in a society which has never thought in any other way (and which has therefore now by and large ceased to think). *Calvinism Today* is a journal from which all conservatives can learn.

Calvinism Today appears quarterly, and is available, price £10 for four issues, from P.O. Box 1, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO21 1HP.

A New Word Order for a Brave New World

Frank Ellis considers the Leninist roots of political correctness.

Professors should have less freedom of expression than writers and artists, because professors are supposed to be creating a better world

Professor Barbara Johnson
University of Harvard

The apostles of political correctness (PC) claim the moral and intellectual high ground in the struggle to liberate the oppressed and rid the world of unhappiness. In the century which has experienced Stalin, Hitler and Mao their messianic fervour has an ominous ring. Indeed, PC may be seen as just the latest refuge for the utopian social engineer. Yet, PC did not spontaneously erupt, as it were, from the primeval, academic slime. Three factors account for the particular virulence of PC: one is the rampant American impulse to enforce equality; the second is post-modernism; and the third is the utopian ideology of Marxism-Leninism. I propose to examine the influence of the latter.

The Soviet experiment with language, literature and thought control is profoundly instructive for understanding the aims and methods of the politically correct movement. Refined over a seventy year period, Soviet practices, it is obvious, have not ceased to be employed with the fall of communism. Far from it, these methods and assumptions have in many instances been successfully adopted and modified by the proponents of political correctness, the social, moral and intellectual agenda of which is no less hostile to Western culture and civilization than its now thoroughly discredited progenitor.

For Lenin and subsequent leaders it was an article of faith, an absolute right, that the Party should exercise total control over the intellectual and cultural life of the people. In the seminal work *What is to be Done?* (1902) Lenin laid the foundations for the future apparatus of agitation, propaganda and the dissemination of information.

Lenin was acutely aware that the state's ability to control and to manipulate language would be vital for the new society. A Soviet language was desirable. It would facilitate the transmission of Marxist-Leninist ideology and would exclude hostile and potentially destabilising thoughts and ideas.

A distinguishing feature of the Soviet language is the almost endless supply of neologisms and slogans which serve as the carriers of the party's value judgements. New words and acronyms create the illusion of dynamic change, of a new society which has broken with the old world for good. Since the language has now been nationalised words can no longer have a meaning independent of the state. In such circumstances the leader's choice of words is crucial. Words used by the leader acquire a special, magical significance. However, cliché-slogans such as Down with Imperialism! Long Live the Workers! Workers of the World Unite! and Death to the Fascist, Imperialist Warmongers! soon lose any substance. Repeated *ad nauseam*, they are a verbal reflex which suppresses thought. One of the first scholars to note this perversion was Grigoriy Vinokur, who wrongly believed that

his leaders wished to be warned of the dangers. (A more recent study of the Soviet language, and one which makes an important contribution to our understanding of PC, is Françoise Thom's *Newspeak: The Language of Soviet Communism*.)

Soviet words not only created the illusion of an incipient, better world, they also masked the real nature of Soviet society. Stalin's era abounds in ideological stereotypes: 'wreckers', 'enemy of the people', 'all out collectivisation', 'kolkhoz', 'rootless cosmopolitans', 'kulaks', 'sub-kulaks', 'Rightists' and 'Trotskyists'. There are many more.

Enslaving the word had profound implications for the growth of Soviet literature. With Stalin's rise to power every effort was made to bring writers under strict party control. The literary doctrine of socialist realism, introduced in 1934, was the logical consequence. Henceforth writers were, in the words of Stalin, to be engineers of the soul. They were to become full time propagandists in the service of the state.

Socialist realism has frequently and rightly been dismissed as crude propaganda. But the exigencies of propaganda and agitation do not provide an entirely satisfactory explanation as to why it was used to bludgeon people into acceptance of unpleasant facts. At the heart of socialist realism lies the belief that the language and literature of the Marxist-Leninist state were blueprints for the new order to which non-Marxist-Leninist patterns of behaviour, thought and culture must and could be made to conform. Where

non-revolutionary reality did not conform, it too was bludgeoned, along with the very idea of truth and knowledge independent of authority. We need look no further than the grotesque contradictions between Soviet reality, as it existed, and as interpreted by ideology.

By 1934, with millions of corpses scattered around the Ukraine and the whole ghastly enterprise of collectivisation shrouded in silence and lies in the media, words and ideas such as 'truthful', 'historically concrete depiction', 'ideological remoulding' and 'spirit of socialism' acquired quite specific meanings: to be 'truthful' you must write that collectivisation had been welcomed by the peasants, who thanked comrade Stalin for his beneficence, not that there had been massive resistance; historically concrete depiction was a vision of tractors and bountiful harvest, not of squalor and party incompetence in town and country; ideological remoulding meant that those who had any doubts were now convinced, not that they had been exterminated in millions; whereas the spirit of socialism was to mean that life had become better and more cheerful, not that the survivors had been cowed into total submission.

During the war period, Soviet writers and journalists enjoyed a measure of freedom which would have been unthinkable in the thirties. The bitter struggle for survival on the Eastern front forced the party to make concessions at home and abroad. However, with Germany defeated Stalin was able to disavow the tacit promise, given when defeat seemed likely, that life would be better after the war. Strenuous efforts were made by the party to purge Soviet society of foreign influences which had crept in as a result of wartime cooperation. The campaign was particularly savage on the cultural front. Many writers and poets were accused of harbouring reactionary ideas. Personal attacks on the satirist Mikhail Zoshchenko and the poet Anna Akhmatova were vicious even by Soviet standards. Novels which offended the censors were either discarded or rewritten. Aleksandr Fadeev was forced to rewrite his war novel about Soviet

partisans to bring it into line with current party thinking, and Vasilii Grossman's long Stalingrad novel underwent twelve drafts — an unprecedented bureaucratic pummelling — before it was passed fit for publication. The official interpretation of the war after 1945 was in the words of Matthew Gallagher, ... 'one of the most audacious efforts ever undertaken by the Soviet leadership to tailor history to political prescription'.

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Accompanying the campaign to rewrite the war was an equally mendacious assertion of Soviet genius in practically every sphere of scientific and intellectual endeavour. Radio, the internal combustion engine, radar, steam engines and jet planes were, it was claimed, the discoveries of Soviet scientists. Charlatans such as Trofim Lysenko, Ignatiy Kazakov and Olga Lepeshinskaya were hailed as scientific giants, while men of outstanding talent were ridiculed and arrested. Quantum mechanics were viewed with suspicion and Einstein's discoveries were not taken seriously by some because they were at odds with dialectical materialism. Scientists or scholars who paid too much attention to the work of their Western colleagues were, in an adumbration of the sin of 'Eurocentrism' in our time, accused of 'kowtowing to the West'. Overshadowing this proclamation of Soviet genius stood Stalin. No scholar was safe, no article could be accepted, without some reference to the greatest genius of them all. In military strategy, genetics, biology, history, philosophy, Marxism-Leninism, art and linguistics, Stalin was the final authority.

The brutal censorship of the spoken and written word, thought and deed

which had been achieved by the time of Stalin's death and which continued until the accession of Gorbachev has not been without its admirers in the West. The collusion of Western academics, intellectuals, journalists and writers such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Shaw, Wells, Duranty, Brecht, Sartre and many more, in promoting the myth of the new civilization, enabled the Soviet leadership to prevaricate and to lie on a massive scale about the war in the countryside, the famine which followed and the purges. Evidence which contradicted Soviet claims was invariably dismissed as anti-Soviet and consequently unreliable. (Witness the reception given to Viktor Kravchenko's account of life in Stalin's Russia, which was published immediately after the war.) Western collusion in the Soviet lie has left a corrosive legacy. It corrupted far too many among later generations into believing that mendacity and distortion were surer foundations for a better world than intellectual rigour and honesty.

For the Soviet scholar, as Gayle Hollander noted in her study of Soviet political indoctrination, 'political correctness' was 'an integral part of scholarly success'. In view of what occurred in Eastern Europe in 1989, it is a perverse irony that such a criterion is gaining acceptance on both sides of the Atlantic. Still less encouraging is the fact that the atmosphere in Soviet universities at the time of the fabricated Doctors' plot of 1952-53, as recorded by one of its victims, Yakov Rapoport, bears a disturbing resemblance to the coerced uniformity on the American campus regarding questions of race, sex, homosexuality and culture:

Many professors, whether Jewish or not, complained that while delivering lectures, they were constantly apprehensive that they might use a phrase that could be misconstrued and give a pretext for accusations of political distortion. There were observers present at lectures whose sole concern was to catch the speaker in some "cosmopolitan perversion". Some secretly brought tape recorders.

In the 90s read "politically incorrect

utterance" instead of "cosmopolitan perversion".

Precisely because it holds out the promise of utopia based on a cleansed language, PC attracts the allegiance of a motley crew of narrow interest groups and self-designated minorities. This loose alliance has greatly facilitated the spread of PC beyond the university. Now, if you are too fat, too thin, black, female, homosexual, Hispanic, disabled, too old, or just plain dim-witted, all your ills are due to the language and culture of the white, middle-class, heterosexual male. Despite the multitude of interests which PC embraces, the language of race, sex and culture has attracted the most attention.

Race is without doubt the most explosive issue on the PC agenda, being manipulated with great skill and ruthlessness. The United States, despite masses of civil rights legislation, seems unable to eradicate the impression, assiduously fostered by many academics, of universal racial intolerance and inequality. According to the critics the ethos of intolerance and oppression permeates American society. With the rise of PC the English language also stands accused. It is the target of vigorous reform.

In the current climate great confusion — perhaps hypocrisy would be a better choice of word — surrounds the use of the word 'black'. 'Black' and its derivatives are thrown back at white society as a curse, proof positive that English is riddled with racism. Yet in certain contexts the word 'black' becomes a source of pride and self-esteem, almost an ethical or moral category, as witnessed by the growth of the black English industry, or the claims made on behalf of black Africa, which for breathtaking disregard of attested historical facts rival the *Zhdanovshchina*. When used in connection with organisations such as the Black Panthers, the Black Sash or Black Power, the word black implies something entirely positive.

Manipulation of language has long been evident in the strident demands of homosexuals and those who claim to speak for them. Homosexuals prefer to be known as "gay" rather than homosexual. Homosexual is neutral. In an

age of compulsory equality such neutrality would, one would have thought, have much to commend it. But homosexuals seem to be repelled by the scientific objectivity, the perceived coldness of the word 'homosexual'. They wish to come in from the cold. It is for this reason that they have co-opted the word "gay".

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For all the logical and semantic objections to "gay" the word has been astonishingly successful in insinuating itself into the vocabulary of everyday speech as an alternative to homosexual. Monosyllabic, easily remembered, positive sounding, it has none of the cool indifference of 'homosexual'. Furthermore, it erodes the distinction between natural and unnatural sexual behaviour which is implicit in 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual'.

'Gay' has also brought about a definite change in the meaning of 'heterosexual'. There is little doubt that 'heterosexual' itself has become a term of abuse. Homosexuals are convinced that the vast majority of heterosexuals do not condone their method of sexual gratification. They are probably right. Consequently, 'heterosexual' defines the enemy, his society, culture and civilization. Henceforth, it is not enough for heterosexuals to adopt a stance of neutrality. Neutrality is really camouflaged hostility. They too must join in the chorus of condemnation of white, middle-class, heterosexual society. Lenin's belief that society could be understood in terms of who does what to whom (*kto-kogo?*) is echoed in the militancy of gay activists.

'Heterosexual' is but one step away

from 'homophobic'. If 'gay' defines the way in which homosexuals wish to be seen, then 'homophobic' is the antonym designating reaction. The origins of 'homophobic' are clear enough, but what of its meaning? Is it right to describe those who do not approve of, or criticise, homosexual behaviour, as homophobic? Would it not be more accurate to say that they do not accept the moral, ethical and intellectual claims for equal recognition with heterosexuals which are the driving force behind 'gay rights'?

The levelling of language in the name of equality and equal opportunity is a primary aim of feminism and its many offshoots. In their capacity as midwives of the sexless language, precursor to the new era of equality, feminists have set themselves ambitious targets. Gender-specific language is deemed inappropriate. As with so many politically correct ideas the language of prescription is revealing.

Words such as "gender-specific"/"gender-free", "logocentric", "phallogocentric", "non-traditional age student", "homophobic", "gynophobic", to list a few, successfully mimic the language of the hard sciences. They create an illusion of objectivity and impartiality, which in turn masks the prejudices and unsubstantiated assumptions of the speaker. Such words are little better than political slogans. The masking effect created by pseudo-scientific neologisms can be demonstrated quite easily. Consider these two examples: 'Gender-specific language reinforces the phallogocentric assumptions of the patriarchal establishment. The patriarchal establishment is homo- and gynophobic'. Translated from the jargon of political correctness this means: 'Grammatical gender is a ruse to help penis-obsessed old men run the country. Straight men hate gays and women.'

Scientific rigour, as opposed to charlatanry, demands that a problem be stated as succinctly and lucidly as possible. Pretentious language obscures the problem. If feminists believe that grammatical gender is in some way related to a cult of penis worship, they should say so in plain English. Then historians and archaeologists could

engage in a fruitful debate about whether the disproportionately large phalluses which adorn many ancient drawings, cave paintings and landscaping are fertility symbols or guides to grammar.

The gender cleansers are tenaciously at work in Britain as well. In the English Department at the University of Loughborough staff and students have been advised not to use loaded phrases to illustrate points in English. 'John ate the fish' was cited as being typical of phrases that '... exclusively draw on male-oriented experience'. Eradicating male Christian names merely creates another problem. Men might reasonably argue that a phrase such as 'Sally ate the fish' is typical of phrases that exclusively draw on female-oriented experience.

At the University of Middlesex certain members of staff have called for banning words such as 'shepherdess' and 'lioness'. The suffix *-ess*, they argue, stereotypes women as wicked. If adopted their suggestions would make it a disciplinary offence for members of staff to use say, 'charwoman' instead of 'charworker'. Justification for these changes seems fair enough: 'It is a recognition that society has changed and women's status has changed, so the language we use should be changed with it.'

Discarding the suffix *-ess* is of course only the beginning. Linguists studying the field of phono-aesthetics and poets have long identified certain clusters of consonants as having a meaning value. The cluster *sl-* generates a whole host of ambivalent, dubious and sex-related exemplars: *sloth*, *slut*, *sleazy*, *slimy*, *slob*, *slinky* and *slag*. We can hardly doubt that those who wish to rid the language of the *-ess* suffix will be any less determined to see the *sl-* cluster go the same way.

Words including the cluster *sn-*, such as *sneaky*, *snotty*, *snidey*, *sneer*, *snob* and *snigger* would suffer the same fate, especially *snigger*, twice damned, and for which there can be no mercy in the new orthodoxy. We are only one step away from banning alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, homonyms and homophones altogether. Why not outlaw poetry?

Far more serious questions are raised. The status of Hitler and Stalin is not quite what it used to be either, but no one suggests that we eliminate the abbreviations, acronyms and words associated with their rule. 'Gestapo',

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'NKVD', 'Final Solution', 'The Terror', 'enemy of the people' belong to the language of totalitarianism. Totalitarianism cannot be understood without them. Germany's status has changed, for she is now a fully fledged liberal democracy. This does not justify expunging the vocabulary of totalitarianism to reflect Germany's changed status. To rid the language of *Kristallnacht* and *Endlösung* does not help the process of healing and atonement. On the contrary, it prevents it from taking place.

The campaign to purge the language of phallocentrism follows many paths. For example, the ubiquitous patriarchal metaphor is at the centre of arguments concerning the desirability or irrelevance of standards in spelling and grammar. Grammar and spelling are frequently interpreted as an extension of patriarchal authority into the medium of language. If 'reading and writing are merely technologies of control' (Houston Baker Jr, professor of human relations at the University of Pennsylvania), then to attack grammar and spelling is — in this fallacious analogy — a blow for freedom. Radi-

cal feminism's hunt for the elusive patriarchal demon obscures a key question: does the erosion of standards in spelling and grammar prevent or further the manipulation of language?

Grammar is a powerful tool, a demonstration of the intrinsic richness and versatility of human language. Grammar, because it imposes order on chaos, creates consistency, which in turn permits us to predict and comprehend: uncertainties are removed; clarity ensues; reasoned discourse, the basis of civilization, becomes possible.

The rules of grammar and spelling are not immutable. With time they change. One of the functions of these rules lies in the fact that they retard the pace of change. In the absence of any retarding influence language would become something ephemeral, as much at the mercy of the advertising executive as the social engineer. Experience and knowledge could not be transmitted from generation to generation in a consistent and accessible form. Clarity of thought and expression would be impossible. The net result would be chaos. The erosion of spelling standards and of adherence to the canons of grammar furthers this chaos. It favours the *tabula rasa* of the ideologues, who, armed with their lexicons of correctness would step into the void, confident that no alternative standard would challenge them. This is why reading and writing, indispensable elements in the training of intellectual independence, together with grammar and spelling, must be ridiculed and undermined. They bar the way to the implementation of the new code of censorship.

To some benighted souls the established canon of Western literature and thought — from Homer to Beckett — is, like the English language, an instrument of oppression. In the measured words of Professor Stanley Hauerwas of Duke Divinity School: 'The canon of great literature was created by high-Anglican ass-holes to underwrite their social class'. The classics of world literature are dismissed as the products of dead, white, European males (class enemies?). In the place of Plato, Socrates, Bacon, Shakespeare, Kant and Tolstoy stu-

dents are to study the works of female, homosexual and black writers. As in the field of equal opportunities, race and the favoured method of sexual gratification are the criteria of approval. Those who oppose this 'multi-cultural' approach are guilty of Eurocentrism or the heinous crime of élitism.

A less obvious, but no less important reason underwrites the attack on the idea of an accepted canon of literature. Great writers are masters of their medium. They are our teachers. From them we learn to respect the meaning of words. Their inventiveness and stylistic flair are not intended to hide the truth, but to uncover it. As such their works are a constant reproach to those who wish to manipulate and to corrupt the language for ideological reasons. They are, as the Russian people discovered from their own terrible experience, a shelter from ideological fallout. As long as Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy could still be read, the lie could never achieve total victory. Able to read the writers of the Golden Age, Russians kept the idea of freedom alive. Thus, while Socrates, Thucydides, Aristotle, Hume, Swift, Nietzsche, Steinbeck and Hemingway are still read in our universities, there will always be an eloquent reproach to the pseudo-humanitarians.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the founders of the West's intellectual tradition and those who have followed in their footsteps have been the target of so much crude deconstruction and uninformed analysis. Dr Elaine Hobby (University of Loughborough) assures us that: 'ideas about "good writing" help support many of the values of the establishment, of white, heterosexual, middle-class men.'

'White, heterosexual, middle-class establishment' is in the same category of hackneyed expression as Death to the Fascist Warmongers! or Death to Capitalism! The words are shells, which serve as a code for the initiated. Hatred is aroused through the emotional associations invested in each word.

'Middle class' and 'establishment' are no less terms of abuse when uttered by those who hate the glories of Western culture and civilization than 'white'

and 'heterosexual'. Such hatred makes sense when one considers the long association of the middle class with artistic achievement — an achievement now dismissed as the product of dead, white, European males.

Equally vague is the assembly of connotations which comes with the word "establishment". It can mean a collection of interests, institutions and classes which represent tradition and authority. In Britain, the Church of England, the armed forces, the professions, the Royal Family and the financial institutions of the city of London would all be considered part of the establishment. However, the great advantage as a term of abuse lies in the open ended nature of its make-up. To quote Oliver Stallybrass:

Its [the establishment's] precise composition, however, tends to reflect the nature and extent of the changes desired, and the sources of opposition or hostility encountered or expected, by the person using the term. It is thus likely to mean very different things on the lips of, say, a self-made millionaire, radical politician, a hippie, and a member of the Angry Brigade.

Combined with the words 'white', 'middle-class', 'heterosexual' and 'male', 'establishment' becomes a word bereft of clarity in a chorus of hate. 'Establishment' masks the speaker's sense of inferiority and justifies the warning: 'At its least precise it may merely mean everyone richer or more powerful than the speaker'. (Stallybrass).

Venomous clichés help to mystify and to intimidate the sceptic. They are designed to prevent rational enquiry. If the speaker had said 'white, straight, bourgeois, male enemy' instead of the speciously objective 'white, heterosexual, middle-class' she would at least be understood. Slogans impede understanding. At best, 'white, heterosexual, middle-class, establishment' is some vague, pseudo-scientific, catch-all term of abuse. At worst it is prejudice, akin to formalised anti-Semitism. In fact the feminist obsession with the 'white, male, middle-class establishment' belongs to the same order of conspiracy theory as Hitler's obsession

with the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Hitler at least had the virtue of clarity. He made it quite clear whom he hated and what he sought to destroy.

Another sleight of hand is the insinuated assumption that 'middle class' equals 'establishment'. Nor is the evidence favourable to the claim that conventional ideas about good writing support the white establishment. Attacks on middle-class activity and influence have been frequent themes of nineteenth and twentieth-century writers. The works of Dickens and Tolstoy — many more could be cited — abound in hostility towards the theory and practice of capitalism and economic liberalism. Their writing leaves us in no doubt that the white, male, literary, conspiracy theory is nonsense. Moreover, if supporting the white, heterosexual, middle-class establishment is indeed a criterion of good writing, then it is quite clear that a significant body of Dickens's and Tolstoy's writing was simply not good writing.

Works of literature deemed unacceptable are as likely to be rewritten as brushed aside. If the offending book is too famous to be tampered with it can be reinterpreted or accompanied with an exegesis of the current orthodoxy, a standard Soviet ploy.

Sponsored by the *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, a group of feminist theologians have compiled The Women's Bible Commentary. It emerges that Eve, Mary Magdalene and Jezebel are the victims of male traducement. Adam is a weakling, as is Jezebel's husband. Jesus behaves like "a dominant male". It is even claimed that the donkey which carried Christ into Jerusalem was female. The issue is not whether the Bible should remain immune from the attentions of new scholarship — it should not — but whether such scholarship can improve upon existing standards. Do we learn anything? Feminist theology is based on a genetic fallacy. It assumes that flaws in traditional Biblical scholarship have arisen because of male bias. Granted, scholarship in any discipline may betray bias, but is this due to specifically male bias, or simply to the bias from which both men and women are prone to suffer?

Bias is further evident in the fact that the theologians in question are not merely theologians, but feminist theologians, with a declared interest in restoring the allegedly tarnished record of their Biblical sisters. Thus they bring a set of dubious assumptions and prejudices to their chosen field of study. The fact that they inadvertently or intentionally declare their prejudice by appending 'feminist' to 'theologian' deserves no credit. Declared or undeclared, prejudice remains prejudice. We are entitled to be sceptical. To put it another way, could we rely on an historian who was avowedly Nazi to write an account of the Final Solution? He might even argue that he was expected to investigate something that had not taken place. Feminist theology belongs to the same order of pseudo-scholarship as Lysenkoist biology, Black English, Nordic physics, Stalinist linguistics, eco-feminism or socialist realism: it substitutes learning with special pleading.

The attack on Western culture which lies at the very core of PC is steeped in hypocrisy. It is intellectually dishonest to dismiss Plato and Shakespeare as 'dead, white European males', but simultaneously avail oneself of the technological and scientific benefits of Western civilization. Plato and Aristotle laid the foundations for the discoveries of Galileo, Newton, Einstein and Hawking, which for better or for worse have shaped the modern world. The totally committed anti-Eurocentrist would have to live in a mud hut in a world without computers, electricity, books, the Pill, screening for breast cancer and the likelihood that a cure will be found for AIDS.

With its indefatigable commitment to churning out any number of misleading, sometimes hilarious and often grotesque euphemisms PC's revolt against the many and undeniable successes of Western culture and civilization demonstrates a remarkable affinity with Marxism-Leninism. Attitudes towards language leave no doubt as to the common ground: change the language and you will change reality. This idea did not originate with the politically correct movement. Belief in

the supernatural powers of certain words is the stuff of legend and sorcery: it is as old as language itself. In the twentieth century its most determined exponents have been the infernal theocracies of National Socialism and Marxism-Leninism, especially the latter.

New words are constantly entering a language. They reflect cultural, economic and scientific needs and will be used according to the extent to which they meet these needs. If they fail, new words will replace them. Their usage cannot be compelled, nor will they be made to disappear down the memory hole. Such words are distinct from the glossary of political correctness whose theorists seek to impose neologisms by appeal to social justice, and where that fails by intimidation. Ultimately, there can be no peaceful coexistence between the language of the hated patriarch and the new medium of sexual, racial and multicultural empowerment. Nor is there anything new in the academic spinelessness and chicanery which make it possible for PC to flourish. Those traditionally responsible for ensuring that the pursuit of truth takes place in a spirit of open enquiry are often among the first to thrust themselves forward, to spit and to trample on the very freedoms without which no university, or the society that supports it, can function. The society which sanctions this behaviour lends succour to the mob, disenfranchises the citizen and empowers the tyrant.

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Sophist's Corner

Don't say

Normal, to describe non-disabled people.

The disabled (not a homogeneous group, separate from the rest of society; this focuses on disability as people's defining feature).

Affliction, handicap

Spastics, epileptics (a medically imposed label is a stigma and only serves to undermine people's rights)

Mental handicap

Mental age of

Victim of, crippled by, suffering from, afflicted by

Wheelchair-bound, confined to a wheelchair.

'Deaf' as a blanket term

The blind.

Do say

Disabled people (which emphasises that they are disabled by the way society and the environment are arranged)

Impairment, condition, disorder, difficulty.

People with cerebral palsy, people with epilepsy.

Learning difficulties, learning disabilities, learning-disabled.

Severe or profound learning difficulties.

Person who has, person with

Wheelchair user, uses a wheelchair, has impaired mobility.

Partially deaf, profoundly deaf, as appropriate. Some people in the deaf community prefer to use 'the Deaf' as a political term, emphasising that they are a linguistic minority, *not* a disabled group.

Blind or partially sighted person, person with little or no sight, with visual impairment — to use the appropriate term. Vague and cumbersome terms like 'visually challenged' serve no purpose.

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Death by Depressive Degrees

Keith Jacka looks at the poetry of Philip Larkin

Man hands on misery to man.
It deepens like a coastal shelf
Get out as early as you can,
And don't have any kids yourself:

A friend of mine had been reading the letters of Philip Larkin. As a young man the poet had seen, carved on the tombstone of an ancestor bearing the same name as himself, some lines of conventionally fulsome piety. This had made him want to vomit, he wrote in his letter. My friend commented, laughing, that Larkin's characteristic tone had been set very early. My response was not in accord: 'dreary negative a miserable bugger...'. Not at all, I was informed. Larkin was a major poet, a great poet even; not negative but rather a writer notable for 'unflinching honesty'. No meeting of minds here. The subject was dropped.

I went away and ruminated. My response had not been frivolous or idly opinionated. I had read a few of the poems. Enough to know that Larkin was a fine craftsman, had a good ear, an exact use of words and a sense of form. The craft was there; it was the vision I couldn't stomach, a vision that was predominantly and deliberately grey. Monochrome grey can have an austere beauty when it is the expression of profound insight, brightness of colour burnt out by long and intense experience. What I saw was not that, not profound or intense but instead, it seemed to me, timorous, petulant, june: a monotone of decay and failure, an insistence that all life is like that and only the stupids can deny it.

And yet over the years it was Larkin's name that was most often mentioned when I asked English people whom they thought was their best contemporary poet. Until now I had passed this off: if the English were irremediably deranged, hell-bent on

racial and national suicide by relentless self-denigration, then there was nothing to be done. Now, having lived here for many years, I am not so sure. There is the question of accuracy, of truth. He may be the best recent poet. Is he a major poet? Secondly, self-contempt and self-denigration are psychic drugs, but not food. You get hooked but returns diminish and you may want to kick the habit. It seemed best to go to the poems themselves, to read them carefully and thoroughly with, as it is said, an open mind. (Meaning, as I see it, prejudice, self-knowledge, sympathy and detachment all at full stretch.) What follows is the result of this reading. The text used is the standard one: *Collected Poems*, edited by Anthony Thwaite.

At an early age the poet's voice is distinct and easily identifiable. Take the opening stanzas of this self-dating poem: 'On Being Twenty-six' (p.24):

I feared these present years,
The middle twenties,
When deftness disappears,
And each event is
Freighted with a source-encrusting
doubt,
And turned to drought.
I thought: this pristine drive
Is sure to flag
At twenty-four or -five;
And now the slag
Of burnt-out childhood proves that I
was right.
What caught alight
Quickly consumed in me
As I foresaw.
Talent, felicity —
These things withdraw,
And are succeeded by a dingier crop
That come to stop;

The metre is classic seventeenth-century, the handling masterly; any change would be a loss. But as for what he is saying: 'deftness disappears' 'Tal-

ent, felicity withdraw'. At twenty-six? (Not fifty-six.) Does he really mean it, or is it a pose? The poem continues in similar vein, and ends thus:

I kiss, I clutch,
Like a daft mother, putrid
Infancy,
That can and will forbid
All grist to me
Except devaluing dichotomies:
Nothing, and paradise.

This is no pose; this is the real thing. In times past, when language was more pictorial, this world would have been immediately recognised as one of the outer regions of hell. Now we speak the scientific bureaucratic tongue and talk of emotional deprivation, of pathology.

If childhood contains no element of living satisfying memory, if it is never a source of strength and comfort but is instead mere burnt-out slag, dead waste; if infancy, the very ground of thought and feeling, if even this is corrupted and 'putrid', so that inner life becomes a despairing oscillation between a meaningless void and a mirage of paradise, then the prognosis is bad indeed.

There is a variation on the theme of 'devaluing dichotomies' in another poem of this period (p. 27):

Horror of life.
Huge awareness, elbowing vacancy,
Empty inside and out, replaces day.
...
Out of the afternoon leans the indescribable woman.
'Embrace me, and I shall be beautiful'
—
'Be beautiful, and I will embrace you'
—
We argue for hours.

Nature abhors a vacuum, in the mind as in the physical world. 'Nothing' does not stay sedentary and genteel. Now it has become 'elbowing vacancy',

a vandal with deadly associates. Over the next thirty years the poems will cumulate to constitute a detailed spiritual autobiography. Here we have an early statement of the poet's incapacity for action, condemned by lack of faith to perpetual indecision and therefore to its concomitant, emotional exhaustion. The world of deeds and new beginnings, where everyone is always to some extent a tyro, this is primitive territory he avoids; clever and sophisticated, he is also stupid, entirely failing to assimilate Auden's simple injunction, casual but ominous: *'Look if you like, but you will have to leap'*. None of this for our poet: cautious, timorous, suspicious, locked within the prison of self, he sees life as a zero-sum game: your gain, my loss. No disruptive exhilarating miracles of birth and growth here; instead in this world the dry rules of double entry book-keeping govern all human transactions equally, the interchanges of love no less than those of trade.

It is fair to add that about this time he wrote 'Modesties' (p. 26), a very fine poem (one of his two best, I think; the other one is 'Tops') and, since the rest of this essay will be gloomy, let us refresh our spirits by quotation and praise:

Words as plain as hen-birds' wings
Do not lie,
Do not over-broder things—
Are too shy.
Thoughts that shuffle round like pence
Through each reign,
Wear down to their simplest sense,
Yet remain.
Weeds are not supposed to grow,
But by degrees
Some achieve a flower, although
No one sees.

The resonance's are manifold. Here is a celebration of an enduring strain within Englishness: that combination of quiet humility and the puritan empirical, a self-effacing exactness of observation, attention to what is there rather than what one would like to see, the putting of theatre in its place, a considered rejection of Italian *bella figura*, Irish blarney, French rhetoric, American grandiloquence — all of those myriad modes of posturing

whereby we con ourselves and others.

The Message

Is there any central vision, any unifying theme in the poetry? Superficially the picture is confusing. Quite often he indulges in that perversion of the critical faculty, the dance of commutable standards, that dishonourable dodge so common as to be a hallmark of the modern intellectual: sneer at B from the position of A; then, after a suitable interval, sneer at A from the position of B; and so on, as the mood takes you. For example, he professes disgust with the pomp and ceremony of Remembrance Day (p. 134), all that

....solemn-sinister
Wreath-rubbish in Whitehall.
It used to make me throw up,
These mawkish nursery games:
O when will England grow up?

(By contrast, on that same day the poet is a self-proclaimed racketeer, off to Bombay to meet his friend Professor Lal and to make some easy money lecturing on the glories of English Literature.... 'Naturally the Foundation will Bear Your Expenses'.)

At any time this would be dubious stuff: a mature poet is expected to do better than some simple-minded scientist or latter-day Voltairean, is expected to know that a nation is not held together by reasoned analysis but by feeling, custom and ritual. Muck about with some of the bits and maybe the whole lot will come crashing down around your ears. Besides, in our time, for a nation to 'grow up' has usually meant a strengthening of the twentieth century's most horrifying creation, the total state.

Setting that aside, there is still the matter of a poem (p.171) he wrote some years later, where the standards are exactly interchanged; we are told that we should be uneasy about the dismantling of the British Empire, that there's more to life than hedonistic calculation:

Next year we shall be living in a country
That brought its soldiers home for lack
of money.
...

Our children will not know it's a different country.

All we can hope to leave them now is money.

The poem is formally elegant and would be quite powerful if one could forget who wrote it. But that can't be done; a poem is not an isolated atomic unit; there are limits to the possible degree of separation between one particular work and what went before: a poem is signed with a name and, just as we appreciate more deeply by grasping (over the years) where a poet is coming from, so our appreciation is clouded by evidence, as here, of moral incoherence and what amounts to virtuoso posturing. (In cultures where artists are anonymous it might be different, but that is not us. You cannot have the advantages and scope of individualism without the corresponding constraints.)

Returning to our question; yes, there is a unifying vision. Like D. H. Lawrence and George Orwell before him, Philip Larkin is a writer with a message, obliquely but powerfully conveyed. And this is the message he proclaims: that life is a long sequence of boredom, disillusion, failure; a broken world of bitterness, frustration and dilapidation; a downward slope ending in pain, decay and terror. Implicit is the absolute presupposition of a great promise having been made (by whoever made the world.... 'I Promise to Pay the Bearer on Demand...'), of an enormous free gift waiting for us all, not clearly specified but something to do with beauty, love, fulfilment and some kind of enduring transcendence. However, all intelligent, experienced and insightful people (*'The Less Deceived'*, as he entitles one of his books) know this to be a con, a gigantic fraud. Only the dimwits and sentimentalists, those soft in the head or heart, continue in their illusions.

Historically this kind of vision would seem to have affinities with that body of doctrines of the third and fourth centuries A.D. lumped together as gnosticism. In the original sects gnosis, which was special knowledge or insight possessed by adepts, guaranteed progressive salvation into a pure realm of light and happiness above this

present material existence of incorrigible corruption and evil. Since the defeat of Christianity in France in 1789 most of the cults and systems that have arisen in the West to fill the vacuum have been variations on the basic Gnostic theme. In Larkin's variation, a peculiarly bleak and truncated one, there is the familiar contrast between the grossness of actuality and the pure world of perfect fulfilment; but this latter world turns out to be a mirage. A few adepts achieve gnosis, and this makes them somehow superior superior, but even less happy, since it merely enables them to decipher more clearly the book of life and realise that everyone is damned.

In the poetry there is one underlying theme; all the others, apparently disparate, implicitly derive from it. This theme is the devastating effect on the individual of the vision described above, where there is a total mismatch between ideal and reality. No appearance ever lives up to its prefigured imagination, no large promise is ever fulfilled, and all hope ends in disappointment. You'd guess that such a vision would generate an incoherent rant; and at the level of ideas there is a pervasive and compulsive incoherence as, for example, in the two poems on the British Empire quoted earlier; but there is no rant and each individual poem is consistently well-wrought. The discipline of grammar school and Oxford seems to have prevailed: the poetry is meticulous, and most of its power derives from the contrast of bleak content with a frame of great formal beauty.

'Next, Please' (p.52) neatly chronicles the dominant pattern of life: expectation, disappointment, death:

Always too eager for the future, we
Pick up bad habits of expectancy.

.....

Watching from a bluff the tiny, clear,
Sparkling armada of promises draw
near

.....We think each one will heave to and
unload

All good into our lives, all we are
For waiting so devoutly and so long.
But we are wrong:

Only one ship is seeking us, a black —
Sailed unfamiliar, towing at her back
A huge and birdless silence. In her
wake

No waters breed or break.

The Complete Works

The poems use three modes of address:

(1) An adept commenting on the lives of the vulgar, those without gnosis.

(2) An adept to his peers.

(3) A spiritual autobiography.

Some poems emphasise just one of these modes, like the well-known 'Whitsun Weddings' (p.114)...mode

(1). The setting is a Saturday train journey down to London from the North East. At station after station the poet sees the same scene repeated: the wedding send-off. There is the satisfying exactness of observation, a detailed evocation of a long train journey across a varying landscape of town and country; there is the familiar superiority about the folk:

The fathers with broad belts under their
suits

And seamy foreheads; mothers loud
and fat;

An uncle shouting smut; and then the
perms,

The nylon-gloves and jewellery substitutes.....

The ignorant futility of their lives is implied by the condescending diction, but never overtly stated. All this conviviality is mere theatre; behind the curtain is the pit of doom. And envisioning it all is the omniscient one: '...and none / Thought of the others they never meet'. None, that is, except the poet.

In another poem (p.59) he is returning home. On the last stage the local train carries him, the sophisticate, seated between 'felt-hatted mums':

Strange that my own elaborate spree
Should after fourteen days run out
In torpid rural company
Ignoring what my labels shout.

In the second mode, that of one adept to another, there is 'I Remember, I Remember' (p.81), an anti-celebration of one's roots: 'Coventry....where my childhood was unspent', an extended sneer at the conventions of idealised reminiscence:-

And here we have that splendid family
I never ran to when I got depressed,

...

The bracken where I never trembling
sat,

Determined to go through with it; where
she

Lay back, and 'all became a burning
mist'.

...

'You look as if you wished the place in
Hell,'

My friend said, 'judging from your face.'
'Oh well,

I suppose it's not the place's fault', I
said.

'Nothing, like something, happens any-
where.'

However it is the third mode, autobiography, that is dominant, especially as the poet grows older. Of this group 'Send no Money' (p.146) is logically primary. In this poem he lays claim to that 'unflinching honesty' attributed to him by his admirers. His life, he says, has been driven by the search for truth. In his youth he addresses Time:

'Tell me the truth,
Teach me the way things go.'

The other lads, driven by their desires,

Were itching to have a bash,
But I thought wanting unfair:
It and finding out clash.

The last line is the key statement. One is puzzled; of course there is a tension between the passions and the intellect, but the essence of being a poet is to live within this tension, to inhabit both worlds, and not to belittle either. It comes as no surprise to find both Descartes and Spinoza devaluing the passions, since they were both emotionally deficient, nearly tone-deaf in that field; which is clearly no bar (maybe an advantage) to becoming a great philosopher, successfully cultivating one region of the spirit, which yields one kind of truth. But this is not the region and not the kind of truth for a poet. For a poet the obvious model is Shakespeare, not Descartes or Spinoza; and one says that Shakespeare lived before the puritan-industrial society, that it is tougher nowadays, then one can reply that both Goethe (*Grey is all*

theory/*Green the tree of life*) and Blake (in a multitude of writings) have shown the poets how to fight back and defend their territory. Since Larkin was highly educated all this was accessible to him. In a clever and educated man ignorance (or ignoring) of such a fundamental nature, with the resultant misdirection and silliness, is therefore wilful. It comes from deep fear ('terror', in this case, would be a better word) acting on a man without courage, and the poems repeatedly make clear that Larkin was a coward.

We therefore deny the claim: he was not a poet of great honesty. One kind of 'honesty' he did possess, which derived from a surpassing skill with the commonest style of our age: he had a fingertip facility with sneering denigration, with the put-down phrase, the 'snot green sea' of James Joyce; but this is 'honesty' as defined by Thersites, and not so hard to do if you've a mind to it.

Poetic honesty is the fruit of elements such as clarity, exactitude, persistence and courage. Larkin had all of these qualities except the last, and it enabled him to write some unusually perceptive descriptions of a particular range of situations and states of mind, to set down certain 'uncomfortable' truths. This goes down well with those who swim comfortably within the current of modern Western intellectual life, where the dominant presupposition is that all the *real* truths are 'uncomfortable' (since *really* man is greedy, cowardly, envious, brutal, shifty — a shit, in other words — and woman is only a little better). But the current of modern Western intellectual life is not the same as the mainstream of the species, and viewed from within that mainstream I think these 'uncomfortable' truths might appear as very special cases.

'Ignorance' (p.107) is a poem that is a kind of footnote to the one just considered:

Strange to know nothing, never to be
sure
Of what is true or right or real,
But forced to qualify or so I feel,
Or Well, it does seem so:
Someone must know.
...
Strange to be ignorant of the way things

work:
....[to] spend all our life on imprecisions,
That when we start to die
Have no idea why.

It is not strange, not strange at all. It is as you would expect. There is perfect justice in the spiritual as in the natural world; the laws of the spiritual domain are as inexorable as those articulated for the natural world in the physicist's three laws of thermodynamics. Knowledge is not information, not something separate from the self; it is self-transformation, and is given to you to the exact degree that you give yourself. If you stand back from life, hiding behind the deception of the self-sufficient pursuit of truth, then you will fail to achieve that truth and your inner world will have just those qualities of uncertainty, of frustrating vagueness and insipidity described above.

On page 150 he confesses himself incapable of love:

The difficult part of love
Is being selfish enough,
Is having the blind persistence
To upset an existence
Just for your own sake.
What a cheek it must take.

And then the unselfish side
How can you be satisfied,
Putting someone else first
So that you come off worst?
My life is for me.
As well ignore gravity.

And in a similar vein, on page 124:

Selflessness is like waiting in a hospital
In a badly-fitting suit on a cold wet morning
Selfishness is like listening to good jazz
With drinks for further orders and a
huge fire.

If these thoughts were put forward in a spirit of puzzlement or humility: 'This is the way it seems to me; how come so many people seem to think differently?' then in that case we might listen with some sympathy. Instead we are given a patronising lecture from one who claims to be in the know. As they stand the two poems are not worth analysis. We are attending here to an emotion-

ally stunted man trying to pull the wool over our eyes. Only bad poetry comes from using the impulse to write as a means to evade action; here is one who misuses his skill with words in order to avoid deeds, and insults us by expecting us to take this garbage seriously.

'Dockery and Son' (p.152) and 'This be the Verse' (p.180) together constitute his argument for race suicide. Dockery was a fellow student who fathered a son at an early age; whereas for Larkin (aged 41 at the time of writing) :

To have no son, no wife,
No house or land still seemed quite
natural.
... how
Convinced he was he should be added
to!
Why did he think adding meant increase ?
To me it was dilution....
Life is first boredom, then fear.
Whether or not we use it, it goes,
And leaves what something hidden from
us chose,
And age, and then the only end of age.

'This be the Verse' (*They fuck you up, your mum and dad*) was written when he was approaching fifty. In an eighteen-year-old such verse would be evidence of talent; in a man of fifty it is evidence of a pathological condition.

Assessment

We need benchmarks and triangulation points. The *prima facie* choice is Housman, since he combined great poetic talent with a vision of life almost as bleak as Larkin's. However, if you take up Housman's poems, it is the many differences that obtrude, not the similarities; and in two respects especially: one to do with the status accorded to man, the other with the relationship between poet and poem. With Housman to be human, to be a creature with a mind, is to be fatally afflicted but not contemptible. He never sneers; he allows man some dignity in his suffering. Secondly, he does not write autobiography: his poems are largely external to himself, often dramatic and with simple highly stylised characters as in opera, a long way removed from

the personality-saturated naturalism of Larkin. A main advantage of art (Housman) over artful case-history (Larkin: for case-history is what it is) is that art, although initially more distant, is ultimately more available, more malleable and usable. You take and you make...a lot, a little; it is up to you. With Larkin's mode of case-history you must agree closely with the writer, go along with him all of the way, and for those not at one this is not a platform, but a prison. Housman puts his verse out into the world, allows you your own space; Larkin speaks not to you, but at you; he preaches. And woe betide if you're not either already on his side, or well-defended, because he's an expert at aiming a kick in the guts if you relax your guard.

Both Housman and Larkin are emotionally arrested, stuck fast in yesterday. This constricts the range but does not preclude the writing of fine poetry. Housman is the supreme poet of adolescence, that turbulent time of intense self-pity and narcissism, of burgeoning sensibility, of Sorrow, Love and Death and grand heroic gestures. And, for all of us but those rare individuals gifted with natural grace, these impure modes constitute the only ones that enable entrance into a wider world; only a fool forgets and only a dishonest man disowns the ladder by which he has climbed. That is why, and because he writes so well, Housman can always speak to us.

A *sine qua non* of writing well is to stay within the limits of what you know. Here Housman never errs, but Larkin often does. Consider their different treatments of Christianity. Housman has written an atheist's version of the Crucifixion: 'The Carpenter's Son' ...Christ as a somewhat deduged prophet who at the end bitterly regrets the path he has taken:

Oh, at home had I but stayed
'Prenticed to my father's trade,
Had I stuck to plane and adze,
I had not been lost, my lads.

...
Here hang I, and right and left
Two poor fellows hang for theft:
All's the same the luck we prove,
Though the midmost hangs for love.

This contains a truth accessible to both Christian and atheist: if Christ, as well as being God, was also fully Man, then he must have sometimes experienced doubt.

***One more generation
dominated by this
kind of gnosticism
and there will be no
such thing as English
culture. If there is a
continuance of
English culture it will
be because such
gnosticism will have
lost its appeal***

Larkin's contribution is 'Church Going' (p.97). The style is overt naturalist autobiography :

Once I am sure there's nothing going on
I step inside, letting the door thud shut.
...I peruse a few
Hectoring large-scale verses
... Back at the door
I sign the book, donate an Irish six-
pence,
Reflect the place was not worth stop-
ping for.
... I wonder who
Will be the last, the very last, to seek
This place for what it was: one of the
crew
That tap and jot and know what rood-
lofts were?
Some ruin-bibber, randy for antique,
...
Or will he be my representative,
Bored, uninformed ...

Thus speaks the sophisticated, cynical man of letters. Now the voice takes on a solemn tone:

It pleases me to stand in silence here;
A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions
meet,
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.

The church is a backdrop; the poem is mostly about the poet and presumes, self-indulgently, that the reader will

share the poet's absorption in chronicling his own vagaries of mood. However, towards the end the narrator asks more than that; he asks the reader to attend to the external referents of the writing, to pause before the solemn pronouncements. But this is asking too much; he has not earned the right to such attention. It is no good being bored or uninformed about the institution which for a thousand years was the main container for the growth of intellect and sensibility in the West. If you are bored or uninformed (and content to remain so) there is a danger that your indifference and ignorance will sometimes lead you into writing just such erratic, thick-skinned verse as that quoted above.

For many years Larkin's reputation has remained high, but a body of poems so committed to anti-celebration, so determinedly hostile to all *joie de vivre* ... I do not think they will stand the test of time: they depend on such a close concordance of viewpoint between poet and audience. At present there are evidently still many who share this melancholy vision, and I assume it is they who are his most fervent supporters; but such a vision is essentially parasitic, anti-evolutionary. One more generation dominated by this kind of gnosticism and there will be no such thing as English culture. If there is a continuance of English culture it will be because such gnosticism will have lost its appeal.

Keith Jacka is a writer and computer analyst.

‘Maastreachery’

Rodney Atkinson finds treason in the Treaty

The United Kingdom is a democracy and a monarchy. The two pivotal powers are the people from whom democracy derives and the Queen who is the Head of State and as whose subjects the people enjoy their identity and freedoms. Parliament and Government are mere functionaries and intermediaries in the democratic process. They neither represent the State nor are they the ultimate source of democratic justification. Power is delegated to them by the people for limited periods. Indeed since the people can throw out their Government, while the Government cannot throw out the people, there is no doubt who is sovereign and therefore — normally — in control.

But these are not normal times and the Maastricht Treaty — negotiated and signed by Government — turns the British people into an 8% minority in virtually all decisions affecting their lives. “The Queen in Parliament” is losing all democratic content. The Treaty completely changes the positions of the Queen and her subjects both towards the EEC and in their relationship with each other. The Government has made the Queen and her subjects (without their consent) citizens of an alien power towards which they will have duties and by whom they can be taxed. This is in moral and political terms (and possibly in legal terms) treason since the sovereign has been subordinated to an alien power and the British constitution has been fatally undermined.

There are certain critical principles in the constitution of every country (whether they have written constitution or not) which can never be sacrificed, even after an overwhelming vote. It is on just such grounds that the German Government finds itself arraigned

before its own supreme court. For although two thirds majorities in both Houses of the German parliament are sufficient to change the constitution in most respects, certain basic principles — like one man one vote, or that Germany is governed by Germans — are absolutely inviolable. Even without a formal constitution in the United Kingdom a series of critical laws and conventions, combined with the powerful loyalties of the British people, represent a strong bulwark against constitutional betrayal.

The extent to which the Maastricht Treaty betrays the very foundation of the British peoples’ laws and rights is demonstrated by those British laws

The Government has made the Queen and her subjects (without their consent) citizens of an alien power towards which they will have duties and by whom they can be taxed

which will be broken by our ratification of the treaty. The 1932 law which stipulates that “no Parliament may bind its successors” is broken since the Treaty permits no withdrawal from this “irrevocable” and “irreversible” Union and stipulates that the “treaty is concluded for an unlimited period”.

According to the Act of Settlement (1700) no one may stand for Parliament in the United Kingdom unless they are of British nationality. But the Maastricht Treaty permits those who do not enjoy

this status (ie all EEC citizens) to vote and stand in elections for our national (Westminster) Parliament.

One of the many advantages of a monarchy is that the nation state and its sovereignty are embodied in the person of the Queen, her heirs and successors. Not only does the Maastricht Treaty turn the British people into citizens of another country (what else could this “European Union” be, which already possesses courts, parliament, passport, civil services, flag and even a national anthem?) but the Queen herself becomes a “citizen” of this other country. The Queen, like her subjects, will, on ratification of the Treaty, have duties towards this “European Union” (Article 8). According to the Foreign Office the Queen can vote in local elections in other EEC states and EEC elections! In other words the Queen, under Maastricht, becomes a citizen not a monarch. In fact, like other citizens, the Queen will be open to be taxed by the “European” Union (Article 192 of the integrated treaty).

The Government claims that these new rights are purely “voluntary”, the duties are non-existent and citizenship, we are told, does not mean citizenship. And yet we cannot opt out of our rights, nor our duties, nor our citizenship — and neither can Her Majesty the Queen.

It is quite clear that Ministers of the Crown have subordinated Her Majesty to an alien power over which the British people have no control and they have done this without the explicit consent of Her Majesty’s subjects. The Queen’s sovereignty has been replaced by her suzerainty.

In this new position of suzerainty (the sovereign of a state which cannot act independently because another state holds supremacy over it) the Queen

herself embodies the powerlessness of the British people and Parliament within this new "European Union". The Foreign Office argues that the duties imposed on the British people are not specific. But nothing could be more onerous and specific than the duty to pay taxes. There are in addition many general and wide-ranging duties imposed on individuals (like the obligation to carry a "European" passport) and on our Parliament (to obey the commission and the European court which is now given even more areas of "common policy" over which to adjudicate).

Under Article 8a all EEC citizens have the right to move to the UK and enjoy the same rights as those who have British nationality. It is therefore possible that over a period of, say, 50

It is therefore possible that over a period of, say, 50 years a large minority of those living in Britain will have no interest in and acceptance of the Queen as their Head of State, not least since they will not share British nationality

years a large minority of those living in Britain will have no interest in and acceptance of the Queen as their Head of State, not least since they will not share British nationality. This will represent a truly "alien wedge" of citizens with far less allegiance to the British crown than, say, Commonwealth citizens. Indeed many will come from countries which spent many years of the 20th century attempting to conquer Her Majesty's territory. In the United Kingdom police officers and members of the armed services, as part of their contract of employment, swear

allegiance to the Queen. The police swear to serve "Our Sovereign Lady the Queen" and "prevent all offences against the persons and properties of Her Majesty's subjects". The armed services swear "allegiance to her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Her Heirs and Successors ... in person crown and dignity against all enemies ..." However it is quite clear under Maastricht that the police will no longer have a sovereign Queen to defend, but a Queen subordinated to another power. They will also have to defend many thousands of citizens (from other EEC countries) who are *not* Her Majesty's subjects. The Maastricht Treaty therefore effectively causes the violation of the policeman's oath.

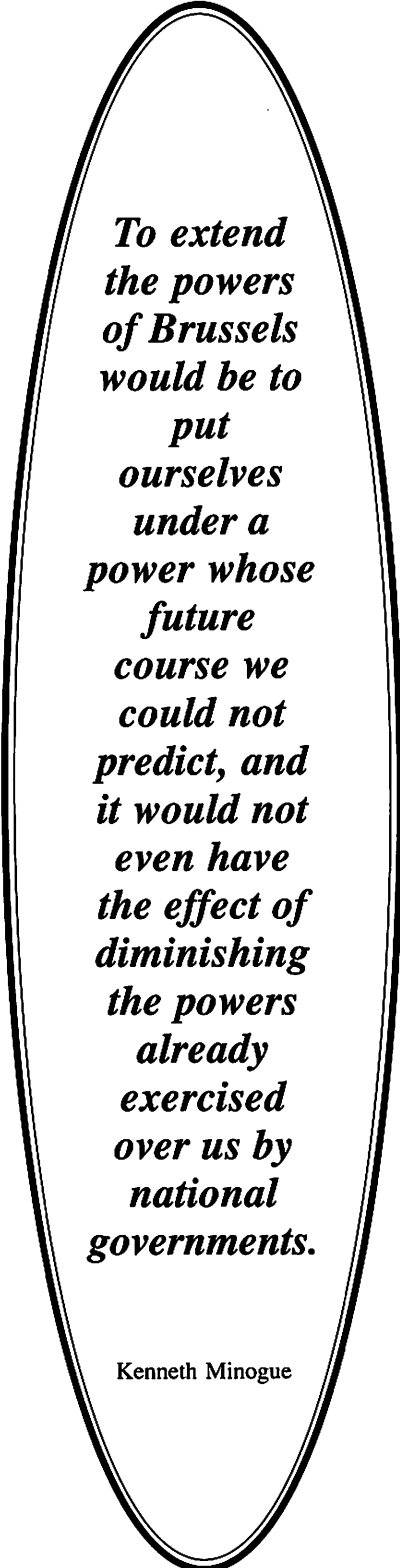
Similarly the armed services, under Article J, will in many circumstances not be serving the Queen (to whom they have sworn allegiance) and her subjects but the President of the "European Union" who will represent European defence policy. Under Article J1 Britain and its armed services "shall refrain from any action contrary to the interests of the union" and "The Council shall ensure that these principles are complied with". This loss of sovereignty covers "all areas of foreign and defence policy". This in no way equates with Britain's obligations towards NATO which was founded for the defence of sovereign states against a specific aggressor — the Soviet Union.

Can those who have subordinated the Queen to another power rely on the loyalty of the forces of law and order who have sworn allegiance to Her Majesty? Indeed may not those very politicians through their approval of the Maastricht Treaty, be guilty of treason ("violation by a subject of his allegiance to his sovereign or to a state") since a Minister of the crown must, like every MP and member of the House of Lords, swear a similar oath of allegiance?

The British people know that something is very wrong with the Maastricht Treaty. They may not grasp the niceties of constitutional law but they do understand allegiance and that the invidious position of Her Majesty the Queen reflects their own

powerlessness as the historic rights and traditions of their Parliament are thrown away.

Rodney Atkinson is on the national committee of the cross party "Campaign for an Independent Britain".



To extend the powers of Brussels would be to put ourselves under a power whose future course we could not predict, and it would not even have the effect of diminishing the powers already exercised over us by national governments.

Kenneth Minogue

Hearts and Minds

N. C. Hayes deplores the Government's failure in Ulster

An opinion poll commissioned by the Sunday Telegraph after the Warrington bombings indicated that a majority of the electorate now favoured a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland. Writing in the Daily Telegraph a few days later, Auberon Waugh attributed this less than robust response to IRA terrorism to the cowardice of what he describes as the "new Brits". It is tempting to agree with this point of view, and see the opinion poll result as further evidence of Britain's moral decline.

I think this would be a mistake, for it seems to me that public weariness with the question of Northern Ireland is a product, not of fear, but of incomprehension and indifference. The majority of the British people outside the Six Counties see Irish affairs as being as alien and incomprehensible as those of Croatia, Bosnia, or the Lebanon. Yet one would have thought that the issue in Northern Ireland; was clear cut — do we, or do we not, abandon part of the United Kingdom to terrorists and murderers? To this question there can surely be only one answer. Yet somehow British politicians have failed to impress this essential point on the minds of the British public, and seem to have lost the battle for "hearts and minds" which is essential for victory in any campaign against terrorism.

Westminster politicians must share the blame with television for this state of affairs. The obsession of British Governments with constitutional talks on the future of Northern Ireland only serves to obscure the central issue in the province, which is the campaign against IRA terrorism. However, by insisting that a pointless series of talks could, in some mysterious fashion, bring about peace, the British Government has made it seem as if the consti-

tutionally elected representatives of the Ulster people are, by their failure to reach agreement, somehow responsible for the continuing campaign of terrorist violence. These talks therefore provide a useful smokescreen, which Westminster politicians can use to conceal their own ineptitude in dealing with Northern Ireland's real problem.

The received political orthodoxy which sees constitutional talks as the means of ending terrorist violence is nonsense. It is never explained how a series of talks to which neither the Provisional IRA, nor the UFF, can ever be invited, are going to bring peace to the province. The orthodoxy at Westminster seems to believe that if a constitutional settlement is negotiated which enjoys the support of a majority of the Ulster people, then the terrorist campaign will simply wither away in some mysterious fashion. The best that can be said for such a view is that it is based on wishful thinking, rather than a realistic appraisal of the facts.

Contempt for the wishes of the majority, as expressed through the ballot box, has always been one of the hallmarks of the IRA

Contempt for the wishes of the majority, as expressed through the ballot box, has always been one of the hallmarks of the IRA. In June 1922, no less than 72% of voters in the Irish Free State endorsed the Treaty with Britain. This confirmed Ireland's independence within the Commonwealth, and

the partition of the country between a largely Catholic South, and the mainly Protestant North. Within a month, the IRA had shown their disdain for the freely expressed wishes of the Irish people by taking up arms in an attempt to reverse the election result. The ensuing civil war, in which Irishmen slaughtered Irishmen, lasted until 1923.

This tradition of contempt for the democratic process has been maintained by the Provisional IRA, who have stated that "a revolutionary movement does not depend on a popular mandate as a basis for action. Its mandate comes from the justice and correctness of its cause..." Apart from the odious Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein candidates have consistently failed to win parliamentary seats in elections both south and north of the Irish border since 1969. This electoral failure has never made the slightest difference to the tempo of the IRA's campaign of violence.

The belief that some form of electorally acceptable political settlement will bring peace to Northern Ireland not only flies in the face of history, but also shows that Westminster politicians cannot bring themselves to accept that the IRA mean what they say.

This belief, or perhaps one should call it a delusion, also disregards the fact that the IRA are as much common criminals as political terrorists. Commentators on Northern Ireland sometimes refer vaguely to the IRA's links with organised crime. This is misleading, as the IRA and organised crime are one and the same thing in the Republican areas of Ulster, and, to some extent, in the Irish Republic. Purely criminal activities in which the IRA are involved include bank robberies and protection rackets in Northern Ireland and the Irish

Republic, together with "front" companies and drinking clubs in the North. This criminal network provides the IRA with a multi-million pound income, which they can use to finance their terrorist activities. In accordance with the traditions of gangland thuggery, the IRA ensure their complete control over all criminal activity in the Republican areas of the North by meeting out the most brutal punishments to petty criminals, such as teenage car thieves. This gives them the opportunity to project themselves as defenders and protectors of the Republican community, and helps to ensure their continued support in these areas.

The implications of the IRA's transformation, from a purely terrorist organisation, into something like the Italian Mafia, do not seem to have been grasped by Westminster politicians because it is never explained how a political settlement is going to have any effect on this criminal empire. Yet it is through this network of organised crime that the IRA receive most of their funds, and maintain their control over Republican areas.

A third reason for dismissing a political settlement as the solution to Northern Ireland's problems is the nature of the IRA's support. Unlike the terrorist groups which plagued other European states during the 1970s and early 1980s, the IRA does not consist of small numbers of spoilt middle class children, alienated from the affluent society which pampered them. It is an organisation enjoying genuine popular support amongst the Catholic working class of Northern Ireland, from whom it continues to attract a steady stream of volunteers. This is what accounts for its longevity in comparison with organisations such as the Baader-Meinhoff group and the Red Brigades, both of which are now just distasteful memories.

That the IRA continues to attract recruits is not surprising. Since 1969, whole generations of young Ulstermen have grown up in communities where violence has become a way of life. Shielded from alternative points of view by the physical segregation of these same communities, and the re-

fusal of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to accept an integrated educational system, they are fed from an early age on the myths of Irish nationalism, which continue to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Consequently, they see the IRA not as the thugs they are, but as freedom fighters. One of the most chilling photographs ever taken in Northern Ireland shows a group of

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small boys attending a Republican rally in 1980. They are standing around two masked and armed IRA gunmen, at whom they are looking with rapt admiration. Seldom has there been a better illustration of the way in which the psychosis of Irish nationalism is transmitted from one generation to the next in Northern Ireland. Can anyone believe that young men brought up in this environment are likely to treat the agreements reached between politicians at Stormont with anything but contempt?

The only constitutional settlement likely to have an effect on the IRA is one which convinces them their struggle is hopeless. There is only one way this can be done, and that is by the complete integration of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, thus proving that the province is as much part of Great Britain as the Home Counties. Instead of following this course of action, successive British Governments have persisted in treating Ulster as a colony, ruled by a Secretary of State with vice-regal powers. It is this half-hearted commitment which, more than anything else, seems to have convinced the IRA that they only have to maintain their campaign long enough and the British will eventually sicken of the whole business, and withdraw from Northern Ireland.

All these points may seem rather obvious, but the casual viewer of the television news, in his suburban sitting room, is not often aware of them. What he has seen on his television screen, for the last twenty-four years, is a series of Westminster politicians stating repeatedly that only the negotiation of a constitutional settlement, which enjoys the support of the majority of the people, will bring an end to violence in Northern Ireland. Our imaginary viewer then sees these talks breaking down time after time, due to the apparent intransigence of unloveable Ulster politicians. Meanwhile, children are murdered by the IRA in British cities. It is not surprising that the reaction of the mainland television viewer, who knows little or nothing of Ulster politics, and who takes the assertions of Government ministers at their face value, is to cry a plague on the whole population of Northern Ireland. The same Government ministers who, by their obsession with talks, rather than security measures, have brought about this situation, are therefore, able neatly to sidestep the blame for the continuing violence.

The language used by mainland politicians to describe IRA terrorism is also to blame for the fog of incomprehension through which the inhabitants of the rest of the United Kingdom view the Irish problem. IRA atrocities are denounced as "mindless"

or “senseless” and we are told endlessly that nothing can be achieved by the use of violence. This gives the public the impression that the IRA are nothing better than madmen, who delight in aimless killing. In a way, it may be oddly comforting for people to delude themselves into believing that the ranks of the IRA are filled with psychopaths and the mentally disturbed, as this provides a ready made, blanket explanation for their actions.

No doubt politicians prefer the public to believe this, for it obscures the fact that this supposedly “mindless” and “senseless” terrorism has all too frequently been successful in achieving its aims during the past twenty-four years. In March 1971, IRA violence succeeded in bringing about the downfall of the Unionist administration of James Chichester-Clark. On the 10th of March, 1972, the IRA declared a seventy-two hour cease-fire, and listed a number of conditions for the truce to continue. These included the abolition of the Stormont administration. Sure enough, two weeks later it was abolished, and Direct Rule was imposed on Northern Ireland. Just a few months later, in July 1972, representatives of the IRA were actually invited to London for talks with a minister of the Crown. Can anyone seriously believe that any of these things would have happened had the IRA not been willing to use terror as a means of achieving their objectives?

The signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 is another example of a British government conceding the validity of the Nationalist position. By giving a foreign state the right to interfere in the affairs of part of the United Kingdom, Westminster seems to have implicitly accepted the IRA’s oft repeated claim that Ulster is in reality a British colony, and not an integral part of Great Britain.

Possibly the IRA’s most spectacular triumph was the crucial role they played in bringing about the removal from office of a British Prime Minister. The murder of Ian Gow, a staunch opponent of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, in July 1990, led to a by-election in his Eastbourne seat, which was won by the Liberals. This in itself was a success

for the IRA, as it meant that an act of terrorism had led directly to a Conservative Unionist being replaced in the House of Commons by a Liberal supporter of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. However, the consequences of this atrocity were to prove more far reaching than that, as the disastrous by-election result caused a catastrophic collapse of confidence in Mrs Thatcher’s leadership within the Conservative parliamentary party. Of course, this came about for reasons which had no direct connection with Ireland, but the rabble who inhabit the Conservative backbenches were, however unwittingly, playing the IRA’s game for them. Having failed to bring about Mrs Thatcher’s physical demise in 1984, the IRA could, nevertheless, take comfort from the fact that they had contributed to her political demise six years later.

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How can anyone, looking back over the past twenty-four years, can seriously describe IRA violence as either “mindless” or “senseless”, and bravely assert that it will achieve nothing? However, British politicians still attempt to do so. They cannot admit publicly that terrorism has, in fact, been consistently successful in weakening the union between Ulster and the rest of the United Kingdom, and pushing the British government along the path to a united Ireland. It is better to obscure these uncomfortable facts by labelling the IRA as madmen, for whose actions there is no rational basis. This, of course, only creates a feeling of despairing incomprehension and hopelessness among the British public, who seem to have come to the understandable conclusion that the Irish problem

is insoluble, and that the only way out is for the rest of the United Kingdom to sever all links with the Six Counties.

It is a regrettable, but unavoidable, fact that the majority of modern Britons rely on television as their main, or sole source of news and current affairs. Yet television current affairs programmes, far from informing their viewers, have rightly been accused of containing “a bias against understanding”. Nowhere has this been more evident than when dealing with Northern Ireland.

One of the main failings of television news is its superficiality. This is the result of two factors. The first, and most obvious, is the pressure of time. News programmes rarely last more than half an hour, and in that time they attempt to cover a multitude of different stories from various parts of the world. Inevitably, no single item can be given more than a few minutes coverage. The second factor is the entertainment ethos of television. The cardinal rule of much television journalism seems to be do not bore the viewer, in case he switches off. For these reasons, news items have to be kept short, and discussion of complex issues conducted by means of a series of easily assimilable sound or vision bites, which are seldom of more than two minutes duration.

Due to these factors, television coverage of Northern Ireland since the mid-1970s has largely consisted of the desultory reporting of one sickening act of violence after another, accompanied by interviews with politicians mouthing the usual, routine condemnations of terrorism. No attempt is made to place this reporting in a contextual framework, and explain why these terrible things are happening. The feeling that Irish violence is mindless and quite irrational is, therefore, planted in the mind of the viewer.

Such criticisms of television current affairs coverage are not original, but I would argue that there is yet another way in which the medium has only contributed to public mystification with Northern Ireland. This is through the failings of television journalists themselves, rather than the medium in which they work. Mainland journalists posted to Northern Ireland in the early years

of "The Troubles" all too often seemed to lack any background knowledge of Northern Ireland's history and politics. In this, they were no different from the vast majority of the British population outside the Six Counties, which meant that their attempts to explain the causes and nature of the conflict to their viewers were very much a case of the blind leading the blind. It is this ignorance which led to the creation of the myth that the strife in Northern Ireland represented a regression into the religious bigotry of the 17th century.

This myth has since become lodged in the popular consciousness on this side of the Irish Sea. Throughout the early years of "The Troubles", journalists routinely referred to the opposing parties in Northern Ireland as Protestants and Catholics. It was, therefore, implied, and often explicitly stated, that this was a religious conflict.

Although Ireland's past history has led to a close identification between Protestantism and Loyalism, and of Nationalism with Roman Catholicism, the present strife in Ulster cannot be described as a religious conflict, if by that one means a war caused by differences over matters of religious doctrine. What is in dispute is not the question of the Real Presence in the Sacrament, but the political existence of the Northern Ireland state.

Neither the IRA, nor the UFF, is made up of religious fanatics. Both organisations draw their recruits largely from the Ulster working class, and there is no reason to believe that these young men are any more religious, or more likely to set foot in a place of worship, than those of similar age and background in England.

In Ulster, the terms Catholic and Protestant have political, rather than religious significance. However, it is doubtful whether many of the journalists who descended upon Northern Ireland in 1969 fully understood this. Their ignorance, combined with the pressures of a medium in which oversimplification is a virtue, and not a vice, led to a highly distorted portrayal of Northern Ireland as a gloomy land, peopled with religious bigots and fa-

natists. This message, hammered home on the news bulletins every night, seemed to be supported by the rhetoric of Dr Paisley, the Loyalist tradition of celebrating 17th century victories, and the close links between the Nationalist community and the Catholic Church.

The erroneous, but widespread belief that Ulstermen were killing and maiming each other as a result of religious feeling had a profound effect on the way "The Troubles" were perceived in the rest of the United Kingdom. In the completely secularised society of the mainland it seemed inconceivable that anyone living in the late 20th century could feel strongly enough to fight over matters of religious principle. The fact that Ulstermen were perceived, quite wrongly, to be doing just that, led to the British public's belief that Northern Ireland's politics were every bit as alien and mysterious as those of the Middle East.

In later years, television attempted to correct the distorted view it had presented of Northern Ireland. The terms Catholic and Protestant were replaced by the less misleading Nationalist and Loyalist. But by then the damage had been done. Ulster, and its problems, had come to be seen in the public mind as being quite impossible to understand.

The other main failing of television journalism is its failure to challenge the received opinions and political orthodoxies which Westminster politicians use as a substitute for original thought when discussing the affairs of Northern Ireland. An example of this is the journalist's obsession with a negotiated political settlement as an all embracing panacea for Northern Ireland's problems. Any political agreement in Northern Ireland, regardless of its substance (and sometimes even the simple act of negotiation itself) can be assured of a fulsome welcome from the media. The Anglo-Irish Agreement was greeted in this vein, as was the Brooke initiative in early 1991. This welcome for any sort of negotiation has now become a reflex action.

It is surprising how journalists, who pride themselves on their independence have allowed the politicians to dictate the terms of discussion in

Northern Ireland. Few, if any, of the former, ever question the widespread belief that, in some mysterious and undefined manner, an endless series of talks about talks will bring peace to the province. How exactly this is supposed to happen is a question which is never asked.

This intellectual laziness, which is equally apparent when dealing with other subjects, such as Europe, only contributes to the continuing tragedy of Northern Ireland by encouraging propositions which are bankrupt, or at least seriously flawed.

The cosy consensus which exists between politicians and journalists also has the effect of convincing television viewers that a political initiative in Northern Ireland must be desirable, although they are not really clear why this should be the case. Therefore, the general public cannot understand why anyone should wish to oppose a political settlement. The objections of the Loyalists (and a few Conservative Unionists who were brave enough to support them) to the Anglo-Irish Agreement were greeted with incomprehension on this side of the Irish Channel. It was they who were seen as the villains of the piece, and not the British government.

In conclusion, one can see why the British public has become indifferent to the fate of Northern Ireland. Public debate on the subject has been non-existent since the mid-1970s. Politicians have failed to offer leadership on the issue, preferring to take refuge in the same threadbare and discredited policies which have failed repeatedly since 1969. The bankrupt policy of bi-partisanship together with the ignorance of both ministers and backbenchers, has stifled any new discussion on the subject. The electronic media, instead of carrying out its duty to inform and educate, has misinformed its viewers. Having never been given any clear explanation of what is at stake in Northern Ireland, the British people can be forgiven for wishing to wash their hands of the whole matter.

N. C. Hayes is a former teacher and freelance writer.

Call Rome Today

James Bogle gives some advice to disgruntled Anglicans

Many High Churchmen like Charles Moore, the august Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, are now seeking an accommodation with the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales that will protect their unique position as 'Anglican Catholics' but allow them to distance themselves from a Church of England set upon the course of women's ordination.

This has already been done in the United States with some degree of success. But we must remember that the property of the (Anglican) Episcopalian Church is not wholly owned by the Dioceses but also by individual parishes and Church communities. In England and Wales the vast bulk of ecclesiastical property is owned by the very authorities who wish to ordain women.

The first matter to consider, must be the question of simple evangelical truth. Irrespective of property rights, Synod votes, block transfers to the Roman Catholic Church and the decision of the UK Parliament – or for that matter of Ecumenical Councils of the Universal Church – it is plainly a simple matter of evangelical truth that women cannot be ordained to the priesthood in the Catholic sense.

To reduce the heat generated by such an assertion, it should first be said that the priesthood understood in a Catholic sense is not a position primarily of leadership, power or political dominion. Its reception certainly often results in various forms of control over parish finances, headships of colleges and schools and leadership in other spheres, but these are not essential to priesthood.

The clergy have gained power and political dominion in the modern

Church. This has happened comparatively recently.

In medieval times Kings and Emperors co-operated or vied with Popes and Bishops in the governance of the Church and this was followed down the social scale to Squire and Parson, Churchwarden and minor cleric. Women enjoyed similar power — Queens and Empresses as well as Abbesses and Prioresses held as much sway as their male counterparts, but they were never priests.

However, as nations and their governments became less Christian, so the balancing power of prominent laymen in the Church has declined correspondingly. The gap has been filled by the clergy who have gained primary political dominion in the Churches. I think that it is this development more than any other that has resulted in the clamour for women clergy. We are dealing with yet another version of the ceaseless quest for power.

Priesthood in the Catholic sense, however, is not primarily about political dominion over others. It is about the ministration of the sacred and the sacrificial for the worship of God and for the salvation of men and women. This priesthood is an imitation of that of the Son of God, who was both the original High Priest and the sacrificial Victim, prefigured in the old covenant of the Jews and realised in the new covenant of Christ.

Throughout the whole of the old covenant of the Jews there was never a priestess. Equally, throughout the whole of the new covenant there has never been a tradition of priestesses. The Montanists claimed to have 'prophetesses' but these were not priests and in any event Montanism was later condemned as heterodox and died out.

This priesthood as well as being imitative of the Son of God is also imitative of God the Father. The priest is father of his spiritual flock, his parish. Now this aspect of the priestly vocation begins to be a kind of dominion; but it is a spiritual dominion and a paternal one at that.

The priesthood is, in consequence, a male vocation. It cannot be otherwise, any more than motherhood can be anything other than a female vocation. One can go through the motions of 'ordaining' a woman to the priesthood (in the Catholic sense), but it is only a charade, since the sacred and sacrificial powers cannot be conferred thereby. Political power and dominion can, of course, be conferred on these women; but never the sacrificing priesthood of the Catholic Church. The Bishop may lay on hands, perform the 'traditio' of the chalice and paten and carefully follow the rubric. But the woman will still not be a priest: it is simply a cosmic and eternal impossibility.

One might wonder why, then, it should now be so much the catalyst for Anglicans. Surely Anglo-Catholics could simply refuse to accept priestesses just as they now refuse to accept the sacraments performed by clerics who are not of their own churchmanship? After all, it is surely no more absurd than the creation of an annual Synod to decide upon the doctrine of a Church claiming to be part of the Universal Church; or the same doctrine being decided upon by a parliament consisting largely of atheist or agnostic members?

Yet somehow we all know that it is more catalytic and, indeed, cataclysmic. It somehow strikes at the root of the nature and purpose of human beings

and their role in the eternal plan. It is here that some members of the wing of the Church of England have been so wrong.

This wing is called 'Evangelical' because it claims to base itself exclusively upon Scripture (rather than Creeds, Councils and a visible and authoritative Church). Nothing could be more plain than the simple words of Scripture on the role of women in church:

Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man but to be in silence... [1 Tim 2:11-12]

Let women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be subject, as also the Law says. But if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church... [1 Corinth. 14:34-35]

This goes very much further than the argument from priesthood and proceeds to a question of the role of women in the churches in general. The choice of women as ministers in the non-priestly sense that is meant by Evangelicals is even ruled out by this passage. Genuine Evangelicals in the Church of England ought to be equally opposed to women 'priests' since the ministerial functions can hardly be performed 'in silence'.

It is, therefore, only the Roman Catholic and Oriental Orthodox churches that maintain consistency with both Scripture and tradition on the question of women priests.

Should concerned Anglicans then try to seek corporate union with either of these churches? It is understood that Bishop Graham Leonard is negotiating along these lines. Why should he not succeed, since the way has been paved in the United States? Indeed an Anglican Uniate rite already exists there. A Uniate rite with the Orthodox is also apparently being explored. This may prove a little more difficult, since there is no central office in Eastern Orthodoxy with which one can negotiate, their churches being largely nationalised churches. Nevertheless there seems scope for progress there.

The Roman Catholic Church has traditionally sought to extend the hand, as far as it can without compromising doctrine, to those – whether individual or corporate – who seek communion with it. This is precisely how the uniate rites of the Ukrainians, Copts, Maronites, Malabarians and so on, arose. Indeed, St Pius X even set up a specifically Byzantine (non-Ukrainian) rite to assist those Russians who wished to embrace Catholicism without renouncing their Byzantine culture but without having to turn to their Ukrainian enemies. Its seminary still exists in Rome (the Russikom – near to the

Basilica of St Mary Major).

Why, then, should the same solicitous and maternal charity not prevail now for those members of the Anglican Church who wish to retain so much of their Anglican culture and worship as they reasonably can whilst entering into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church? It is not unlikely that the Roman authorities will look upon this favourably; the leaders of the Anglican-Catholic group should make their representations there to Cardinal Edward Cassidy with all haste.

It is the especial property of the Catholic 'pax Romana' to respect the differences of the nations within its ambit – every nation is a 'Royal Peculiar', more so than in the dispensation of any other religion. It is no accident that there is more variety in the continent of Europe than in any comparable group of nations.

Generations of Englishmen have loved their country and have not found this incompatible with their Catholic faith.

James Bogle is a barrister at the Middle Temple. He is a convert to Roman Catholicism.

Notes on Reviewers

Jillian Becker's latest publication, *Neo-Nazism*, is published by the Institute of European Defence and Strategic Studies.

Ian Crowther is our Literary Editor.

Jessica Douglas Home is Chairman of the Mihai Eminescu Trust.

Dennis O'Keefe is Lecturer in Education at the University of North London.

Robert Thomas works at the Conservative Research Department.

Set Books in the University

Bruce Charlton asks whether the concept of great books will disappear

The phenomenon of recommended or “set” books is common to most university courses. When these set books are recommended because of their “classic” status they are accorded a special cultural value — they become *canonical* texts — and the choice of set books may then become a topic of intense debate.

Some critics currently recommend wholesale revision of the canon, others recommend its abandonment. In the United States the debate on set books in the humanities (especially English studies and cultural history) has spread from the universities to involve local and national government and many public figures. Indeed the debate has challenged the whole nature of the university as an entity. Choosing which set books to recommend is not, therefore, a straightforward matter and deserves detailed consideration.

In the humanities, books (and other texts) have a central place — these are bookish subjects and it is impossible to be, for instance, an English literature academic without reading books (or, at least, this used to be the case). And it is in disciplines such as English that we see the greatest controversy over which books should be recommended — that is over which books are, or ought to be, *canonical*.

The canon of classic books

The concept of a canon is derived from theology where the canon is those texts recognised as revelatory, as encapsulating true religion. This kind of religious “set book” (the “books” which make up the Bible, the Koran, the Book

of Mormon) is not a detachable and rearrangeable set of facts or knowledge like an anatomy textbook — a canonical book, and not another book, has special inherent moral validity which is not susceptible of abstraction or paraphrase without loss of exactly that which makes it canonical. The Gospel of Saint Mark cannot be replaced with anything other than itself, not even a sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury, any rearrangement or summary just is not the same. Somehow this book, the Bible, and no other, is canonical.

A similar quality may be claimed (although less strongly) for specific books in English literature — special qualities in them. Some of the works of William Shakespeare are the most obvious examples. The aesthetic qualities of *Hamlet* are clearly going to be part of that book and that book alone — a different arrangement of words will have a different aesthetic value.

Or, even if we regard English literature as being principally a kind of moral discourse, the same applies. Whatever counts as uniquely morally edifying about *Hamlet* is something to do with that book in itself — and is not a characteristic of whatever moral principles may be detachable from it, or which may have guided Shakespeare in his own life. The morality inheres in the book.

It is in that branch of philosophy known as cultural history or the history of ideas that we see the sharpest disagreement concerning “set books”. Western civilisation is often conceived as a series of key texts (from Plato to, well, Darwin perhaps?): “the” canon

— those books which contain and indeed *are* the essence of our civilisation (either as it is, or as we would like it to be). And it is in this arena of history of ideas that we have observed bitter disagreements in the United States. The traditionally accepted canon of classic or “great” books has been vilified as simply the product of one, elite grouping within society (“rich, dead, white males”) and not reflective of the actuality or aspirations of the majority of citizens (poor, alive, culturally diverse and female?). This critique has spread to the United Kingdom — although the specialised nature of British higher education has meant that the debate has been confined to only a few university faculties. The traditional set books, in other words, are said to be little more than “high cultural imperialism”, a sophisticated form of brainwashing or making the under-privileged accept their inferior status.

This is a canonical dispute with religious overtones, a fight for the soul of society, to determine what will be the “good books” for the future. But the relationship between the reader, the “set book” and society is problematic. The construction of a canon may be achieved in a variety of ways. I will consider three ways: these — by analogy with the religious canon — are the “catholic”, the “protestant” and then the “post-modern”.

A “catholic” canon

The catholic attitude is to approach a canonical text through the medium of a *commentary*. If we think of the medieval university in Europe we notice

that the dominant form of teaching was to read a passage from the canonical text then to expound its meaning. The major form of discourse was the commentary (such as the Sentences of Peter Lombard), and as time went by and the commentary was found to be ambiguous, then commentaries were written on commentaries.

The novice thus approached the canon through layers of interpretation. Aristotle's own words (which were, anyway, translated into Latin, adding a further interpretative layer) might not be read until the commentaries had been expounded. The Bible would itself hardly be read (again, this was only available in a Latin translation); instead it was the teaching of the church, the tradition of commentary upon commentary, which was essential. Even now the Pope's pronouncements as they are expounded through the priesthood are the prime source of spiritual guidance — rather than sitting down and reading the Bible.

Western civilisation is often conceived as a series of key texts (from Plato to, well, Darwin perhaps?)

The catholic approach to set books is thus to teach the student *how to read* before letting him loose on the canonical texts. Firm control is maintained on interpretation and exposition. There is relatively little interest in the canonical text, little interest in editorial or historical work, and little appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of the set book (buried as it is beneath accretions of commentary). The canon is a set of books *and* how to read them.

For this to work, to produce and maintain consensus, an “educated” community must be created: those who have been taken through the commentaries to the text so that they approach it in a proper spirit. Only such people are competent to comment on the canon — the views of the uneducated are of little interest. And it is this educated community which carries final author-

ity, not an individual (this is analogous to the authority of “the church”).

Problems arise when there is a loss of control over what to read and how to read it. This happened at the time of the Reformation. Control is lost when there is an impatience with the long process of entry into the educated community (through layer after layer of commentary) and students wish to confront the set books directly, from the very beginning. After all, they reason, if these books are so beautiful and edifying, why waste time on the commentaries?

A “protestant” Canon

The protestant approach plays down the problem of how to read. Every rational person is assumed to be “competent” to read the canonical books: they need not be “educated” in any special way. Protestantism assumes that the canonical book has inherent power to *speak to the reader*. Attention is focused on the text itself (in the original language if possible), upon its accuracy (editorial work), upon its historical status, and upon its aesthetic impact. The implication is that if we can get the book exactly right, then it will do its work on the reader without further assistance.

In the post-medieval university, after the Renaissance, there was thus a direct approach to Aristotle and the other classics. Students were taught Greek, and Aristotle was dictated verbatim — the assumption being that the work had power to speak to the students directly without the interference of commentary. The scholars were stunned by the sheer beauty of the rediscovered classical authors (it has been suggested that the Renaissance itself derived from the impact that classical Latin oratory — especially Cicero — had upon Plutarch).

For protestants, the Bible itself, and not the church, was the final arbiter of religion: the Bible is the source of revelation and the church is a secondary accretion. This belief encourages the Gideon movement to place bibles in hotel bedrooms — the idea that the book itself, unmediated, will have the force of revelation, convert the sinner and set him upon the path of righteous-

ness. God will speak through the book to the soul of the reader — all else is superfluous.

The Great Books movement in American Universities sprang from the protestant attitude, and Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* draws its inspiration from it. If only students are brought into contact with the right books, then the right attitudes will follow: a great book has inherent power to speak directly to the reader. The canon is then constructed from such books — the emphasis is on the list of books and not how to read them.

But the protestant approach is vulnerable to any critique centred upon the ambiguities and uncertainties of language or the variable responses of readers — for example linguistic deconstructionism or cultural relativism. For the “protestant”, the text comes first, so if language is not fixed and transparent in meaning, how can a book speak the truth to a reader? Can a book be said to “speak” the truth if there are no competent readers to hear what it says? If the canonical books are supposed to speak to the reader directly, then what is to be done if the readers disagree about what is being said, or if (as with the Bible) interpretation has changed over time? Having claimed to have loosened control on interpretation, how can the protestant attitude enforce a list of set books if the readers claim that such books do not speak to their souls? — if the readers ask, in effect, what is so “great” about the Great Books?

Post-modern Deconstruction

The post-modernist approach to the canon is to concentrate on the reader rather than the book — context is all. Post-modernity — that cultural critique which derives from Friedrich Nietzsche — appears to challenge the validity, the very *existence*, of the canon.

A post-modernist approach is what characterises those critics of the “classics” of Western civilisation. Post-modernity looks at the cultural factors which have constituted the canon — typically it analyses the canon in terms of power and status — who is allowed to

define the canon and how they impose this definition upon others. The list of set books is reduced to being merely an expression of socio-politics: just one possible list among many. The exact identity of "set books" then becomes almost arbitrary — they are purely symbolic of an actual state of culture or symbolic of a desired state of culture.

Some advocates of post-modern, deconstructive techniques are purely destructive in their criticisms — they wish to destroy the canon and put nothing in its place — canons as such are presumed to be bad, or at least unnecessary. But this purely ironical standpoint is rare. More usually the post-modernist has a political agenda. For instance, Michel Foucault analyzed society in cynical terms as a product of power relationships, yet proposed prison and psychiatric reforms and homosexual liberation — despite these being, presumably, merely another product of the operation of power and knowledge.

So we hear the argument that — being arbitrary — the canon should be balanced in political terms, that it should contain books by or about the whole range of contemporary culture — women, racial and cultural "minorities", homosexuals and lesbians, diverse viewpoints of many kinds (although it is not usually proposed that the views of fascist and child molesting minorities be included). The nature of this socio-political balance is, for the post-modernist, more important than the moral or aesthetic qualities of the set books themselves (after all, these are merely symbolic). People have argued that the telephone directory is of equal or greater canonical status to Shakespeare, because the telephone directory is at least a social document giving all sorts of insight into contemporary culture — whereas Shakespeare is just a dead, white male of limited relevance.

The post-modernist attitude sees the reader's personal and political agenda as primary: "The personal is political" (especially if the reader belongs to an "oppressed" social group). Any supposed "inherent" qualities of the book or the tradition of how to read it are equally up for grabs — material for

analysis in terms of the socio-political relations which are assumed to capture the essential reality of the situation.

To put it another way, the post-

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modernist dispenses with set books in favour of a set *technique*, a skill, and a way of reading. This has proved very popular: the method of feminist, or Marxist, or anti-racist reading is taught to the student — then this technique can be applied to virtually anything, whether it be Shakespeare or indeed the telephone directory. Evidence of oppression may be gathered and, in principle, used to further a political agenda. (For this kind of post-modernist, everything is political anyway, so the capture of English literature, philosophy, history or anything else by — say — feminism is perfectly justifiable. It merely exchanges one kind of politics for another.) Attention has become fixed, not on the book, but somewhere outside it. For post-modernity, the canon has thus become a weapon of political rhetoric: it has become — in a real sense whatever is "politically correct".

Future of "set books" in the university

The catholic tradition integrates set books with set techniques of reading,

the protestant tradition insists on the importance of the book itself, while the post-modernist favours the technique. This analysis confirms the widespread observation that the whole concept of canonical texts is in deep trouble. We can no longer be the unselfconscious heirs and adherents of any one of these three ways of devising a canon — on the one hand we "know" how they work and they are thus less convincing, on the other hand each attitude appears to be consistent and satisfying to its adherents.

Yet the three ways do not have equal validity for a university. Only something like the "catholic" attitude to creating a canon is appropriate to a university discipline — that is each university discipline should have a number of set books and teach the students how to read them — what to read *and* how to read it.

The protestant approach is incapable of dealing with disagreement because it does not establish premises from which to argue. Lacking a concept of the educated, and therefore competent, critic it opens up discourse to anybody, and everybody's contribution carries equal weight. In the past it could be assumed that readers would read Great Books in more or less the same way: therefore if you could persuade them all to read the same books, then they would all get the same moral and aesthetic message. But it is precisely this common ground which has broken down and resulted in the post-modern approach.

The post-modern approach is not an option for universities. The very existence of universities depends upon some kind of acknowledgement that the academics who teach in them, and the books they recommend, have something of real value to communicate to the student. If not, why go to a university at all? Why should such institutions exist if they are merely reflective of power and knowledge? If universities are believed to be just another expression of the politics of a repressive society then both students and academics themselves would, presumably, be advised either to steer well clear of them, or else to destroy them altogether (perhaps this is already happening).

A post-modernist would also regard

any “set books” as unjustifiable except as the arbitrary expression of cultural power (the universities *forcing* the students to read this, rather than that, for no better reason than they are able to do so and that this perpetuates the *status quo*). Anything or nothing might as well be included in the list of set books – it is all grist to the mill. And no way of reading is preferable to another: having read any book you wish you may then say anything you wish – nothing is ruled out because such rules are exactly the sort of cultural repression which post-modern politics is trying to destroy. Hence the telephone directory.

Any special technique might become a privileged focus – feminism, Marxism, anti-racism, gay liberation – but the choice of technique would itself be arbitrary. How would the claims of each technique be evaluated against the others? Certainly, the subject boundaries of English literature, history, philosophy, or sociology would melt away, and we would be left with a wholly arbitrary set of data upon which an arbitrary technique would be exercised with arbitrary standards of competence. In such a situation “a university education” would become a meaningless exercise, and the university itself an unjustifiable waste of money.

The whole notion of an academic discipline depends upon setting boundaries to discourse – boundaries upon what is studied and how. Upon this depends everything else – academic rigour and rationality itself. If we cannot include Shakespeare and exclude the telephone directory from the list of “great books”, then in what does the canon consist? Does telephoning a friend count as doing English literature, is going on a demonstration equivalent to studying history, is picking your nose a philosophical argument (as Diogenes might have claimed)? This stupidity occurs as a matter of routine in the world of *avant garde* fine art, but should it also embrace the universities?

The future of the university

If universities are to maintain any of their recognisable features and

educational role then the catholic approach to set books is the only coherent model. However at present, for most of people most of the time, university students and their lecturers alike, the humanities are just a way of studying politics and sociology by reading novels and poems rather than works of politics and sociology. (A cynic might say English can become a way of studying social sciences without the need either to read difficult books or stick to the facts.) In this kind of English study there are “set books” of a fairly arbitrary kind, but the “canon” has expanded far beyond the range of any single person and therefore cannot be required reading, and anyway there are no fixed ways of reading these books. The books spark off reflections of one sort or another, and there are no rules for deciding what is legitimate or rational, and what are merely associations of ideas. Thus, in a seminar a group might read a book, then talk about something. This something may be enjoyable; it may even be very valuable; but the question remains: is it an academic discipline?

If it is agreed that the humanities must teach not only what to read, but also how to read, then what are the consequences? First of all the selection of students and their teachers becomes very important – they must be clear about what will be required of them in a disciplined study. If they would prefer to study politics, moral philosophy or sociology then they should be diverted to those subjects. Alternatively they could learn some kind of reading skill (such as Marxist or feminist analysis) which they could use on any material which came their way – but such a one-sided and non-rigorous practice should probably not be part of the official business of a university (what staff and students do in their spare time is their own affair).

Secondly, there would be a limited number of set books, so that students and staff would be required to know them all and in depth. Required reading forms the basis of a common culture. Then the teaching of English would concentrate on the set books in the time-honoured fashion of commentary – either through the medieval

practice of expounding a book and its interpretation in lectures, or through the more intensive and individually tailored medium of tutorial and seminar work. The assumption would be that the academic discipline grew from the interaction between the set books and the educated approach to reading them – the opinions of an uninitiated student would therefore not have the same validity as those of a person who had been educated in the subject. This would be the ground rule for academic discourse.

There would naturally be limits set on what constituted academic discourse in the humanities. Arguments about politics, economics, the oppression of women, the class struggle, animal liberation and so on, would be ruled out of academic discourse except insofar as they flowed directly from the subject; not because these things are unimportant but because they are not the humanities.

All this setting of limits cannot itself escape the charge of being arbitrary – such is the fate of any project in the post-modern world in which we live. It does, however, maintain the academic virtues – and for those of us who value the universities this is of great importance to the well-being of our culture. So, am I suggesting that study of the humanities should exemplify the rigorous discourse of a minority interest? Yes, I’m afraid so; done properly they are not likely to appeal to many. Do I believe that this will happen? No: I fully expect English and cultural studies to continue down their populist, anti-academic, post-modernist path. And such humanities will therefore continue to feel, and increasingly become, out of place in a real university – assuming that such institutions remain in existence. In a fully post-modern world, however, I cannot see how real universities would be allowed to survive, although the name “university” might still be used to dignify the institutions that betray the cause of education.

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Out of Work

Michael Mumford reflects on the problem of unemployment

Unemployment is perhaps the greatest social problem of our time; yet it is very little discussed or understood. It is blamed on recession and economic stagnation: yet most people in Britain are living in unparalleled prosperity. We are rich as never before, yet we manage our wealth so badly that many young people can find no way of earning a living; and many middle-aged people find themselves, despite all their experience and remaining energy, rejected and apparently unneeded by the economy.

Economists offer at least two possible solutions. Keynesians tell us that we must stimulate the economy, if necessary by inventing work for people to do; and we must increase the supply of money – even at the cost of some inflation – to encourage investment and spending. These measures (they say) will increase economic activity, and so increase the demand for labour. The Keynesian solution was applied in the seventies. By 1975, we had 24% inflation combined with the highest unemployment since the War. The word ‘stagflation’ was coined to describe this apparent paradox; and Keynes’s analysis became much less fashionable.

Since Mrs Thatcher we have had monetarism. Monetarists say we must at all costs avoid inflation. They often allege that the economy is inefficient, because of government interference and restrictive practices. Given economic freedom and the hard discipline of the market, they predict increased economic growth and more jobs. This analysis became fashionable in the eighties and is still being tested (to a greater or lesser extent) today.

These may be over-simplifications; but one thing is not in much doubt.

Economists are professionally concerned not with the individual unemployed person but with the prosperity of the whole economy. Their solution to unemployment is to increase (or to try to increase) economic activity in general.

But what if the economists’ prescriptions do not work, and the economy fails to grow fast enough to provide the extra jobs? Is it in fact reasonable to expect the economy to grow, just because more jobs are needed? No individual businessman takes on more employees for the sake of providing employment. He takes them on because there is an increased demand for his company’s products or services. The economy is just the sum of many such businesses. The economy exists as they do, to provide goods and services, not to consume labour. Only perhaps when the demand for goods and services grows, will the demand for labour also grow. It may not be so easy to increase the demand for labour – by whatever means – if there is no sufficient increase in the demand for goods and services.

Unemployment is not a specifically British problem. Since the seventies, there has been a trend towards higher unemployment in nearly all Western countries

Why should we need to increase the demand for labour? Perhaps we shall get nearer to understanding the

phenomenon of unemployment, if instead of looking at the *demand* for labour, we look at the *supply*. Why are there too many people looking for work?

Unemployment is not a specifically British problem. Since the seventies, there has been a trend towards higher unemployment in nearly all Western countries. In the second quarter of 1992, for example, British unemployment was at 9.6% of the labour force. This was less than in France, Australia and Canada, all of which had over 10% unemployment. In the U.S.A., unemployment was at 7.5%, in Western Germany 6.5%.

Increased unemployment does not necessarily mean that fewer people have jobs. In 1989, the total number of people working in Britain was 26.5 million, or 46.2% of the population: both these figures were higher than at any time since 1969, and possibly higher than at any time ever. Yet in that same year, 1.3 million people were unemployed: 6.1% of the labour force: more unemployment than at any time in the fifties, sixties or seventies.

How can employment and unemployment both reach high levels at the same time? What is unemployment, if it is not shortage of employment?

Unemployment is a condition in which the number of people wanting or needing jobs significantly exceeds the number of jobs available. It is an imbalance in the labour market, in which the supply of labour exceeds the demand for it. There were more jobs in Britain in 1989 than there had been in the seventies. But this didn’t get rid of unemployment, because the number of people seeking work had grown even more.

Why? Mainly because by 1989 there were relatively more people of working

age, and fewer people of an age to be dependants. In the mid-seventies, there were only 35 million people aged 15-64 in Britain: 62.5% of the population. In 1989, there were 37.5 million aged 15-64: 65.4% of the population.

Much the same has happened in other countries. Ever since the seventies, almost all Western countries have seen a shift in the age profile of their populations, with an increasing percentage of people being of an age to enter the jobs market.

There is a simple cause for this: a decline in the birth rate. In Britain, the birth rate per thousand of population declined from around 18 in the sixties to a low point of under 12 in 1977. Since then it has risen somewhat, but it is still only around 14 per thousand. Whatever the cause of this change – the pill must have been a factor – the effect is that there are now a fewer number of children in the British population. In the early seventies, there were 13 million children under 15 in Britain. Now there are less than 11 million. This pattern is common, with local variations, to all Western countries. In France, for example, the number of children has declined over the same period from around 12 million to around 11 million. In the U.S.A., it has declined from 58 million to 54 million.

The fewer number of children has been partially offset everywhere by an increasing number of dependent older people. There are now over 3 million people over 65 in the U.K., compared with 2 million in the early seventies. But this increase has not been enough to balance the lower number of children: there are still fewer dependants and more people of an age expecting to work.

Of course not everybody aged 15-64 does expect to work. No one leaves school in Britain till 16; most continue their education longer; many married women do not seek work; many people retire before 65. The percentage of 'working age' people who actually seek work – known as the 'labour force participation rate' – changes over time, and this affects the jobs market by increasing or decreasing the supply of labour. The labour force participation

rate in the U.K. has increased, from 72% in the early seventies, to around 75% now. This has not helped unemployment. Nevertheless the single and most obvious reason for increased unemployment has been the shift in the age balance of the population.

Most attempts to cure unemployment seem to be based on the principle of trying to get the next upswing to occur sooner

This is not the first time that a decline in the birth rate has coincided with a period of unemployment. Economic historians have for some time been puzzled by the apparent paradox that the period between the wars, well-known as a time of high unemployment, was also a period of quite good economic growth in Britain. The missing factor turns out to be the birth rate. There was a very dramatic drop in the British birth rate in the early part of this century. In England and Wales it fell from around 30 per thousand in the 1890's to around 15 per thousand in the late 1930's. The decline in the birth rate increased the percentage of the British population aged 15-64 from 63% at the 1901 census to 68% in 1931 – the highest percentage ever recorded at a British census. In 1931, about 15% of the British labour force – about 7% of the population – was unemployed.

Both now and in the thirties, the effect of changes in the birth rate has been to shift the age profile of the population in such a way as to increase the number of potential producers, without increasing the number of consumers.

It seems that the British and other Western economies may sometimes behave as if the demand for goods and services – and hence the demand for labour – is approximately determined by the total number in the population, regardless of age. The percentage of the population which needs to work, in order to satisfy this demand for labour, is approximately constant. So if more

of the population fall into the age-range which seeks work, there may not be enough work for all, and some may be obliged to remain in the dependent condition of unemployment.

Economists would point out that the period of increased unemployment – the period of the later seventies, eighties and nineties – has also been a period of slower economic growth in the Western economies. They would suggest a number of possible reasons for this – first the increase in oil prices, then competition from Asian manufacturing, and so on. But the fact remains that there have been few years since 1974 when the British economy has not grown; and overall it has grown well. Economic historians tell us that British economic growth in the last twenty years has probably been faster than in any previous period of our history – with the sole exception of the thirty years following the Second World War. It was not to be expected that the growth rates of those years would last for ever. And anyway, the increase in unemployment cannot be simply blamed on slow economic growth, because average levels of employment have not decreased.

If unemployment was caused by economic stagnation, it would be because stagnation caused a decline in the number of jobs. In fact, there have often been more jobs, yet there has still been high unemployment. Unemployment since the seventies has increased mainly because employment has not grown fast enough to absorb all the new people who were coming on to the labour market.

There is also a serious cyclical problem. The chart shows more precisely what has happened. There was a steady increase, between 1975 and 1984, in the proportion of people who were of working age. In 1985 this stabilised: it has since declined slightly. The 'labour force' increased roughly in parallel with the increase in the proportion of working age, except at times of high unemployment, when it even decreased a little. The percentage of people working has fluctuated in a cyclical way from year to year, and this has caused wide variations in the unemployment level; but unemployment has always

been quite high, because of the increase in the size of the labour force.

Plainly the economic cycle is also a serious problem, and it has much pre-occupied economists. Most attempts to cure unemployment seem to be based on the principle of trying to get the next upswing to occur sooner. But in the long run, this would quite possibly do more harm than good. During an economic upswing, there is over-production (e.g. the over-production of office buildings in Britain and elsewhere in the late eighties). Too much boom causes all the more slump later. There is no escaping the market. We have to try to find a solution to unemployment which does not involve producing more goods than people actually need.

The tendency for economic activity to proceed in bursts, with alternating periods of boom and slump, is nothing new – it was familiar in the nineteenth century and earlier. But there seem to be times when the peaks and troughs of the economic waveform become more distinct and marked.

The years between the Wars were one period in Britain. Economic historians have calculated that, after 1918, the amplitude of the cyclical variation in British GDP – the height or depth of the economic cycle – was almost twice that of pre-First World War cycles.

This is quite likely to have been caused by over-supply in the labour market. If we look at recent British unemployment trends, a similar accentuation seems to be noticeable. There is an obvious reason why this

might be so. Wide cyclical variations in employment and unemployment cannot easily occur at times when there is little surplus labour. During the long years after 1945, when there was little unemployment anywhere in the

Unemployment will not go away in the foreseeable future, unless some action is taken. It will not be easy to get things put right. But no solution is likely until the problem is understood

Western world (the percentage of working age seems to have been generally falling), any over-optimism in the economy was automatically restrained by labour shortage. It was always hard, in those years, to recruit new staff. If everybody had tried to do it at once, it would have been impossible.

By contrast, the boom of the late eighties occurred at a time when there was always plenty of surplus labour available, because the change in the age profile had given rise to an increase in the labour force. Since it was also very easy to raise money at that time, there was nothing much to stop overexpansion, until painful lessons were learned in the market. In this

way, the decline in the birth rate, by eliminating labour shortage, may (as in the thirties) have accentuated the cyclical behaviour of the economy.

What of the future? The decline in the birth rate has been halted, and there are now more older people to support, so that the percentage of working age is now falling a little: but current population projections do not suggest that it will fall much over the next twenty years. Such projections are subject to future events, but demography currently offers little prospect of much decline in the labour force. And recently we have seen a considerable increase in labour force participation, as more women have taken jobs.

What is to be done? Policies designed to increase the demand for labour have not been very successful. Perhaps they have sometimes been counter-productive if they have encouraged economic growth in excess of the demands of the market. It seems to me that human dignity demands that more attention should be paid to the *supply* of labour. How can we encourage people who either do not want or do not need to work, to give way to those whose future lives depend upon it?

Unemployment will not go away in the foreseeable future, unless some action is taken. It will not be easy to get things put right. But no solution is likely until the problem is understood.

Michael Mumford is Director of Insight Research.

Per Cent Aged 15-64 and per cent Working or Unemployed in the UK Population



The Death of Education

Manuela Freihofer reports from Switzerland

English readers may like to know that they are not alone in perceiving a decline in educational standards, and an attempt to subvert the state of childhood. I can give little cause for hope – except by showing that some of us are trying to fight back against corruption. By some of us, I mean the VPM which is based in Zurich. The Association for the Advancement of Psychological Understanding of Human Nature is an association of doctors, psychologists, scientists, teachers, parents and others interested in psychology.

I shall describe the reforms being made in our country; secondly, I shall expose the reformers' strategy and thirdly show how our organisation is being treated by left-wing reformers.

For the past 20 years our association has observed with increasing alarm the systematic dismantling, not just of the Swiss education system but also of social and political structures, too. A major role is played by minority groups who will not let anything stand in their way to attain the power they so desperately desire. Unfortunately, the unique democratic system of Switzerland makes that fairly easy for them. Thus, a political battle is being fought in our schools, and the victims are, of course, the pupils. Politically confused individuals, who never tire of telling us how wonderful trendy education is, are cold-blooded in the extreme, and the only welfare they have at heart is their own. In 1989, an OECD (Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development) study placed Swiss schools at the top of their list of excellent schools, and it is rather bewildering that a system which achieves such good results should need reforming. In 1967 the Plowden Report was published in Britain. 25 years later the very same demands are being propagated as *the*

solution to the education dilemma: Schools must emphasize a child-centred approach to learning instead of the traditional emphasis on content and knowledge; lessons must offer opportunity for creative work and individual discovery; and so on.

Teachers who use traditional methods are branded as child murderers, prison warders and sadists. We are continually told that scientifically tried and tested teaching methods damage and dull a child's development. Never tiring of repeating these supposed facts, 'reformers' have managed to brainwash parents and teachers with the help of the media. Pupils are said to be imprisoned at school, the work the children do to resemble that of idiots in a lunatic asylum. These people have already succeeded in pushing through some changes: Lessons have been reduced from 50 to 45 minutes, there has been a drastic reduction in the number of lessons and a thinning-out of the curriculum by employing the 4 instead of the 5 day-week, children are not taught to read in the first year of primary school. In one canton primary school children are no longer obliged to do any homework because a strict separation between school and the child's private life has to be observed. Teachers are ordered to integrate physically and mentally handicapped children into their classes, when every serious educationalist knows that these children need an intensive and specialised care. Teachers who voice their reservations are accused of practising discrimination against these children. The result is that teachers have to use two methods of education in one classroom, and more individualised teaching which leads to a disruption of the normal teaching procedure. Much to the consternation of many experienced teachers and parents a new curriculum

is to be introduced where subjects like geography and history are now combined and labelled humanities. Although officially it is still in the 'experimental phase', teachers have been ordered to use these methods. At the same time, any kind of debate on the matter is strictly prohibited.

Children are no longer encouraged to work with their classmates and co-operate. Even the long-fought for co-education is to be abolished.

Pupils are encouraged to live out and to experience their 'true' feelings such as anger, aggression and hate. Project weeks and discovery learning result in children spending more time in the woods and on walks than in the classroom. It is therefore not surprising that when children do have to concentrate on work, they are just not able to. An atmosphere of learning is no longer created, in fact it is despised. Teachers are expected to act more like an MC at a holiday camp. Teachers and adults are increasingly regarded as figures of fun not to be taken seriously. This is lethal for the education process.

Hand in hand with these reforms are the changes being realised in teachers' training institutions. Left-wing radicals in universities and teachers' training colleges systematically subject their students to a kind of training that breaks every boundary of decency and human dignity. One of the hair-raising examples experienced by primary school teachers can be observed in a psychology lesson whose title was 'The Anal Phase'. A questionnaire contained, amongst others, the following bizarre questions:

What does your excrement and urine smell like?

Are you disturbed by your own noises whilst going to the toilet?

How do you behave on the toilet at home?

Do you enjoy spending some time on the toilet?

How do you clean yourself and how do you clean the toilet?

How do you cope with menstruation?

Is it any wonder that at the end of their training period many teachers are lethargic and unmotivated, while others are just completely confused and stuffed full of nonsense? And above all how will these teachers instruct the children entrusted to their care?

One particular further education institute in Zurich whose courses have to be attended by every teacher, also offers a multitude of courses to parents and children alike. Great significance is attached to problems such as drug addiction and psychological counselling. For the unsuspecting layman, this may sound wonderful. Little do they know that this institute has long been the headquarters of the left-wing reform strategists.

Desperate parents of drug abusers who attend these courses are told that their children are just sensitive to society's pressures and injustices. Besides, drugs have always been a part of daily life and it is just a question of learning how to deal with them. Every one has one or more addictions, eating chocolates, drinking coffee or maybe watching the telly – so who are we to tell our children what is right and wrong? We are in no position to help them anyway. We have to start work on our own addictions and let our children come to terms with theirs. It is therefore no surprise that parents become so confused by this information that they even stoop to buy drugs for their child.

Our research shows that the connection between trendy education, drug addiction and promiscuity, so-called sex- and HIV-education cannot be ignored. These factors are part and parcel of a strategy aimed at destroying our society as we know it: The family unit must be shattered, homosexuality is presented as natural, young people are encouraged to engage in so-called safer sex, young girls are told by fanatical feminists that it is the pinnacle of emancipation to be a single mother. The list is never ending.

How did a small band of agitators

succeed in hoodwinking local and federal authorities, parents and teachers alike? The Leftists in Switzerland realised that in order to overthrow a well-organised and smooth-running society, they would have to start in the schools, not just with pupils but with teachers as well. As a result, in the mid-seventies, a comparatively small number of Left-wing idealists started their 'long march through the institutions'. They installed themselves in key positions in the education and social departments at a cantonal level, not just in Zurich, but in Berne, Basle and Lucerne.

The people who are in charge of the education departments in Switzerland are laymen advised by a panel of experts. By means of this panel the left infiltrated the education authorities. Meanwhile, they have launched massive media campaigns which tell an unsuspecting public – by now almost every day of the week – how bad the traditional school methods are, that schools need to be 'humanised' and children should not be subjected to all this terrible learning by rote and drill. The promoters of school reforms disguise their real aims by using words with positive connotations which hide a perversion of their original meanings. Thus parents and teachers are duped. Phrases such as 'education by fascination', 'self-initiated learning' and 'child-centred' produce false impressions. Progressives have ulterior political motives and are not at all concerned about the child's well-being. Let me illustrate this by looking at the techniques employed by the radicals, the most important of which is based on Gestalt-therapy, a pseudo-psychological, violent form of so-called therapy taken up by the sixties' student revolts in Europe and which has been making headway ever since. Gestalt sees the origins of people's problems as stemming from existing society's structures. Gestalt's main objectives are:

1. The promotion and support of aggression and violence. Children are encouraged to vent their feelings without restraint.

2. General insecurity and destruction of morals. Morals are regarded as obstacles which hinder the development of 'my authentic self', and the teacher has no right to impose his sense of values and what is right and wrong.

3. The dismantling of sympathy and consideration towards others, which means the shrugging off of conventions in order to become 'the centre of my own world.'

4. The promotion and support of irrational actions and at the same time destruction of common sense. Only creativity and self-realisation count.

5. Doing away with general knowledge and scientific facts and at the same time presenting material in such a way that it can only lead to absolute confusion. This is otherwise known as the holistic world view.

6. Children are encouraged to exert power and dominate. Sado-masochistic patterns of behaviour are promoted.

7. Arousal and corruption in sexual matters, for example so-called warm-up games in which bodily or even intimate contact takes place. Discussions on homosexuality and sexual perversion are encouraged at a very early age. Discussions on incest are used as a vehicle to foster mistrust between parent and child.

8. Finally pro-drug propaganda is employed to play down the dangers of addiction. Adolescents are no longer informed about the dangers of drugs but are encouraged to experiment with them – but only if they are in a good frame of mind.

As the founder of Gestalt said "lose your mind and come to your senses!"

In 1991 our association published four volumes which describe and analyze the disastrous developments in Swiss schools. Our research led us to the roots of the reforms, for instance to the above mentioned Gestalt-therapy and the theoretical development which has taken place since then. Despite positive reviews in the academic world,

the press refused to publish any reviews for almost a year. When the books were finally reviewed, the content of the books was not dealt with at all. Instead, our organisation and the authors, (almost 200 academics) were labelled as Stalinists and Fascists. The VPM has been the target of a smear campaign whose sole aim is to discredit our members and supervising director. In the press and on TV we are presented as a bunch of crackpots who are members of a peculiar sect and completely paranoid. Left-wing authors have written books denouncing our association. These are sent to all school governors, cantonal and local authorities. Even the *Neue Zürcher*

Zeitung which was once an extremely respected newspaper, supports this line because it is in favour of free enterprise for drugs. In one supplement a whole magazine was used for drug legalization purposes. Even Timothy Leary was made respectable, but voices opposing a drug liberalization are not published.

The education authorities dominated by the left have now admitted to compiling illegal secret files, not only on our teachers, but on all our members both in Switzerland and abroad. These days, when a teacher applies for a job, they are automatically asked if they are a member of VPM. Several teachers have lost their jobs over the past three

years. Others, still employed, are exposed to every imaginable harassment. Left-wing parents incite witch-hunt campaigns, put their children on strike or refuse to send them to VPM-teachers. Leaflets are distributed on the streets of Zurich listing names of VPM members. This clearly violates the convention of human rights, but those who dare to speak up publicly have to run the gauntlet in the media and even politicians are manoeuvred out of office.

Manuela Freihofer is a teacher of English.

The Relentless Cult of Novelty

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn describes how it wrecked the Century

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn received the medal of honour for literature of the National Arts Club in New York City. His wife, Natalya Solzhenitsyn, accepted the medal on his behalf, and his son Ignat read his acceptance remarks. The text of Mr. Solzhenitsyn's address follows.

There is a long-accepted truth about art that "style is the man" (*"le style est l'homme"*). This means that every work of a skilled musician, artist or writer is shaped by an absolutely unique combination of personality traits, creative abilities and individual, as well as national, experience. And since such a combination can never be repeated, art (but I shall here speak primarily of literature) possesses infinite variety across the ages and among different peoples. The divine plan is such that there is no limit to the appearance of ever new and dazzling creative talents, none of whom, however, negate in any way the works of their outstanding predecessors, even though they may be 500 or 2,000 years removed. The unending quest for what is new and fresh is never closed to us, but this does not deprive our

grateful memory of all that came before.

No new work of art comes into existence (whether consciously or unconsciously) without an organic link to what was created earlier. But it is equally true that a healthy conservatism must be flexible both in terms of creation and perception, remaining equally sensitive to the old and to the new, to venerable and worthy traditions, and to the freedom to explore, without which no future can ever be born. At the same time the artist must not forget that creative freedom can be dangerous, for the fewer artistic limitations he imposes on his own work, the less chance he has for artistic success. The loss of a responsible organizing force weakens or even ruins the structure, the meaning and the ultimate value of a work of art.

Every age and every form of creative endeavour owes much to those outstanding artists whose untiring labours brought forth new meanings and new rhythms. But in the 20th century the necessary equilibrium between tradition and the search for the new has been repeatedly upset by a falsely understood "avant-gardism" — a raucous, impatient "avant-gardism" at any cost. Dating from before World War I, this movement undertook to destroy all commonly accepted art — its forms, language, features and properties — in its drive to build a kind of "superart", which would then supposedly spawn the New Life itself. It was suggested that literature should start anew "on a blank sheet of paper". (Indeed, some never went much beyond this stage.) Destruction,

thus, became the apotheosis of this belligerent avant-gardism. It aims to tear down the entire centuries-long cultural tradition, to break and disrupt the natural flow of artistic development by a sudden leap forward. This goal was to be achieved through an empty pursuit of novel forms as an end in itself, all the while lowering the standards of craftsmanship for oneself to the point of slovenliness and artistic crudity, at times combined with a meaning so obscured as to shade into unintelligibility.

This aggressive impulse might be interpreted as a mere product of personal ambition, were it not for the fact that in Russia (it is impossible to bypass the harsh and extensive experience of my country), in Russia this impulse and its manifestations preceded and foretold the most *physically* destructive revolution of the 20th century. Before erupting on the streets of Petrograd, this cataclysmic revolution erupted on the pages of the artistic and literary journals of the capital's bohemian circles. It is there that we first heard scathing imprecations against the entire Russian and European way of life, the calls to sweep away all religions or ethical codes, to tear down, overthrow, and trample all existing traditional culture, along with the self-extolment of the desperate innovators themselves, innovators who never did succeed in producing anything of worth. Some of these appeals literally called for the destruction of the Poussins, the Murillos and the Raphaels, "so that bullets would bounce off museum walls". As for the classics of Russian literature, they were to be "thrown overboard from the ship of modernity". Cultural history would have to begin anew. The cry was "Forward, forward!" – its authors already called themselves "futurists", as though they had now stepped over and beyond the present, and were bestowing upon us what was undoubtedly the genuine art of the Future.

But no sooner did the revolution explode in the streets, than those "futurists" who only recently, in their manifesto entitled "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste", had preached an "insurmountable hatred toward the

existing language" – these same "futurists" changed their name to the "Left Front", now directly joining the revolution at its leftmost flank. It thus became clear that the earlier outbursts of this "avant-gardism" were no mere literary froth, but had a very real embodiment in life. Beyond their intent to overturn the entire culture, they aimed to uproot life itself. And when the Communists gained unlimited power (their own battle cry called for tearing the existing world "down to its foundations", so as to build a new Unknown Beautiful World in its stead, with equally unlimited brutality) they not only opened wide the gates of publicity and popularity to this horde

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of so-called "avant-gardists", but even gave some of them, as to faithful allies, power to administrate over culture.

Granted, neither the ragings of this pseudo-"avant-garde" nor its power over culture lasted long; there followed a general coma of all culture. We in the U.S.S.R. began to trudge, downcast, through a 70-year-long ice age, under whose heavy glacial cover one could barely discern the secret heartbeat of a handful of great poets and writers. These were almost entirely unknown to their own country, not to mention the rest of the world, until much later. With the ossification of the totalitarian Soviet regime, its inflated pseudo-culture ossified as well, turning into the loathsome ceremonial forms of so-called "socialist realism". Some individuals have been eager to devote

numerous critical analyses to the essence and significance of this phenomenon. I would not have written a single one, for it is outside the bounds of art altogether: the *object* of study, the style of "socialist realism", never existed. One does not need to be an expert to see that it consisted of nothing more than servility, a style defined by "What would you care for?" or "Write whatever the Party commands." What scholarly discussion can possible take place here?

And now, having lived through these 70 lethal years inside Communism's iron shell, we are crawling out, though barely alive. A new age has clearly begun, both for Russia and for the whole world. Russia lies utterly ravaged and poisoned; its people are in a state of unprecedented humiliation, and are on the brink of perishing physically, perhaps even biologically. Given the current conditions of national life, and the sudden exposure and ulceration of wounds amassed over the years, it is only natural that literature should experience a pause. The voices that bring forth the nation's literature need time before they can begin to sound once again.

However, some writers have emerged who appreciate the removal of censorship and the new, unlimited artistic freedom mostly in one sense: for allowing uninhibited "self-expression". The point is to express one's own perception of one's surroundings, often with no sensitivity toward today's ills and scars, and with a visible emptiness of heart; to express the personality of an author, whether it is significant or not; to express it with no sense of responsibility toward the morals of the public, and especially of the young; and at times thickly lacing the language with obscenities which for hundreds of years were considered unthinkable to put in print, but now seem to be almost in vogue.

The confusion of minds at 70 years of total oppression is more than understandable. The artistic perception of the younger generations finds itself in shock, humiliation, resentment, amnesia. Unable to find in themselves the strength fully to withstand and refute Soviet dogma in the past, many

young writers have now given in to the more accessible path of pessimistic relativism. Yes, they say, Communist doctrines were a great lie; but then again, absolute truths do not exist anyhow, and trying to find them is pointless. Nor is it worth the trouble to strive for some kind of higher meaning.

And in one sweeping gesture of vexation, classical Russian literature – which never disdained reality and sought the truth – is dismissed as next to worthless. Denigrating the past is deemed to be the key to progress. And so it has once again become fashionable in Russia to ridicule, debunk, and toss overboard the great Russian literature, steeped as it is in love and compassion toward all human beings, and especially toward those who suffer. And in order to facilitate this operation of discarding, it is announced that the lifeless and servile “socialist realism” had in fact been an organic continuation of full-blooded Russian literature.

Thus we witness, through history’s various thresholds, a recurrence of one and the same perilous anti-cultural phenomenon, with its rejection of and contempt for all foregoing tradition, and with its mandatory hostility toward whatever is universally accepted. Before, it burst in upon us with the fanfares and gaudy flags of “futurism”; today the term “post-modernism” is applied. (Whatever the meaning intended for this term, its lexical makeup involves an incongruity: the seeming claim that a person can think and experience *after* the period in which he is destined to live.)

For a post-modernist, the world does not possess values that have reality. He even has an expression for this: “the world as text”, as something secondary, as the text of an author’s work, wherein the primary object of interest is the author himself in his relationship to the work, his own introspection. Culture, in this view, ought to be directed inward at itself (which is why these works are so full of reminiscences, to the point of tastelessness); it alone is valuable and real. For this reason the concept of play acquires a heightened importance – not the Mozartian playfulness of a Universe overflowing with joy, but a forced playing upon the strings of emptiness, where an

author need have no responsibility to anyone. A denial of any and all ideals is considered courageous. And in this voluntary self-delusion, “post-modernism” sees itself as the crowning achievement of all previous culture, the final link in its chain. (A rash hope, for already there is talk of the birth of “conceptualism”, a term that has yet to be convincingly defined in terms of its relationship to art, though no doubt this too will duly be attempted. And then there is already *post-avant-gardism*; and it would be no surprise if we were to witness the appearance of a “post-post-modernism”, or of a “post-futurism”.) We could have sympathy for this constant searching, but only as we have sympathy for the suffering of a sick man. The search is doomed by its theoretical premises to forever remaining a secondary or ternary exercise, devoid of life or of a future.

But let us shift our attention to the more complex flow of this process. Even though the 20th century has seen the more bitter and disheartening lot fall to the peoples under Communist domination, our whole world is living through a century of spiritual illness, which could not but give rise to a similar ubiquitous illness in art. Although for other reasons, a similar “post-modernist” sense of confusion about the world has also arisen in the West.

Alas, at a time of an unprecedented rise in the material benefits of civilization and ever-improving standards of living, the West, too, has been undergoing an erosion and obscuring of high moral and ethical ideals. The spiritual axis of life has grown dim, and to some lost artists the world has now appeared in seeming senselessness, as an absurd conglomeration of debris.

World culture today is of course in crisis, a crisis of great severity. The newest directions in art seek to outpace this crisis on the wooden horse of clever stratagems – on the assumption that if one invents deft, resourceful new methods, it will be as though the crisis never was. Vain hopes. Nothing worthy can be built on a neglect of higher meanings and on a relativistic view of concepts and culture as a whole. Indeed, something greater than a phenomenon confined to art can be dis-

cerned shimmering here beneath the surface – shimmering not with light but with an ominous crimson flow.

Looking intently, we can see that behind these ubiquitous and seemingly innocent experiments of rejecting “antiquated” tradition there lies a deep-seated hostility toward any spirituality. This relentless cult of novelty, with its assertion that art need not be good or pure, just so long as it is new, newer, and newer still, conceals an unyielding and long-sustained attempt to undermine, ridicule and uproot all moral precepts. There is no God, there is no truth, the universe is chaotic, all is relative, “the world as text”, a text any post-modernist is willing to compose. How clamorous it all is, but also – how helpless.

For several decades now, world literature, music, painting and sculpture have exhibited a stubborn tendency to grow not higher but to the side, not toward the highest achievements of craftsmanship and of the human spirit but toward their disintegration into a frantic and insidious “novelty”. To decorate public spaces we put up sculptures that aestheticize pure ugliness – but we no longer register surprise. And if visitors from outer space were to pick up our music over the airwaves, how could they ever guess that earthlings once had a Bach, a Beethoven and a Schubert, now abandoned as out of date and obsolete?

If we, the creators of art, will obediently submit to this downward slide, if we cease to hold dear the great cultural tradition of the foregoing centuries together with the spiritual foundations from which it grew – we will be contributing to a highly dangerous fall of the human spirit on earth, to a degeneration of mankind into some kind of lower state, closer to the animal world.

And yet, it is hard to believe that we will allow this to occur. Even in Russia, so terribly ill right now, we wait and hope that after the coma and a period of silence, we shall feel the breath of a reawakening Russian literature, and that we shall witness the arrival of fresh new forces – of our younger brothers.

What's Gay About Homosexuality?

E. J. Mishan challenges its claim to normality and legitimacy

According to ex-director Pattullo of the Psychological Laboratory at Harvard University, "In a growing number of schools, children are taught that the gay life is as desirable as the straight – if not indeed more desirable – and such instruction (which is often hard to distinguish from outright indoctrination) begins as early as the elementary grades. The same idea is increasingly propagated on television and in films. And it is strongly reinforced in colleges and universities.

Nor, curiously, has the appearance of Aids affected the growing acceptance of homosexuality as a completely legitimate alternative life style. If anything the opposite has been the case, perhaps because gay-rights activists have been so successful in spreading the notion that heterosexuals are as threatened by AIDS as are homosexuals.

No one will be surprised at Pattullo's mentioning the influence of the media. Whatever its opinion on the subject, even the high quality press tends to follow fashion in using the word "gay" as a euphemism for homosexual. And since Pattullo himself has acquiesced in the practice, there is some excuse for an initial observation on its role and effect.

Those of us with a feeling for language will already have deplored this gratuitous abduction by homosexuals of a once popular and poignant little adjective to serve as gloss on their aberrant activities. This evocative word "gay" has effectively been used as a political weapon against the traditional heterosexual establishment. It has been nicely chosen to impart – to young innocents at least – an air of carefree defiance, a dash of colour, a touch of the exotic perhaps, to what in plain

words is nothing more than the practice of sodomy.

Well may we ask, "What's in a name?". Can anyone really believe that if, instead, the media and the public agreed to refer to homosexuals as "sodomites", the movement would have expanded so fast since World War II? Although the movement's adopted newspeak is, of itself, a force for indoctrination – for "consciousness-raising" in liberationist newspeak – homosexuals, as indicated by Pattullo, have been able to count on the sympathy and promotion of the media. Since the 1960's, films and television have been active in overcoming innate heterosexual aversion chiefly by presenting the viewing public with more congenial – indeed with quite captivating – images of homosexuality. On last Valentine's Day (14 February 1993), for instance, BBC Radio 4 broadcast a "Sunday Outing" which turned out to be a marathon celebration of the "gay and lesbian community". After much fanfare came a repertory of poems, comedies, stories, songs, all testifying to the joys of homosexuality and the bigotry of the establishment. There were coy disclosures of homosexual adventures and much solemn affirmation of the deep caring love between homosexual partners. The programme contrived to give the impression that the frolicsome cheering body of homosexual men and women were in some way the enlightened harbingers of a new age, pointing the way from the bondage of ancient prejudice toward a golden future of universal emancipation.

Then there are those repeated scenes on the television screen of winsome young homosexuals or lesbians la-

menting the persistent prejudice among the public against their adopted "lifestyle", usually followed by, or interspersed with, scenes of touching tenderness between homosexual couples in homoerotic embrace – intended, no doubt, as a corrective to the more vulgar view of furtive pederasty and homosexual rapists. But we need not trouble to strike a balance between alternative images of a union marked by unalloyed affection and mutual respect. For the central issue is not the depth of the feelings of homosexuals, nor the richness of their humanity, nor yet the quality and the diversity of their talents. The central issue turns on that particular in which the homosexual differs from the heterosexual: namely, the physical. To be blunt about it, the male homosexual rejects normal vaginal sex in favour of rectal sex with another male. By whatever lights this latter form of carnal union is rationalised, the recurring question is whether it may justly be regarded, as its votaries affirm, as entirely normal and legitimate, indulgence in it being simply a matter of taste or "sexual orientation".

In affirmation of this belief, the more militant fringe continues to maintain a high profile through the establishment of homosexual clubs, pubs, dance-halls, hotels, recreational centres, in addition to well-advertised rallies, processions and festivals. Unsurprisingly, the extremes will be found in America where homosexual fraternities have been formed in some of the university campuses and, where occasionally, "gay and lesbian studies" appear in the syllabus.

The more articulate protestations of the movement can be boiled down to four contentions. There is, first, the

repeated insistence that it is in his, the homosexual's, profoundest nature to engage in homosexuality – an insistence, however, which does not comport easily with a much favoured allegation of homosexuals that the choice between heterosexuality or homosexuality is simply a matter of taste. We need not quibble about the depth of the homosexual's feelings. Strong feelings are altogether compatible with a wide range of pathological and indeed of vicious propensities: they are no way a measure of morality or normality.

The remaining three contentions are somewhat defensive in nature. First, there is the challenge to produce compelling reasons why society should not "advance" to complete the "sexual revolution". Secondly, there is the evidence of history cited in vindication of the cult. Thirdly, and as a corollary, there is a categorical rejection of the propriety of such terms as abnormal or deviant in a description or judgment of homosexuality. I consider these arguments in that order.

For the man whose morality is guided by the scriptures, there can be no doubt about the issue since, according to the authorised version, "If a man also lieth with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus.20, 12). In our increasingly secular society, however, quotations from the Bible carry little weight whereas scientific opinion carries much. Whatever disputes may exist between different philosophical schools of thought, they all accept the view that the burden of proof lies on the innovator who is challenging the currently accepted theory. A parallel methodology also informs the common conservative maxim that there is a presumption in favour of existing social institutions. Inasmuch as they are deemed necessary to the ordinary business of society or contribute to its cohesion and welfare, such institutions that have endured will continue to command support until arguments and evidence against their continuance prove to be overwhelming. Assuming then the existence of an open and self-critical society, long-established insti-

tutions need no defence against those who would challenge their existence. The burden of proof is on the homosexual opposition to present the cogent arguments and evidence necessary to persuade the long-accepted heterosexual establishment to abandon its claims to legitimacy. So far it has failed to do so.

Secondly, in the attempt to create a legitimacy for homosexuality, it is frequently pointed out that it has prevailed in all civilisations since antiquity, its incidence and character varying with time and place. But the fact that homosexuality has a long history is, of itself, hardly a vindication. As the logician would put it, a prescriptive statement cannot be derived from a descriptive one. Corruption, blackmail, torture, assassination, indeed the whole gamut of vices and pathologies, may be found in every civilisation known to historians – from which lamentable fact it may not be concluded that such actions or propensities are socially acceptable.

Although the character of homosexuality, has indeed varied over time, at no stage in history has it ever been a threat to the institution of the family – not until the advent of the permissive society of the Sixties and the new sexual 'enlightenment' it begot.

The escalation and exaltation of homosexuality in the West since World War II may properly be regarded as but one of a variety of symptoms clearly indicative of civic disintegration. Thus, all the indices of crime, drug addiction, vandalism, street violence, and family breakdown, have been rising remorselessly over the past three decades. Symptoms such as these may be viewed as the neurotic reactions of a society being exposed to what Alvin Toffler has called "Future Shock". Accordingly, the recent spread of militant homosexuality is also to be linked with the shock and sheer pace of technological change and its by-now familiar repercussions; movement, urban compression, traffic congestion, incessant noise, media saturation, accelerating obsolescence, and the anxieties and tensions resulting therefrom. A more particular but related explanation of homosexuality favoured

by psychologists is that it is the common response to an ineffectual or absent father, an explanation that has increased relevance in our over-liberated post-war society, where family ties have been weakening as a result of greater sexual promiscuity.

Experiments have shown that groups of mammals such as rats start to behave in abnormal and anti-social ways after being exposed for a prolonged period to unusual conditions such as excessive light or noise, or to being confined to cramped quarters. Female rats begin to neglect their young or to kill them. Male rats begin to attack the females and to engage in homosexuality. Were the male rats able to speak their mind they would doubtless aver that their newly discovered pastimes were truly liberating experiences and should be enjoyed in all rat colonies.

Such findings should not be assumed to apply to humans. Perhaps not, but neither should the idea be easily dismissed. It is plausible enough to believe that the dominant features of modern life within a seemingly unbounded environment – the incessant haste and clamour, the nightly glare and dazzle, and the fevered excitement, anxiety, and strain, they engender – will act over time to unhinge a man's senses and to distort his instincts.

Turning finally to the propriety of deeming homosexuality to be deviant, the incidental question of nature or nurture should be considered. Implicit in the preceding paragraphs is the assumption that homosexual activity, and the ethos congenial to it, are, in some measure, cultural or environmental phenomena. Some people go as far as to affirm that nobody is born homosexual. Per contra, others will insist that none of us have any choice in the matter. Not surprisingly, many homosexuals themselves roundly declare that homosexual orientation is purely an accident of birth, a point that may be conceded provided we also bear in mind that accidents are what we seek to avoid. The more common view, however, is one that admits of a genetic spectrum. Beginning with extreme heterosexuality there is a continuum – albeit one that becomes increasingly

slender -- as we move through bisexuality toward the other extreme, complete homosexuality. Yet according to this common view, whatever the sexual propensity inherited, it is also influenced by the prevailing ethos and by particular circumstances.

Within a society where heterosexuality is wholly dominant, those men and women whose innate carnal desires stray in varying degrees from heterosexuality will strive to suppress or at least to disguise their sexual inclinations. They may also seek medical treatment for their condition. If, on the other hand, such people grow with, or are indoctrinated with, the belief that homosexuality and heterosexuality are equally valid forms of sexual expression they will have no incentive to resist engaging in homosexual practices.

According to reports published in the USA, the proportion of American males who are completely homosexual lies between 3 and 10 per cent, although whether their homosexuality is largely genetically or culturally determined has not yet been ascertained. What is significant, however, is that among those having homosexual inclinations, there are still many who submit themselves to psychotherapy or surgery in the attempt to correct the condition. The reverse reaction -- that of heterosexual men or women seeking treatment to become homosexual -- is so far as I know, non-existent. So much for the tribute still being paid by homosexuals to heterosexuality.

This fact in itself may be construed as offering some support for the persistence of the belief that homosexuality is an abnormal condition. But warrant for the belief itself rests on firmer ground. This firmer ground has, however nothing to do with the actual incidence of homosexuality or, for that matter, with the incidence of any sexual fetish or fashion. The determinants of normality with respect to the characteristics and the behaviour of any animal are primarily biological, not statistical.

Scientists agree that in the course of evolution mutations continue to arise within any species of animal. Few of them, however, have any survival value within a stable environment, and are

more likely to prove a handicap. Even among the higher forms of mammalian life, mutations or abnormalities may appear regularly but not in numbers sufficient to threaten the survival of the species in question. Inasmuch the sexual union of male and female in any mammalian species is biologically normal -- the inborn instinct tending to such a union being an integral part of 'nature's provision' for the survival of the species -- it follows that an instinct prompting a male to attempt to copulate with another male, or female with female, is abnormal. Such sexual unions are invariably sterile. Certainly any species in which this sexual abnormality became largely or wholly dominant would soon become extinct. An innate or acquired sexual orientation actuating a man to seek carnal gratification with the body of another man rather than with that of a woman is properly speaking a deviant sexual orientation. It deviates from the biological norm that is instrumental in preserving the species.

This deviant condition -- at least in so far as it is not cultivated -- deserves understanding and sympathy, as should any other human affliction. But tolerance and sympathy, no matter how lavishly bestowed, do not extend to a willingness to transform society's existing institutions so as to legitimise and promote sexual deviance.

The seemingly enlightened opinion that the sponsored and supported the Sexual Offences Act of 1967 removing discriminatory laws against homosexuals was one that apparently conceived pederasty to be less of a cultural phenomenon and more of a pathological condition, one therefore more deserving of sympathy than censure. Nonetheless, with the advantage of hindsight, a good case can be made for legal emancipation being now regarded as a error of judgement. After all, the blanket complaint of homosexuals that they are being denied "full human rights" cannot be taken seriously. Nor can their demands that the E.C. intervene to enforce anti-discrimination legislation in all member states. It is not, however, so much a question of the practicability or the cost of such enforcement that is at issue, as the need

for state intervention at all. Wherever circumstances are such that the homosexuality of the individual is not apparent to others, there is no point in enacting anti-discrimination legislation. And, as it happens, these are the circumstances that in fact prevail provided the individual elects not to reveal his homosexuality in his workplace and in his daily affairs. Thus, no more than ordinary discretion is required of any homosexual who really wishes to avoid the possibility of discrimination or harassment. So long as he does not parade or announce his homosexuality, or solicit in public places, he may continue to indulge his homosexuality in private and behind closed doors.

Bearing this in mind, it would have perhaps been more prudent to have let the existing law stand, the greater tolerance sought being encouraged simply by making it abundantly clear to all police officers that homosexuals were not to be prosecuted or in any way molested provided that they behaved with ordinary discretion. For, as is now only too evident, tolerance and sympathy alone do not suffice to appease the activist homosexuals. Once "let out of the closet", they began to caper about the streets and run wild with political ambition. Inspired by exuberant manifestations of counter-culturism, hyped by visions of "gay chic", they began to clamour for more public attention. They strive to popularise and propagandise their "lifestyle", seeing themselves as harbingers of a universal emancipation.

Thus with the unflagging encouragement of films, theatre, radio and television, homosexuals have become increasingly militant, provocative, and arrogant, although -- like other self-styled emancipatory movements -- they are no less eager to be counted among the legions of the martyred, groaning (loudly) under the yoke of an oppressive establishment. And they have sought more political clout by seeking to link their cause with that of the woman's liberation movement or, rather, with the latter's extreme wing that espouses the lesbian way of life. Hence the minting of a new trinity of deadly sins, "racism, sexism, and homophobia," which are seen by

eager victims of "the system" as still raging within the corrupt heart of Western civilisation.

Risible though the militant homosexual's vision of the future may be, his manoeuvrings over the past two decades or so have added to the disruptive elements in our already nervous and disoriented society. For the first time in history, homosexuals have come together to form a politically influential group that, in effect, explicitly challenges the legitimacy of a heterosexual establishment and increasingly seeks confrontation with it. Currently, for example, homosexuals are creating turmoil in America by insisting that they be overtly recognised and respected within the armed forces of that country. More important, the movement seeks, both actively and insidiously, to undermine the one institution that has served mankind since the dawn of history – the family as traditionally conceived, the basic cell upon which every known civilisation has been built.

The homosexual avant-garde has also busied itself recently in contributing to the tribulations of the Christian Church,

and more particularly to the Anglican Church in Britain, still labouring to cope with and contain the recent feminist-inspired incursions into its hierarchy. Encouraged by such success, homosexuals are renewing their demands that they also be officially admitted into the priesthood and, to boot, that both Church and State sanction marriage between homosexual lovers.

Whether the armed forces or the churches eventually surrender to homosexual demands, one thing is certain. The more showy, loud, and defiant the homosexual becomes, and therefore the more hostility he attracts, the higher the cost of his protection to the taxpayer. And not only to the taxpayer. Additional protective legislation presupposes investigative government agencies, entails litigation, and increases the burden on the courts. Enforcement of court decisions necessitates an extension of the bureaucracy. And the coercion involved augments the duties of the police and enlarges their powers.

Seen in perspective, therefore, this incipient development of yet another

internecine conflict has now to be added to those which have emerged in the postwar period and which together have acted to increase the power of the state at the cost of individual freedom.

It is not, of course, wholly impossible that the tide of homosexual success will eventually ebb. But hopes that sanity in this and other respects will come to prevail, that the traditional values and beliefs of the West will somehow be re-established, are not easy to rationalise in the closing years of the Twentieth century – at a time, that is, when the pre-war consensus is badly fractured, when elected governments are eager to be seen moving with the times or are sensitive to the demands of minority groups, and, above all, when the media, especially television, are becoming the dominant influence in shaping our tastes, our beliefs, our morals, and our sense of propriety.

E.J. Mishan was formerly Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics.

Bosnia

Noel Malcolm replies to Mervyn Hiskett

The *Islamic Declaration* which Izetbegovic wrote in 1970 is a general treatise on politics and Islam, addressed to the whole Muslim world; *pace* Mervyn Hiskett (*SR* Vol. 11 No.4) it is not about Bosnia and does not even mention Bosnia. The essential structure of its argument is utterly obscured in Dr Hiskett's account. Izetbegovic starts with two basic elements: Islamic society and Islamic government (*Islamska deklaracija*, p. 19). Islamic

government, he says, cannot exist without Islamic society, and the latter exists only when the absolute majority of the people are sincere and practising Muslims. 'Without this majority, the Islamic order is reduced to mere power (because the second element, Islamic society, is lacking), and can turn into tyranny' (p. 37). From this it is perfectly clear that Izetbegovic's argument rules out the creation of an Islamic government in Bosnia, where Muslims

are a minority. Dr Hiskett fails to mention this fact; he gives the figures for Serbs and Croats but omits to mention that the Muslims are only 43.7 per cent of the Bosnian population.

From this point onwards, Izetbegovic's argument is entirely concerned with countries (unlike Bosnia) where it is possible to create first an Islamic society and then an Islamic government; and henceforth too, his argument is systematically miscon-

strued by Dr Hiskett. Unlike the sort of modern fundamentalist with which Dr Hiskett tries to associate him, Izetbegovic explicitly rejects the notion that the end justifies the means, and attacks the idea of seizing power in order to create an Islamic society from above (pp. 37, 40). His basic idea is that an Islamic society can be created (in a population the majority of which are at least nominal Muslims) only by a long process of education and moral suasion. This idea, brushed aside by Dr Hiskett ('He appears from time to time to be conciliatory...'), is a major and repeated theme of the book. Dr Hiskett calls it 'wooliness concerning ways and means'; but the wooliness must be located either in Dr Hiskett's mind, or over the eyes of his readers.

There is no contradiction between what Izetbegovic says about creating an Islamic society, and what he says about the possible need, once that society exists, to topple a non-Islamic government which may still hold power over it. Once again, let me emphasise that this does not and cannot apply to a state such as Bosnia, where the conditions for an Islamic society cannot be met in the first place. The passage which Dr Hiskett quotes as the 'kernel' of Izetbegovic's thinking cannot apply to Bosnia either: it too is describing a genuine Islamic society when it argues that such a society cannot be organised, socially or politically, on non-Islamic lines.

Dr Hiskett then adds the final touch to his distorted account of Izetbegovic's argument: 'While Izetbegovic demands', he writes, 'that non-Muslims living under an Islamic state shall be "loyal", he clearly does not extend that obligation to Muslims living in a secular state!' In fact, Izetbegovic extends precisely that obligation in the very next paragraph: 'Muslim minorities comprised in non-Muslim communities, so long as there is a guarantee of religious freedom and normal life and development, are loyal and are obliged to carry out all obligations towards that community, except those which harm Islam and Muslims' (pp. 37-8). This is almost the only passage in the book which directly

applies to the political status of the Muslims of Bosnia: Dr Hiskett does not merely ignore it, but seems to deny its existence.

Izetbegovic's general cast of mind is also misrepresented throughout the article. Dr Hiskett paints the picture of a fierce campaigner against the West, someone who rejects all Western values. But in a longer and more important book, *Islam Between East and West*, Izetbegovic tries to present Islam as a synthesis which includes the values of Western Europe. The book contains some eloquent pages in praise of Renaissance art (including portraiture) and European literature; it also has a special chapter praising Anglo-Saxon philosophy and culture. No fundamentalist could have written that.

Dr Hiskett's claim that Izetbegovic and his party threatened 'the imminent creation of the Islamic theocratic state of Bosnia' can be based neither on Izetbegovic's writings, nor on the statements or actions of that party. Dr Hiskett simply claims that he knows 'the real intentions of the Muslims'. He says that 'escalating militancy of the Islamic fundamentalist kind can be profusely documented from Muslim sources', but supplies only one document, a quotation from Kalim Siddiqui, who is not a writer to inspire much confidence. Anyone who knows the country well will know that the Muslims of Bosnia are one of the most liberal and secularised Muslim populations in the world — or were, until they started to be massacred last year. Fundamentalism is quite alien to modern Bosnia. Of course some fundamentalist agitators may have operated there, just as Trotskyists operate in Britain; Dr Hiskett might find references to them, exaggerating their importance, in Muslim extremist publications elsewhere, just as the pages of Trotskyist magazines might contain glowing reports of Trotskyist achievements in Britain. But the fact remains that these are fringe phenomena in both countries.

The only people who believed in a fundamentalist 'threat' in Bosnia were gullible Serb peasants and townspeople who were persuaded by Dr Karadzic

and his men that they were about to be murdered in their beds. This propaganda, carried also on Serbian television, was a necessary part of the operation to radicalise the Bosnian Serbs in order to bring about the violent carve-up of Bosnia and subsequent annexation of large parts of that country by Serbia. The Nazis employed similar tactics when they spread fears about Jewish conspiracies in the 1930s. Nazi propagandists would have been delighted if a scholar in a foreign land had started publishing articles solemnly warning about the 'threat' of Jewish fundamentalism in Central Europe.

One important element in the Serb propaganda campaign has been a distorted and one-sided version of the history of the second world war, in which the Muslims are all painted as Nazi collaborators. The truth is that the Muslims, like the Serbs, fought on all three sides: German, Chetnik and Partisan. It is true that in 1943 an SS division was raised in Bosnia; it spent that year in training in France and Germany, and was stationed for the first time in Bosnia in 1944 at the request of local Bosnian leaders, who wanted it to protect the Muslims of northern and eastern Bosnia, many thousands of whom had been killed by Serbs. Many occupied countries supplied such divisions, including France and Belgium, but few would argue that this justifies the murder of Frenchmen or Belgians today, or that it makes the prospect of Frenchmen or Belgians exercising power in government an intolerable idea. Two whole generations — the majority of the population — have grown up since the war in Bosnia, without any direct memories of the war and with little interest in raking over its history. But others have done, and are doing, the raking for them.

Dr Hiskett writes that the Bosnian Muslim SS division is 'reputed to have massacred 700,000 Serbs' during the second world war. This is an utterly grotesque figure, exaggerating by a factor of at least a hundred. The word 'reputed' seems carefully chosen (as in: 'The Jews are reputed to have written the Protocols of the Elders of Zion').

The standard scholarly works on Yugoslav war deaths, by Bogoljub Kocovic and Vladimir Zerjavic, put total Serb deaths from all causes in the whole of Yugoslavia at 480,000 and 530,000 respectively. The figure for Serb losses in Bosnia itself is approximately 160,000: the main causes of these deaths were the policy of the Croatian Ustasa government and the civil war between the Serb Cetniks and the Partisans (who, in Bosnia, were also mainly ethnic Serbs). To suppose that more than four times that number of Serbs were killed by the Bosnian SS division, in its brief period of operations in Bosnia in 1944, is quite ludicrous. But instead of pointing out how ludicrous this 'reputed' figure is, Dr Hiskett bolsters it with a piece of hearsay from Evelyn Waugh, who had been told, no doubt by embarrassed Croats, that 'Mahometans' were principally responsible for the massacres of Serbs, gypsies and Jews in the Ustasa state. This claim is contradicted by all serious modern studies of the Ustasa. The Muslims were not responsible for the murder of the Jews in Bosnia, and to suppose that they massacred the gypsies is

particularly nonsensical, in view of the fact that most of the gypsies of Bosnia were themselves Muslim. 'Thanks to the intervention of the higher Muslim priests', writes Dr Uhlik, the authority on this subject, 'a greater slaughter of the Bosnian Gypsies was prevented'.

Dr Hiskett's other excursions into Bosnian history are almost equally mistaken. His account of the 'massacres' of the Christian populations of Sarajevo and Skopje is fantasy, not history: we have no record of what happened to the inhabitants when Sarajevo was ceded by agreement to the Turks in 1428 or at the capture of Skopje in 1392. We only know the date of the latter event from an inscription. The Muslim population of Bosnia did not arise, as Dr Hiskett seems to think, from the 'mass clearance' of Christians and the mass importation of 'Turkish Muslim peasants and nomads'. There is a large amount of scholarly literature demonstrating that there was no mass importation of Turks or other non-Slavs into Bosnia; the Muslim population there is indigenous, having been Islamicised gradually and, in the great majority of cases, without coercion.

When Dr Hiskett writes that the

Ottoman practice of population transfers 'almost certainly ... gives rise to "ethnic cleansing",' he is simply wrong. Ethnic cleansing is what happens when a majority population tries to rid its territory of a local minority in order to establish itself as an ethnically homogeneous geographical unit. That is not what the Ottomans were doing when, like many imperial powers in previous history, they transferred populations in some parts of their empire for reasons of political control. But of course it will give satisfaction to Bosnian Serb leaders today to learn that the blame for the ethnic cleansing which they have organised, involving the murder of more than 100,000 people, can be shifted in some vague historical-conceptual way onto the shoulders of the Ottoman Empire. The final implication seems to be that the Muslims, as presumed heirs to the Ottomans, are somehow to blame for the mass-murder which they have suffered during the last year. Such a view of the Bosnian war combines moral blindness with historical ignorance in roughly equal measure.

***In Asia they have always had great empires: ...
in Europe the natural division forms many
nations of a moderate extent, in which the
ruling by laws is not incompatible with the
maintenance of the state. It is this which has
formed a genius for liberty, that renders every
part extremely difficult to be subdued and
subjected by a foreign power.***

Montesquieu

There has to be a Better Way

Beverley Pyke suggests a radical way to resolve the iniquity of the Council Tax

Try to raise a flicker of interest among your acquaintances about the Council Tax and a groan will go up all round. Imagine being a member of the Government, charged with the job of getting it right next time — not another go at local government expenditure, have we not had enough?

Vivian Linacre bravely opened the batting in March with the simplest solution of all, the raising of central government grants from 85 per cent or so, to 100 per cent, saying “More realistically, VAT and Income Tax combined could cover the Chancellor’s entire budget”. The small relief from the worst effects of the Poll Tax (Community Charge) which the present Council Tax undoubtedly brought to a large and influential swathe of residents, seems to have taken the wind out of the sails of many objectors but it is an artificial calm before the storm. When we get a little closer to the next election all the shortcomings of mal-administration will reappear; so it will do no harm to try to solve this problem before we are asked whether the other firm could do a better job. It could be argued that a property tax is justified by its ability to relate personal lifestyle to local expenditure variations and thus provide relief from the Standard Spending Assessment.

The Poll Tax was intended to correct what was held to be an inequitable system. The problem with Rates was the contentious notional assessment of rental related to an arbitrary date years ago; the need to tackle the differences was plain, but under the new proposals, if the basis of assessment was to be changed as most people accepted, some would be better off and others worse. However, the pleading of special cases makes for bad law.

To add to the basic problem, the So-

cialist concept of equality appeared to have gained converts, with no account being taken of the pleasure people derive from living either above or below their income. Arguments for equality do not stand close scrutiny — some are obviously more equal than others — so is there really a case for equal contribution for local authority services?

A reappraisal of the system was certainly overdue, but we should recognize how far Socialism has corrupted the lives of those who should know better. Recall the clamour for ‘fairness’ coming from those with larger houses, who were being charged substantially more than the common level of one or two hundred pounds for the smaller house. The vastly different quality of life that we may choose to enjoy, eccentrics apart, relates what we can afford to the cost of keeping a home in the manner to which we have become accustomed.

In the property world there is a well-understood and at present statistically available ‘unit of accommodation’ known as the ‘Habitable Room’. This has a relevance to the needs of every individual — a place to lay one’s head or a room of one’s own. This is an important factor since it places needs more fairly in relation to usage.

There are other aspects of inequality which both the Community Charge and Council Tax failed to address. Consider the difference between the more spacious suburban scene where not only the postman and the refuse collector, but the fire service and police force and the highways are far less economically spread than in the close-knit urban street. Consider the different civic aspirations and provisions such as parks and gardens and libraries, planning, education and social services, which give pleasant diversity wherever we may dwell. Truthfully, inequality is our particular

delight and inequality our most natural circumstance.

With all the rich diversity of provision of local authority services, the actual cost of them is almost the same, whether in a dense urban area or a more sparsely populated rural area — which, of course, is why there is a Standard Spending Assessment.

To take an actual example, in rural South Hams in Devon, the budget of £14 million would require a contribution related to each of the 156,000 Habitable Rooms, of about £89. In urban Torbay the budget of £22 million would require from each of the 243,000 Habitable Rooms, that same figure of about £89.

Assessment on the basis of Habitable Rooms is demonstrably fairer than a capital valuation of the property because the Habitable Room relates to the Per Capita occupation. I wonder who will take up the challenge, examine the proposal and see if a fairer way can be found — and who will now scream the loudest? Note carefully that no account is taken of the size of room (beyond a minimum of 100 square feet or so) since large rooms are naturally burdened with higher heating and maintenance costs; and further, will it really matter if a few smaller rooms were to be enlarged?

Lastly, consider the cost of collection; no need to chase people who move — buildings do not; rebates for exceptional circumstances may still be needed but valuation and revaluation will not; the records exist in every local authority. The Civic Charge could be introduced next year with the minimum of upheaval — and at a great saving over the administration of the present and previous Charges because, like the extreme fiscal economy of the old Rating system, it is so simple.

Beverley Pyke is an architect.

EDITORIAL

It requires little research to discover that many British teenagers are lacking in discipline, morality and self-esteem. Capable of callous crimes of violence, indifferent to the distinction between 'yours' and 'mine', foul-mouthed, ignorant, ungentle and without moral restraint, they are the root cause of the loss of hope that now infects our society. The true object of social hope is the next generation, and when that generation seems to reject the moral heritage that would enable us to relate to it, a sense of impending extinction fills the collective conscience. Of course there are well-bred young people even now; but they are the exceptions. For when, in former times, was an adult agreeably surprised by politeness and deference in the young, or overwhelmed with relief to discover decency, dignity or chastity in those who were still at school?

Who or what is to blame for this decline? Indeed, is blame appropriate in an age when the box of pleasures has at last been sprung by science? There are those who blame the parents: and especially the parents who neglect their children, or whose marital instability deprives their offspring of a home. But how did such parents come into being, and whence arose the idea that the raising of children can be so easily separated from the discipline of marriage? There are those who blame the media and in particular the relentless diet of violence and promiscuity that is available on video and television. But whence came those films and programmes, and why are people so devoid of personal resources as to watch them in the first place? Others blame the politicians – as though there were any clear social policy that would avoid these evils, and as though the tendency to blame the politicians were not itself a sign of the prevailing depravity. There are also those who blame the schools – as though a teacher, faced with a class of these feral anthropoids, could adopt any strategy besides that of bare survival. The fact is that we are as unable to isolate the cause of this decline as to propose a plausible remedy. All we know is that many young people today are morally and culturally repulsive, and that if nothing is done to arrest the tendency that we observe in

them, our civilisation will soon be dead.

Is that a counsel of despair? Only if we forget the one saving feature of the modern hooligan, which is youth itself. A young person, however badly raised and ill-instructed, may still be moulded by external influence. Moreover, the natural instinct of mankind has endowed every adult with the knowledge of how it is done – namely, through discipline and example. The real question is whether we have the strength of conviction to see the process through.

So far the evidence is not encouraging. The law – without which British society would be nothing – has adopted a deplorably lax attitude to young offenders. One by one the punishments that would influence the young have been removed by the legislature. It has even become an offence for a schoolteacher to strike an unruly child so as to remind him of his need for the approval of his betters. In a court of law the magistrates are denied knowledge of a youth's former offences, so that the punishment can no longer be made to fit the character of the one receiving it. 'Short sharp shocks' are promised by politicians; but in reality custody for a teenager is little more than a brief period of meditation on the next and more glorious offence. And as for those old-fashioned remedies that have recommended themselves to people far wiser than our liberal guardians – the shame of a flogging, or the disgrace of being publicly named – decades of flabby 'criminology' have persuaded our rulers, against all the evidence, that the effect of these salutary measures is precisely the reverse of the one that has been everywhere observed.

This laxness has many causes, and those who refer it to the 'expressionist' educational theories of Rousseau and Dewey – for whom goodness is natural and education merely the process of releasing it – are not entirely wrong. But those daft theories would never have obtained the slightest purchase on the public conscience, had not sentimentality prepared the way for them. And it is sentimentality that underlies our reluctance to provide the other and more arduous guide to youthful passion – that of a good example. We seek the easy way out,

the way of appearing good without the real emotional cost of being so. The desire to impress on the surrounding world an image of our niceness, to win sympathy and escape censure, causes us to make public display of our 'caring' attitudes, to bestow cheap compassion on everything that is low, weak or disadvantaged, and to scoff at those who choose the lonely path of rectitude and judgement. To be 'judgemental' is to commit one of the great post-modern crimes.

Our predecessors were of different mettle, as we well remember from those who most impressed us when we were young: those severe teachers and adults, whose orderly and decent lives supported them in the hard task of correcting us, and whose friendship, when it could be won, was not the sickly camaraderie of a fellow reprobate, but the recognition of our moral worth. They told us uplifting stories of hardship and sacrifice; they were shocked by licence and not ashamed to say so; they frowned on those who debased themselves in crime and immorality, and lived according to precepts which, however hard, were the ultimate source of our respect for them.

Perhaps the greatest damage done by the liberal establishment that has ruled our country since the war has come through the habit of mocking these good people, of representing their virtues as stuffiness and their self-denial as repression. The shallow sophistication of 'Our Age', as Noel Annan has described it in a penetrating study, taught us to look with suspicion on the very decencies which make liberal attitudes possible. The virtues that made our country the haven of liberty in the midst of tyranny and licence, were held up to scorn by those who lacked the will to emulate them. And before long that scorn had been written into law, had seeped into the school curriculum, and become the stock response of highbrow culture and the party trick of the aspiring don. The real question is whether anything now remains in the collective memory of a virtue that was thus lost in a fit of petty-mindedness. It is significant that among intellectual journals it is only in this one that the question can be posed.

Letters

Sir,

R.T. Allen appears to be saying that all our state schools should be Church of England. That is a logical position which I would support. However, it has never been available, for in 1870 the free churches insisted on an arrangement in which the Church of England was at a disadvantage. Rab Butler sowed the whirlwind in 1944 by extending state funding to Catholic and Jewish schools.

To deny to Muslims, Hindus and others what we grant to Catholics and Jews is not a tenable position and would not stand up in an international court.

The challenge is to find ways of imparting notions of morality without invoking religious authority. There seems no reason why this should be any less successful than what we have now. Unfortunately, as the fiasco of the National Curriculum has shown, we have lost both the will and the wit to do things which ultimately make sense.

Stewart Deuchar
Milton Keynes.

Sir,

John Carroll's article *Male and Female* (SR December 1992) was the best thing I have read on the subject for a long time. Family values and the gentle notion of harmony between the sexes deserve to be appreciated and respected rather than belittled as they so often are today.

In Poland these commonplace values live on. The divorce rate is high and most women have to work, if only for economic reasons, but traditional values have not declined as they have done in the West. Feminism hasn't taken root here, partly because there is no leisured middle class to support it and because crass attempts by the Communists after the war to enforce a sexless society had Polish women rushing for their powder compacts. The church has also helped to maintain respect for traditional women's roles.

Carroll outlined various threats to harmony between the sexes and or-

derly family life. Of these the advent of egoistic consumerism is particularly relevant to Poland.

The Communists preserved a greyness which meant that people were the only thing of interest in the social landscape. Now the senses are assaulted by glossy products -- beyond the reach of most people -- and showy shop displays while simple human values are demeaned.

Clive Dunwich's analysis of the anti-free-market effect of current advertising practice (SR March 1993) is pertinent to Poland. Undercapitalised local companies with dowdy packaging and inefficient distribution are a poor match for international concerns with money to spend in order to establish a market share. Dunwich's proposal for countervailing attractively presented and accurate consumer information is an interesting one. Such a service is direly needed here when according to the advertisements, every international brand of toothpaste, washing powder and shampoo is the best and the customer cannot know how older domestic products measure up.

There is much worth respecting and cherishing here and it needs a gentle touch rather than arrant bigotry to conserve tradition without stultifying it.

Robert Mellors,
Warsaw.

Sir,

I read George Chowdharay-Best's article 'Conservatism's big idea' (SR March 1993) with great interest. Skelton's ideas for a "property owning democracy" have a striking similarity to the Distributist ideas of Belloc and Chesterton. It seems that through him they were finally endorsed by the Conservative Party in the 1950's. As the article also pin-points the shift during the 1950's from the idea of share-ownership to home ownership, I wonder why Mr. Chowdharay-Best did not mention the Conservative Party's Industrial Charter of 1947. This was introduced by the then Marquess of

Salisbury in a Party Political broadcast. Among other measures it proposed that the Government should favour those firms which introduced worker-participation schemes. One result was the I.C.I. employee-share scheme.

The shift of emphasis to home-ownership has historic reasons. Until the 1950's it was a working class aspiration. The first Building Societies were founded by workmen as a means of both escaping the tied-cottage and qualifying for the vote. The middle classes were not inclined to tie up their capital in bricks and mortar, preferring to lease or rent a house and invest in more profitable enterprises. By the 1940's rent control and security of tenure had made ownership of houses for rent a liability. Ironically socialist measures and controls benefited middle class rather than lower class tenants. Private landlords refused to re-let vacated properties, offering them for sale instead. The only houses available for rent were council houses and middle class families found themselves obliged to buy a home. From the early fifties the idea of selling council houses began to be mooted, but the strongest advocacy came from a Labour M.P. Simon Mahon of Bootle. He pointed out that a council house cost £1500 to build and that the local authority subsidised its rent by £300 over thirty years. He proposed that the £300 be given to the tenant as a deposit, leaving him to repay the mortgage over thirty years. Home ownership is a means for accustoming people to the responsibility of property (Skelton's "Character") and in the second generation provides a capital inheritance. If as a result of "recession", Conservatism's "Big Idea" has been soured for many, that is because ultimately a permanent distribution of ownership cannot take place within the context of a monetary system designed to concentrate ownership.

Anthony Cooney,
Liverpool

Reviews

Freedom on the Baltic

Robert Thomas

The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence. Anatol Lieven, Yale University Press (New Haven and London) Price: £19.90

The Baltic States suffered much in the Soviet takeover of 1940 both in terms of the human suffering of those people deported or killed, and in the economic devastation. Of equal importance to this physical destruction was the damage which was inflicted upon the idea and understanding of civic order, for at that time the institutions and traditions of political and economic association were ripped up at their roots.

The sheer scale of this damage has ensured that the Baltic States have faced a period of political and economic turbulence as they confront the problems inherited from Soviet rule. In a period of continued change with a new government elected in Latvia in June 1993 and the recent moves to unite Lithuanian conservatives under the banner of the Union of the Homeland party, Anatol Lieven, who is of Baltic descent, has provided a guide to the complexities of politics in these new nations. He combines first hand knowledge of recent events with an account of the history and culture of the area and he makes a critical of the progress which has been made along the difficult path away from socialism.

The Communist Party maintained itself as a monolithic structure dominating the political life of the countries under Soviet control. The unravelling of Soviet power which culminated in the failed coup of August 1991 has left the Baltic politicians struggling to fill this vacuum with new and largely unfamiliar democratic institutions. The political parties which have sprung up since independence are frequently without any clear structure, organisation,

or philosophy. Unfortunately the years of Communist rule have discredited the very term "party", with many politicians seeking to stand aloof from party politics. In Western terms many of these new parties have proved impossible to classify, with a combination of populism and factionalism being far more important than any clear "Left" or "Right" ideological division. Lieven remarks that "In the opaque primeval soup of Baltic politics, these political amoebas split, form new transient unions, and split again. The Lithuanian Sajudis movement, despite its earlier ability to mobilise large numbers of people to resist Moscow's rule, proved unable to remain united around a broadly based political programme before the October 1992 elections. The tendency towards fission helped the return to power of the Communists, now calling themselves the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party.

These political groupings are often based around prominent individuals rather than party institutions. This respect for powerful individuals with access to power and influence harks back to the authoritarian rule of the inter-war leaders such as Antanas Smetona in Lithuania, Konstantin Pats in Estonia and the Latvian Karlis Ulmanis. In their historical context there were positive aspects to these politicians' rule, giving the Baltics a degree of stability during this chaotic period. But the presence of such men in modern times can only add to the volatility of the Baltic States.

Nationalism exerts a powerful influ-

ence on Baltic politics and is firmly rooted in the indigenous peasant cultures and in the intellectual revivalism of the nineteenth century. Lieven understands the positive role that nationalism has played in Baltic politics. It was undoubtedly the decisive force in inspiring ordinary people, such as those Lithuanians who gathered to defend the parliament and television centre in January 1991, to defy Soviet authority.

However, there are dangers in this concentration on nationalism. Too much attention can be paid to the outward trappings and symbolism of politics while neglecting underlying political and economic problems. The process of reform is also obstructed by the populist and anti-capitalist streak which runs through Baltic nationalism. The small Baltic states fear they will be swamped by Western consumer culture. The poet Jaan Kaplinski refers to this as "Barbification", after the toy doll. A more atavistic form glorifies the countryside and regards towns as alien cosmopolitan places. The nationalist hostility to capitalism has been partly responsible for the traditional dominance of trade and capitalist activity by non-Balt minorities such as Caucasians and Jews.

The greatest danger of extreme nationalism lies in potential for conflict with the large Russian minority, particularly in Latvia and Estonia. Tensions between the majority and minority populations are common in most East European countries. In the Baltics, however, this problem is particularly acute where the minority population are identified with the rule of the former

imperial power. Unlike most "colonial" groups the Baltic Russians were generally poor, often working in Soviet implanted heavy industry, and throughout the period of the independence struggle they were forced to contemplate the terminal decline of their Russian homeland. This explains the limited success on the part of the authorities in mobilising the Russians to support the Soviet loyalist, Interfront organisations. Other Russians, supported the Interfronts out of fear of the consequences of independence, while at the same time cursing the incompetence and corruption of the Communist leaders.

Since independence the governments of Latvia and Estonia have started to restrict citizenship to pre-1940 residents and their descendants. Others, notably the Baltic Russians, are to be subject to new naturalisation procedures. These moves contrast sharply with the way in which, before independence, Baltic politicians stressed the trans-national nature of the struggle against Communism. Among more moderate nationalist politicians these measures are presented as an attempt to assimilate the Russians, who are now referred to as "illegal immigrants" or "colonists", to the body

politic. With justification many Russians suspect that more extreme nationalists will seek to use these laws to exclude them permanently from full participation in political and economic life. A policy which equates citizenship with ethnicity rather than a framework of unifying values and common institutions can only increase the risk of instability in both the Baltic and the other wider regions.

Unlike the other countries of Eastern and Central Europe the Baltics lacked even nominal economic and institutional independence. As a fully integrated part of the Soviet economic structure the process of independence has meant massive dislocation of industrial and commercial activities. Not even the Depression of the 1930s can rival the economic trauma suffered by the Baltics during this period, when production declined by 30 per cent over two successive years, and real wages fell by 45 per cent. Many factories which are still officially employing people are continuing to work at minimal rates of productivity. The grim situation has not been helped by the atmosphere of bureaucratic stagnation or by the trade barriers the Baltic states have encountered in the West.

Despite these grave problems the Baltic States have been able to achieve real economic progress. While they may still lag behind some Central European countries in their transition to a market economy, the Baltics have now overtaken the other Soviet republics and the Balkan countries. Both Estonia and Latvia have brought about effective currency reform with the stabilisation of the Kroon and the Latvian Rouble (in March 1993 this began to be gradually replaced by the Lat). The Lithuanian Talonas remains weak, but inter-state transactions have stabilised around the dollar. These currency reforms have paved the way for large scale privatisation which, though often disorganised and spontaneous, has in many cases already led to rapid and clear improvements in quality and business standards. Monetary stability has also encouraged Western firms to invest in the Baltics. With the backing of a highly educated work force with low labour costs, Baltic businesses are now competing in Western and Central European markets. But these positive trends which are re-integrating the Baltics with the rest of Europe, will only persist if these new nations can avoid being drawn into the maelstrom of ethnic strife.

The Marxisant Malady

Dennis O'Keeffe

L'Avenir Dure Longtemps Louis Althusser STOCK/IMEC, Paris 1992

Are some writers and intellectuals wicked or mad and does this affect the value of what they have to say? Anglo-Saxon scholars have traditionally avoided the *argumentum ad hominem*. What people create, intellectually or artistically, has usually been separated from questions of their moral character. A few years ago Paul Johnson's *Intellectuals* drew some very hostile

criticism for violating this convention, discerning as it did an unedifying contradiction between the rotten lives and the political and moral prescriptions of many famous scholars and writers.

Louis Althusser's recently published autobiography, however, reinforces the opposite view that intellectual criticism is often not personal enough. Althusser's writings, advanced in the

English-speaking countries by academics who often thereby made their reputations, played a major part in this country in the pathology of modern sociology, in particular the near destruction of sociology of education. This influence did not stem from an illuminating clarity. On the contrary, Althusser's work is dense and forbidding, obscurantist to the point of night-

mare, though with flashes of crystal-clear malice. For example, in his famous essay on education and ideology, he claims that the formal separation of the private and public realms is "a bourgeois distinction". Hatred of civilisation resounds in such words. In the autobiography we find the chilling claim that communism, if it comes about, will be the abolition of market relations. Althusser still holds that Marxism is a ship which can carry us across the shit (sic) of reality. These admissions are at least frank: we cannot say we have not been warned.

In fact it is reality against which such fanatics are in revolt, regardless of the human consequences. The abolition of markets has catastrophic results, as a vast evidence attests. Althusser hates the facts, exhibiting from first to last a necessary condition of madness: an obsessive refusal to confront reality. He stands squarely in a tradition in which dishonesty and fanaticism merge, in an amalgam which is often not easily separable from insanity. His hero Marx thought nothing of abandoning statistical series when they proved theoretically inconvenient, for example when real wages moved up when his theory required that they should move down.

In Althusser's life insanity and evil intertwine. The autobiography reveals such sustained wickedness that our pity for Althusser's suffering wanes. Madness was his medium, as with many of his contacts, including the wife he murdered. An abiding mania, was that he did not exist. Alas, his ontological presence was all too insistent. He was cruel and vindictive, a self-confessed liar, cheat and scrooge, though spending a fortune on psychoanalysis. He endlessly humiliated his wife, even making love to his conquests in front of her. He stole for devilment, dividing one holiday in Brittany between scouring the beaches for women and shoplifting.

The autobiography also reveals a charlatan, a world-famous Marxist at a time when he did not know Marx's writings well. He admits ignorance even of the history of philosophy, an extraordinary confession for a professor at the École Normale Supérieure.

His bottomless obsession with his own tortured person connects, by inversion, with the brand of Marxism he espoused. He sought release from inner horror, or to gain power over others, or both, in a version of Marx even more dehumanising than Marx's own, in which real persons, whom Althusser could not abide, vanish entirely in favour of bloodless abstractions.

Althusser was in no way an isolated figure, however. The three most influential French Marxists since the Second World War have been Poulantzas, Althusser himself and Sartre. The first, who was paranoid, killed himself; the second killed his wife and the third died in terror and degradation, his abiding legacy his contribution to today's destructive Third Worldism. Sartre too felt threatened by reality, often imagining he was pursued by crayfish. Nor is it only French theoretical Marxism which manifests this social projection of interior pain and misanthropy. Marx himself was a prime architect of the "hermeneutics of suspicion", the revolt against the world, the insistence that nothing is what it seems, that beneath all surfaces lie sinister, hidden powers. The proper vocabulary for such a disposition is unclear. There is no doubt, however, about the pathologies into which it merges: paranoia, megalomania, manic-depression.

It is hard to disagree with Solzhenitsyn that Stalin was a terror-struck paranoid. Castro's marathon broadcasts are part of a wider manifest megalomania. Guevara's Sartre-like, bloodthirsty sentimentality, links with a seemingly ubiquitous tendency of Marxist movements to murder and chaos. All these phenomena suggest a pathology as ready for terrorism or despotic politics as for "philosophical" activity.

Nor is Marxism proper the whole story, which concerns a wider antinomianism, especially apparent till recently in France. Some people, driven by discord within, seek to destroy the order without. Every cultural and moral canon must be overturned. So many celebrated French Marxist scholars are now known — soon after their deaths — to have shared Althusser's

moral wilderness. Barthes with his rentboys, Foucault with his violent homosexuality, were intellectual outragers and disrupters, their disreputable lives all of a piece with their intellectual attacks on tradition, their assault on the "bourgeois order", to use Sartre's impoverished description for civilisation itself. Nor does it put one on Derrida's side to learn that Althusser thought him the greatest modern French philosopher. Althusser and his friends and followers in the free countries have sought to overturn the art and wisdom of the ages. Their attempts to destroy literature and thought cannot be separated from their personal moral sickness.

Glaring intermittently through the ugly tale, is the longstanding moral bankruptcy of the French Communist Party. Althusser comes back repeatedly to this supine arm of the old Soviet Foreign Office, with its bullying of members, its internal squabbles and empty debates. Only the most perverse of people could have stayed with it through all its slavish adherence to Moscow. Althusser himself never abandoned either the Party or the Utopian fantasy. Indeed, as we ponder the unpleasant reality of France's radical intellectuals, we might usefully distinguish between the disenchanted mainstream, lodged despairingly in the common gutter, and the minority, perhaps even more deranged, who still thought they were looking at the stars.

*A nation
without the
means of
reform is
without
means of
survival.*

G. K. Chesterton

The Morals of Moderns

Ian Crowther

Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals, Iris Murdoch, Chatto & Windus, 1992, £20. **Of Virtue: Moral Confusion and Social Disorder in Britain and America**, edited Digby Anderson, Social Affairs Unit, 1992, £15.95. **The Family: is it just another life choice?**, Jon Davies (editor), Brigitte Berger, Allan Carlson, IEA 1993, £6.95. **Families without Fatherhood**, Norman Dennis, George Erdos, with an introduction by Professor A.H. Halsey, IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1992, £7.95. **Literature and Moral Understanding: A Philosophical Essay on Ethics, Aesthetics, Education, and Culture**, Frank Palmer, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, £30.00.

Modern moral philosophy, at least until quite recently, has paid scant regard to our natural desires and feelings, seeing them as belonging to the realm of 'facts' and therefore to the domain exclusively claimed by science. But to the scientific mind, moral language is little more than a kind of polite figleaf which we adopt to hide our naked self-interest from ourselves and others; hence to attribute any sort of moral property to human nature is as nonsensical as to attribute it to nature as a whole. We may talk, for example of noble anger or selfless love, of generosity, gratitude and honesty, but all such virtues are really only the behavioral means by which we pursue our non-moral ends of survival and happiness.

The one apparent refuge from this reductive view of the moral life has been that first constructed by Kant with his "moral law within." Granted that there is a world of causally determined facts, there is also another, separate world of rationally determined values. As autonomous moral agents, we can transcend our natural desires and inclinations: 'never mind your emotions, you must do what's right.' But no more than scientific materialism does Kantian idealism allow us to express our moral selves through our natural feelings. It is Iris Murdoch's concern to put back together our moral lives and our ordinary lives which has evidently shaped much of the thinking behind her sprawling but impressive *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. "Does not value colour almost all our apprehensions of the world, and is the

colour something which must be withdrawn in order to purify the will?" Murdoch's fear is that values are being "squeezed out" of the modern world, on the one hand by making them "ineffable or conceptually inaccessible", on the other by reducing them to a utilitarian hedonism.

In practice, modern man leads a morally divided life: at times as the apparently rational self, much given to laying down the law (thou shalt not smoke, hunt foxes, invade my 'space'); at other times as the predominantly utilitarian self, more preoccupied with 'feeling good' than 'being good', and blind to the difference between these two conditions. The 'good' then is either identified solely with the free choices made by an autonomous will or with some ulterior, non-moral motive having to do with pleasure or happiness. In neither position is there any room for the virtues to take root and develop, since in neither are a person's natural needs and inclinations moralized. The individualism common to both positions would in any case sit uneasily with such traditional virtues as duty, loyalty, patience, piety, reverence and obedience, all of which assume that a person's moral life is defined as much by heteronomous as autonomous considerations.

To pay attention to virtue or the virtues is to pay attention to the kind of *persons* we would be, and not simply to the kind of 'values' we should choose. We develop virtuous habits through cultivating such dispositions as will form our moral character in accord with our natural or supernatural end as

humans. The virtues, as perfected human desires, presuppose a conception of what is good for man: a *summum bonum*. Moreover, they cannot easily be acquired or exercised apart from a *habitus*, or way of life, in which there is general agreement about what constitutes a good character. Unfortunately, any attempt to define what is good for us is seen as incompatible with a liberal democratic society, and with the whole effort of enlightened modernity to liberate morality from historic communities and traditions. Since in modern society each individual must be free to pursue his own interest or choose his own versions of the good, the only moral maxims allowable in public life are those of a purely formal kind, designed to secure co-operation between such self-centred individuals. The minimal morality generated by the imperative to 'do as you would be done by', is thus perfectly acceptable to the "unencumbered" self (as Michael Sandel felicitously dubbed it) celebrated by liberal individualism. But rules of fairness and justice, useful for the management of conflict in a morally pluralistic society, hardly suffice to produce a community of the kind which sustains virtuous characters: characters who habitually feel they have 'no choice' but to act in a certain way; the very antithesis of what modern man is meant to feel!

As one after another of our civilisation's moral communities succumbed to an individualist, contractarian ethos, the only remaining site of the encumbered self was the family; and now that

institution, too, is being atomised out of existence. It was in the family, "the primary moral domain" as Patricia Morgan calls it in her contribution to *The Loss of Virtue*, that for generations Western man learned to subordinate his baser, egoistic instincts to habits of self-discipline and self-control. The economic system of liberal capitalist societies has depended for much of its vitality on the strong, independent characters produced by strong, stable families. Ironically, however, the moral counterpart of liberal capitalism — the view that individual choice and desire are absolute measures of right and wrong — has rendered the marriage bond vulnerable to the claims of self-interest. The family, like other modern institutions, and indeed like modern society itself, has come to be seen as no more than the sum of its individual members, rather than as the embodiment of social and even sacred obligations binding upon its members. Patricia Morgan writes of the "concerted drive to change people's perception, in which words like marriage, husband or wife, and parent, are expunged in favour of 'partner', 'relationship' and 'carer'. The presumption that children have two parents with a commitment to each other is mocked ... Where 'everybody has their own definitions of family life' or there 'are as many definitions of the family as families', the individual alone chooses what is or is not a family, and anything the individual chooses is a family for her ... The family as the clearest example of an institution based on a transcendent bond gives way to autonomous individuals with random living arrangements and sensory experiences cut off from millennia of human experience."

The institution of the family, which in its traditional form resists the onward march of moral individualism, in its contemporary, deinstitutionalised form reinforces it. So is today's family, in the apt title of a recent IEA book, *Just another lifestyle choice?* To the extent that it is, it is bound to accelerate the centrifugal tendencies of modern society. As the book's editor, Jon Davies, writes: "Marriage is now the great romantic act: everything ven-

tured on one great gesture of individualism, with no attention at all being paid to the wider kin, very little ... to close kin; and not very much to anything other than the most formal of religious or societal obligations. The logic of this drive to individualise the marriage decision is of course the drive to individualise the marital relationship itself, with both spousal and parental obligations being increasingly regarded as matters of taste and fashion rather than of permanent social commitment." Children who have been deprived of strong emotional ties, whether because of divorce, neglect or their parents' misguided permissiveness, are likely to grow up deficient in those virtuous dispositions — voluntary restraint, respect for others, a sense of personal responsibility — which require for their blossoming the soil of stable, human relationships; which require, in short, to be *lived*. Those who keep on mindlessly chanting the mantra that 'the family is not deteriorating it is just changing' are apparently prevented by their libertarian ideology from seeing what by now numerous research studies have made abundantly clear, namely "that the children of parents who do not follow the traditional norm (i.e., taking on personal, active and long-term responsibility for the social upbringing of the children they generate) are thereby disadvantaged in many major aspects of their chances of living a successful life. On the evidence available such children tend to die earlier, to have more illness, to do less well at school, to exist at a lower level of nutrition, comfort and conviviality, to suffer more unemployment, to be more prone to deviance and crime, and finally to repeat the cycle of unstable parenting from which they themselves have suffered." This is how Professor A.H. Halsey (an ethical socialist) sums up the shocking facts in his foreword to another IEA book, *Families without Fatherhood*. Its authors, Norman Dennis (also an ethical socialist) and George Erdos, deplore the insistence of liberals and libertarian socialists that for the child there is nothing to choose between different household arrangements, when all the evidence

demonstrates that "unless a child is brought up in the constant atmosphere of human beings negotiating the business of getting on with one another, co-operating, controlling their anger, affecting reconciliations, he cannot learn what it is to be an effective member of a social group. He can only learn this as he learns his native tongue, by experiencing the phenomenon, in this case social interaction, taking place outside of himself, yet his being part of it densely and continuously. For this he needs the presence of two adults in close interaction constantly in his immediate environment."

As family ties are progressively weakened, so, too, are the internal restraints on individual behaviour, necessitating ever more external restraints. From fatherless or fractured or feckless families, there emerges the unsocialised young adult (in particular, the unsocialised young adult male), whose motives for behaving well, to the extent that they exist at all, are of a crudely utilitarian sort. For increasing numbers of people, then, the only effective brake on criminal or bad behaviour is the fear that the costs of such behaviour will outweigh the benefits. It is not this calculating attitude which should frighten us so much as the fact that it receives a kind of covert approval from a society that itself eschews moral judgements and frames its laws in the same transparently utilitarian spirit; no more crass example of which is the Criminal Justice Act 1991. It seems the only arguments we can offer for obeying the moral and criminal law are those formulated by accountants. It would certainly be odd and indeed self-contradictory to rely on non-moral imperatives to restore a more virtuous society. But if we can no longer rely on the family for this purpose, what resource is available to us, other than coercion, as a means of curbing delinquency and crime? We could perhaps start by proclaiming our commitment to a good or virtuous society more vigorously, instead of merely to a 'healthy' or 'wealthy' or 'classless' or 'opportunity' society. But here we run into the familiar difficulty that modern, liberal society acknowledges, only what Alasdair MacIntyre has

called certain "secondary virtues", notably co-operation, fairness, tolerance, though even this last, most typical of liberal virtues is today being stigmatised as politically incorrect for reasons which John Gray explores (and deplores) in his contribution to *The Loss of Virtue*. "The idea of toleration," writes Gray, "goes against the grain of the age because the practice of toleration is grounded in strong moral convictions. Such judgements are alien to the dominant conventional wisdom according to which standards of belief and conduct are entirely subjective or relative in character, and one view of things is as good as any other. A tolerant man, or a tolerant society, does not doubt that it knows something about the good and the true; its tolerance expresses that knowledge. Indeed, when a society is tolerant, its tolerance expresses the conception of the good life that it has in common ... Toleration as a political ideal is offensive to the new liberalism ... because it is decidedly non-neutral in respect of the good. For the new liberals... it is wrong for government to discriminate in favour of, or against, any form of life animated by a definite conception of the good."

This new liberalism is in fact the regnant ideology of our time, almost irrespective of which political party is in power. The attitudes it assiduously promotes have become increasingly well entrenched over the past thirty years. Thus in a period when schools might have helped shore up our society's crumbling moral foundations, they have been prevented from doing so, since nobody even dared raise the question of how we might create, or recreate, a more virtuous society, whether through education or any other means. The modern classroom is simply modern society in microcosm, which is to say, its ethos is primarily hedonic and 'non-judgemental'. No wonder, then, that today's school child is often doubly disabled. Children, who because of progressive teaching methods, do not sufficiently exercise the strenuous virtues of diligence, patience and perseverance, will tend to be morally as well as intellectually backward. The sense in which the 'intellectual' connects

with the 'moral' is well understood and explained by Iris Murdoch in a passage of her book which I would commend to every teacher: "Learning is moral progress because it is an asceticism; it diminishes our egoism and enlarges our conception of truth, it provides deeper, subtler and wiser visions of the world. What should be taught in schools: to attend and get things right. Creative power requires these abilities. Intellectual and craft studies initiate new qualities of consciousness, minutiae of perception, ability to observe, they alter our desires, our instinctive movements of desire and aversion. To attend is to care, to learn to desire to learn."

Even where the National Curriculum and attainment tests are now compelling schools to introduce a more demanding regime, there still remains the progressive proscription on adding to the three "R's" of tradition the further two of right and wrong. Not that educators hostile to traditional moral conceptions are above promoting their own brands of sub-political moralism. At best the watered down morality of Comparative Religion is taught. At worst, as Dennis O'Keeffe observes in *The Loss of Virtue*, "there is no real moral discourse. Truth, courage, mercy and magnanimity are discussed no more than the mainly prudential virtues of diligence and perseverance. Even respect for others is diminished as a value by its unhealthy, overcharged predication on questions like race, cultural diversity and 'gender'. The real and incontestably vital morals of conduct are submerged in a glutinous moralism."

It is no coincidence, then, that our society's indifference to the moral conduct of its citizens extends to the classroom where, for example, the teaching of literature exhibits a similar indifference to the moral conduct of the characters depicted in imaginative works. Children are more likely these days to be treated to a feminist reading of *Romeo and Juliet* or a post-modernist perspective on Jane Austen than to any attempt to draw forth from a play or novel such moral response as are properly evoked by the behaviour of its fictional characters. This is not to say

that the contribution of literature to moral education lies in its providing a stock of bland, edifying propositions about 'life' or 'the world'. But it is to suggest that we develop our powers of practical reason, as through a closer attention to literature, defined by Aristotle as knowing how to feel, or how to respond appropriately and in the right degree towards the appropriate object. This is the view defended by Frank Palmer, a former teacher himself, in a book which argues eloquently for the link between *Literature and Moral Understanding*. It is what literary works *show* us about life, concretely, rather than what they tell us about life, abstractly, that explains at once the artistic and morally educative power they can exercise over us. As Palmer puts it: "In showing, as opposed to telling, a work of art does not present us with descriptions of the world (from which we are left to infer propositions about life), it acquaints us with scenes, objects, people, and circumstances in such a way that we learn through that acquaintance." This 'knowledge by acquaintance' which we gain from literature awakens rather than anaesthetizes our moral sensibility in a way that mere knowledge by precept or factual description does not. "He who only 'knows' that vindictiveness is wrong," writes Palmer, "because people say so, no more understands what is wrong with vindictiveness than the man who only 'knows' that the Atlantic Ocean is beautiful because it says so in the guide-books appreciates its beauty. We do not understand or appreciate beauty and ugliness except by being acquainted with beautiful and ugly things. Similarly, we do not understand what is wrong with vindictiveness and spite unless, when they manifest themselves, we are repulsed by vindictive and spiteful acts, finding in them a coarse and vulgar brutality of attitude and a range of ugly passions." Literature, in short, discloses to us, as our limited experience can not, the full range and nature of the phenomena to which abstract moral predicates apply.

Iris Murdoch, too, sees literature as "full of values", for which reason she reserves some of her most powerful polemics for the nihilistic doctrines of

structuralism and 'deconstruction' which divorce a literary work's meaning from truth or value, locating it instead entirely in its linguistic structure. The structuralist dogma that language uses us, rather than the reverse, has an inherent plausibility in a scientific age seduced by the notion that surface phenomena, our everyday modes of evaluation, our ordinary perceptions are, in truth, mere epiphenomena. For Murdoch "the ideal deconstructionist is more like a scientist who shows that things are *absolutely* not what they seem (they really are made of atoms). He will tell us that the literary object, as we have hitherto understood it, is pure phenomenon,

below which lies something quite different from what its naive creator believed and intended, or what the naive reader imagines he perceives. In fact the *real* work of literature is what the *critic* produces. The deconstructed work is the real work. The notion that every sentence we use bears, indeed consists of, the invisible *traces* of other meanings created by a vast non-human system, carries serious implications. We seem to be losing our concept of the individual ... Value, morality, is removed by the structuralist picture if taken seriously. The removal of value is, in a quiet way, characteristic of this age." Structuralism as Murdoch understands it, is a new form of determin-

ism. And as she says, "Determinism is always reappearing in new forms since it satisfies a deep human wish: to give up, to get rid of freedom, responsibility, remorse, all sorts of personal individual unease, and surrender to fate and the relief of 'it could not be otherwise'". At the heart of Murdoch's book (and indeed of the other books cited here) is the threatened figure of the "responsible moral spiritual individual". This is the individual, first idealised, then (always imperfectly) realised, who has also been at the heart of Western civilisation, at once forming it and formed by it. The fate of the one is inextricably linked with the other.

Chinese Puzzles

Jessica Douglas-Home

Laogai: the Chinese Gulag Hongda Harry Wu. Forward by Fang Lizhi. Westview Press. £11.95

In March *The South China Morning Post* reported The President of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of China, Mr Liu Fuzhi, speaking thus: "We have to see with a sober mind that class struggle will exist over a long period of time within certain areas of our society because of domestic and international factors... 2.9 million people faced criminal charges during the last five years. A further 871,922 people were arrested for serious crimes, and 102,083 people arrested for taking part in crime syndicates... Counter-revolutionary activity, aimed at toppling the regime and endangering national security, has been cracked down on with the help of China's secret police."

In a recently published book, *Laogai* —*the Chinese Gulag*, Hongda Harry Wu shows us how to interpret Mr Liu's communist newspeak. In China today arrest is arbitrary, without legal proce-

dures. There is no criminal code. And the 'crimes' for which those millions were arrested have never been defined by law. The value and importance of this book is that Wu documents the Chinese Communist Party's most closely guarded secret for the first time — the exact locations of 990 (out of approximately 5,000) Labour Reform Camps, all over the vast country. With few exceptions it is not possible for the outsider to spot a Laogai because they appear from the outside no different from regular factories, farms or mining operations. Since so many of the products made within these camps are for international consumption, it is time that the international community, particularly the business community, who are investing heavily in China at present, became aware of what happens to those who are arrested and enter the Chinese Communist Party's Labour Reform System (Laogai).

Wu, a political detainee, was sent into the Laogai for 19 years. He was born in Shanghai in 1937, the son of a local bank manager. Despite his bourgeois background, he was accepted by Beijing College of Geology in 1955, where he generally avoided politics. However, during the CCP's Let A Hundred Flowers Bloom Movement, he was urged by a Party secretary to offer a few criticisms of the Communist party. Soon, along with thousands of intellectuals, he was labelled a counter-revolutionary rightist for his innocent remarks, and eventually arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment due to his "poor attitude" (that is his refusal to admit guilt).

Wu was sent to twelve different Laogai. Then in 1979 Deng Xiaoping announced that the Anti-Rightist Movement had been "necessary" but perhaps a bit exaggerated. Luckier than most, Wu was released. In 1985 he

managed to obtain a passport to the United States, where he now lives.

Calmly and meticulously Wu documents the ideology behind the complex structure of the camps and the cruel policing within them, which today hold between 16-20 million of the present Chinese population. The purpose behind the Laogai is not, as in prisons in Western democracies, to maintain order in society or to punish criminals in accordance with the law, but to protect and consolidate the dictatorship of the Communist party. Through beating, torture, solitary confinement, 'struggle' sessions and criticism meetings, where the inmates are expected to inform on each other, the individual is taught to return to Deng Xiaoping's four basic principles – all concerned with the upholding of the socialist path through Marxism/Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought.

The methods used to maximise convict production are carefully laid down. A definite daily quota must be met; otherwise the convict is guilty of "lazy work attitude"; if people are unable to work due to sickness, the public security police take this as evidence that they are "work avoiders" and the already rationed food may be decreased or immediately cut off. Other sanctions used when quotas are not fulfilled include solitary confinement, confinement to handcuffs or foot shackles while not at work, sending convicts to intensive mass education teams or calling meetings of the convicts' work group to criticise their poor work attitude.

Wu explains how the camps differ from their Nazi and Soviet-counterpart in two particular respects. Firstly the "Thought Reform" mentioned above; secondly, the prison system is so extensive that it pervades all aspects of national production, and has such careful planning and organisation that the commodities produced in the camps form an integral part of the economic system of the country. There is virtually no product that is not manufactured in a camp. Wu produces a huge list of products sent for both the domestic and the international market. The most popular products for export are

coffee, tea, spices, salt, cement, plastic, rubber, textiles, ceramics, glass, iron, steel, copper, lead, nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery, electric machinery, sound equipment and vehicles: all of these are produced by slave labour, in appalling conditions.

Once you enter a Laogai it is unlikely you will ever come out of the system. If you have endured the treatment and survived to be "released", your status as a displaced person ensures that you are then relocated to a Forced Job Placement Camp – a different name for roughly the same place. For example the camp, LRC No.1 Detachment of Beijing, twice inhabited by Mr Wu, and consisting of 80,000 prisoners of whom 15,000 fit the category of Forced Job Placement Personnel. Known as "ex-prisoners", they have a few minimal privileges, such as being allowed to be with their families (who must work in the camp). But they will all remain in the Laogai for life, and in turn their children will grow up to become workers on the farm.

This book is aimed at three types of people: First, businessmen who may have entered into joint ventures with ethnic Chinese but have been unable to know until now which of the factories in the provinces where they operate are slave labour camps in disguise. Wu now fills this gap with maps, photographs and documentation. It is to Volvo's credit that they refused a joint venture once they found out that their product was to be manufactured in a Laogai. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the Sino-French Joint venture with Remy Martin.

Secondly it concerns the consumer: in Appendix 2 Wu lists the hundreds of exported commodities with the code numbers of the camps which supply each product. Thirdly, the book is for intellectuals and politicians: it is fashionable to hear, even from Human Rights LEGCO members in Hong Kong, the phrase that "Marxism is dead", with the implication that life will now be very different for the ordinary Chinese. Seldom do those who utter this slogan realize that, even if the ideology now lacks credibility, those who continue to operate the structure

have not themselves died. Their work and their means of survival involve corruption, extreme cruelty and lies which continue to permeate every transaction. Wu's salutary prologue, written just before the book went to press, describes the general collapse of faith in Socialism in Chinese society at large during the last ten years. But the result is the opposite of that expected by gullible Westerners. In failing to produce the required results through political education and Thought Reform, the staff within the camps have increased the use of violence, so as to ensure that production targets are met.

*Why
shouldn't
we quarrel
about a
word? What
is the good
of words if
they aren't
important
enough to
quarrel
over? Why
do we
choose one
word more
than
another if
there isn't
any
difference
between
them?*

G.K. Chesterton

Man and Superpower

Jillian Becker

Free Agent Brian Crozier, Harper Collins 314 pp. 1993. £16.99

The knights of legend were armed against evil with truth, but also with a sword. The author of *Free Agent* had only truth to fight with. If there is something Quixotic about him, it is in the pertinacity with which he endured mockery and calumny and still pressed on against tremendous odds. He is no 'obsessive eccentric' — to use a phrase of his own — and is under no illusions, quite the contrary; he was tilting not at windmills but at veritable giants — the covert legions of the Evil Empire. And he won.

His lucidly written book is an important document. It deals with the most significant political events of the last half-century; and while it reveals a great deal, including incidentally the writer's own (unclaimed) vision, courage, honour and extraordinary skills, it also holds a dark, impenetrable mystery. It is, without exaggeration, an amazing tale.

To begin with, it is surely an astonishing thing that one man should take upon himself the task of saving the free world — that is to say civilization itself — from defeat and destruction. But that, simply but truly, is what Brian Crozier did.

After the descent of the iron curtain, Crozier saw sooner and more clearly than most that the Evil Empire, being held back from attempting a hot war of conquest against the West because the weapons of such a war would destroy the attacker along with the attacked, was striking instead with subversion, terrorism, and lies — or 'disinformation' as jargon had it — and that the governments of mighty nations were reluctant to admit what it was doing, or to fight back.

In 1954 he was appointed editor of *The Economist's 'Foreign Report'*, the

limited-circulation news-sheet of background information which in those days was highly reliable. He also had a contract with the BBC foreign service to broadcast talks in French and Spanish. Travelling the paths he had to in order to pursue the facts and insights necessary for his work, and helped a little by recognised chances and educated guesswork, he found himself in touch with MI-6, which he began to supply occasionally with information. Another chance brought him into contact with the French intelligence service, which led to his being invited to attend high level international meetings for the exchange of intelligence and opinion among French, Dutch, and German persons of influence. He wrote a number of books which sold a great many copies, were translated into numerous languages, and brought him much appreciative notice; but also provoked hostility from those whose violent activities, subversive intentions, or false arguments he exposed.

In 1964, when he left *The Economist*, he was approached by three secret services. One was the Information and Research Department of the Foreign Office (IRD), which invited him to become a parttime consultant. Another was MI-6 which asked him to continue to provide material. The third was an organisation called the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). The CCF was a creation of the CIA, though Crozier did not know that at the time. He was asked to take over the running of its press agency service, providing reports and features to newspapers in the Third World, which was being inundated with Communist propaganda. The CCF wanted Crozier to make it pay as a commercial enterprise. He accepted, on conditions which

were all agreed to. So Forum World Features (FWF) was created.

To Crozier's justified chagrin, the conditions he had insisted on — which would have given him independence of decision — were not fulfilled by the CCF, and he was ready to resign. Then he found out that the CCF was a CIA creation, but far from considering this an additional reason for resigning, he saw it as a reason for staying on. He severed the links between his news service and the CCF, but began to deal directly with the CIA.

In 1968, when the democratic governments of a number of West European countries — most dangerously France — came close to being overthrown by internal Communist (chiefly Trotskyite and New Left) activity, the KGB massively increased its support for subversion, mainly with its 'peace offensive'. Crozier perceived that a research centre was needed to gather and expose the facts about subversion. He consulted Leonard Shapiro of the LSE, the great scholar of Soviet history, who suggested the establishment of an institute. Crozier took his advice, and set up the Institute for the Study of Conflict (ISC). Shapiro agreed to be its Chairman. Among the other famous names associated with it were Professors Hugh Seton-Watson, Max (later Lord) Beloff, and Richard Clutterbuck, a specialist in the subject of Terrorism. Crozier raised the money for it from private sources, chiefly Shell, BP, and Gulf Oil. The Foreign Office, while taking a semi-benign interest in ISC, would not give it any financial support, nor would the CIA. But it soon proved its worth.

Among its early achievements was a report on Communist intentions published in 1972 which had a real effect

in that it influenced the East-West 'detente' negotiations at Helsinki, contributing to the contents of 'Basket III'. It also became required reading in Western intelligence and security services and defence colleges. However, it made Brian Crozier personally a prime target of the KGB — 'Public Enemy Number 1', according to a KGB defector who met him some years later — and he was subjected to what he accurately describes as a 'great smear campaign'.

The campaign followed a fairly regular pattern. An article in *Time Out*, the *Leveller*, or *Militant* would be followed up in the *Guardian* or *Observer*. Then at Question Time in the House of Commons, Communist-fellow-travelling MPs would use the 'press revelations' to ask a barrage of questions about ISC and its connections with the police, the army, the MOD, the FO, the Home Office, and the secret services. So far did the effects of his anathematizing go, that when he wrote an article for the *Daily Telegraph* disputing the version of certain events presented in a 'World in Action' TV programme which featured two defectors from the CIA — Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball — as objective witnesses, the printers threatened to go on strike if the editors did not agree to drop it. The campaign even spread abroad, through the unrelenting efforts of the KGB, into Third World newspapers — though without their editors necessarily knowing that they were being used.

In 1973 the Labour Party dropped its list of proscribed organisations to which no member of the Labour Party might belong, so 'opening the floodgates to subversive penetration of the party.' The extreme Left began systematically taking it over, and in 1974 Labour came to power with 'a manifesto almost identical' to that of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

Crozier's response was to increase and intensify his contributions to the propaganda war. Under his direction, the reputation of the ISC grew internationally. The IRD, still nested in the Foreign Office, had commissioned him to produce a series of counter-insurgency studies for

distribution to selected governments. But soon the IRD was to have its wings clipped fatally. It had grown to a staff of 400. The Foreign Office insisted that cuts be made, and then made them far too drastically, dismissing experts who could never be replaced and so crippling the organisation. Then all IRD reports on subversion in Britain were suspended by the Labour Government; and eventually David Owen, as Foreign Secretary, abolished the IRD completely.

It was only one of the secret services which Western governments concertedly weakened just at the time when they were most needed. The CIA was almost destroyed under President Carter. Its plans were made subject to Congressional review, so thousands of informants dropped away, leaving at most a couple of dozen. The Privacy Act made it impossible for the FBI and CIA to vet civil servants or monitor spies. Along with 'detente', this self-damaging policy, giving the KGB the run of the coop, helped to bring the Soviet bloc closer to winning the cold war than any historian has yet recognised.

In 1976, when Margaret Thatcher became Leader of the Opposition, Crozier briefed her on subversion in Britain. An unofficial organisation, named Shield, developed to keep her informed. Its members were on the one side givers of information — Crozier and two or three others — and on the other receivers of it: Margaret Thatcher, Sir Keith Joseph, William Whitelaw and an unenthusiastic Lord Carrington. Its remit was to keep a watch on domestic subversion such as 'entryism' in the Labour Party, the trades unions, churches, schools, universities and media, and other plots to turn Britain into an East European type of 'people's democracy'. It lasted until 1979, when the Conservatives came to power and Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister. The meetings continued for a while at Chequers and Downing Street, but within three months of the election Shield was done away with, probably by the will of Lord Carrington, then Foreign Secretary.

It was also Lord Carrington, Crozier believes, who was responsible for his

dismissal from the Directorship of ISC. Whoever was behind it, his removal was disgracefully contrived, and was also a destructive act. ISC ceased to be an effective organisation.

Sans ISC, sans Shield, Crozier did not, of course, give up. He had another agency which could and did take over Shield's work, a private and very secret international organisation which had been set up in 1977 to fight the cold war in the wider world. He had seen the need for it when the best of the official Western intelligence services were rendered powerless by their own governments. Its purposes were to help friendly governments by providing intelligence; to conduct counter-subversion operations (not with armed or physical force); and to mount a counter-offensive by assisting disruption inside the Soviet satellites and client states — all of which it did. It consisted at first of only eight or nine people — British, American, German and French. It was called 'The 61' — a name chosen with irony: 'we are the 6th International,' they joked. It built an international network of highly-placed agents, and in due course its advice was welcomed and sometimes heeded by Ronald Reagan when he had become President; and by the man appointed to head and revive the CIA, William Casey. The 61 influenced affairs to some extent in the American hemisphere; but more significantly in Europe, where it was triumphantly responsible, through its German network, for exposing — and so preventing — a secret Soviet plan for an invasion of Poland by East German troops during the 1980-1982 'Solidarity' crisis. It managed to create an active branch in Czechoslovakia; and carried its campaign into the USSR itself when volunteers distributed multilateral-disarmament leaflets in the heart of Moscow.

Its greatest success was in Britain: a turning of the political tide which had global repercussions. It created an instrument called the Coalition for Peace Through Security. (That Crozier and The 61 were behind this organisation is revealed now, in his book, for the first time.) How the 'Coalition' fought the Soviet 'peace campaign' would

make a fascinating book all on its own. Briefly, it was done by infiltrating CND, by spoiling 'peace' demonstrations, and by the cunning use of intelligence. The 61's reports went through Peter Blaker, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, to Mrs Thatcher and certain cabinet ministers.

The Labour leadership had been deceived by CND's 10 year campaign into supposing that the mood of the country was unilateralist. The Conservative Party, better informed, decided to make a strong defence policy the central issue of the 1983 election, and they won their landslide victory. Unilateralism faded rapidly out of mainstream British politics. Cruise and Pershing II missiles, the non-deployment of which had been a specific objective of CND, were then introduced into Britain and Europe. Without them, NATO would have been weakened and the Alliance loosened,

even perhaps unravelled. As it was, the Alliance held firm. The strong front presented to the Soviet Union by the Western powers under the leadership of Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan could not be mistaken by the Soviets for anything less than fixed resolve. No matter how much money the KGB might disburse to promote 'peace', the West was not going to disarm. The Soviet oligarchy saw the need for more pragmatic leadership, and the pragmatist whose hour had come was Gorbachev — the man Mrs Thatcher 'could do business with'.

The 61 saw the approaching end of the Evil Empire, and documented its prophecy a few years before it became true with the collapse of the East European regimes in 1989 and of the Soviet Union itself in 1991. When Gorbachev resigned as President of the USSR, and the CPSU was suspended by the Moscow Parliament, 'Lenin's bloodstained

legacy came to an end'. But, Crozier reminds us — and it is a case he has vividly illustrated — 'if the West's leaders had had their way, there could still be a Soviet problem'.

For Crozier there was the satisfaction of a job well done, but that was all the reward he got. He indicates that it was more than enough. Yet if ever a man deserved honour in his own land, he does; and if his own country were to honour him, others which owe him considerable debts might do so too.

Finally, the mystery. Why were those who fought against the Communist evil regarded by the *bien pensants* of the Western world as moral offenders? Conversely, why are unrepentant Communists and their fellow-travellers not treated with the disdain and disgust they deserve? And how is it possible that Marxism can still smell sweet in the nostrils of so many 'intellectuals'?

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In Short

Michael Dummett: *Grammar and Style* for examination candidates and others. Duckworth, £8.95.

Michael Dummett, not known either for conservative convictions or for elegance of style, has here produced a book with both those virtues. A sincere defence of the English language against modern barbarism, the book delivers authoritative answers to questions by which even the most practised writer may find himself puzzled. Professor Dummett is neither trendy nor pedantic, but forthright and lucid, in the manner of Fowler. He has worked hard to locate the major misuses and deformities of modern prose, and takes what can only be called (in someone so eager to be identified with radical causes) a courageous stance against feminist neologisms and ideologically-inspired illiteracies. His examples of good usage would have delighted Dr Leavis: Bunyan, Milton, Blake and Shakespeare are well represented, and Dummett never hesitates to imply that the great authors in the English language are the true authorities as to how it should be used.

On transitive and intransitive verbs, the split infinitive, conditionals and subjunctives, Dummett gives definitive and lucid directions, that any student would be advised to follow. His accounts of individual words and their misuses are also concise and elegant. If the book has a defect it is one that Fowler also possesses, but which Dummett, unlike Fowler, might have supplied: namely a philosophical underpinning to the rules of grammar. Recent public pronouncements by Dummett's fellow academic leftists have poured scorn on the idea of correct usage, and on the need for training in style and grammar. Something *deep* needs to be said in answer to such vandals, and Dummett could not only say it, but also gain a hearing from those whose bigotries he has so far not aroused.

RS.

Aegean Adventures 1940-3 and the end of Churchill's Dream Michael Woodbine Parish. The Book Guild 1993. £14.95.

Churchill's Dream was of course his vision of creating the second front through 'the soft underbelly of Fortress Europe'. Had that dream been realized, the second front in Normandy would have been unnecessary and half of Europe might not have been enslaved. Many see that failure as this century's greatest disaster. After the capitulation of the Italians in September 1943, there was a clear opportunity to capture Rhodes with the Dodecanese islands and to recapture Crete. The supply of raw materials to Russia would have become possible and Turkey would probably have entered the war. Three soldiers, including the author, took Samos and Leros right under the noses of the Germans. Woodbine Parish is convinced that had he been allowed, he could have captured Rhodes – he had previously done MI9 work in Smyrna and Istanbul, acquiring a small fleet of secret craft. This heroic success was not followed by decisive action by General Wilson which might have overcome Roosevelt's refusal to commit his forces in the Aegean.

This episode is examined in depth and reveals the waste and muddle which the establishment tried to conceal. The author also gives a spirited account of his subsequent capture by the Germans and a spell in an Oflag.

MC.

Neo-Nazism — a Threat to Europe? Jillian Becker. Institute of European Defence & Strategic Studies 1993. £5.

Left-wing terrorism has not disappeared totally in the wake of the collapsed Soviet Empire but it has certainly abated. Instead, an old spectre appears to stalk Europe and Germany in particular: that of right-wing neo-Nazi terrorism. Who better than Jillian

Becker, the author of the best work on the Baader-Meinhof gang, to analyze this renewed menace to the fragile European civilization? Her pamphlet *Neo-Nazism* is admirably cool and rational. It is full of detailed information on the causes of the recent outrages, on the various groups and their members and on the outrages themselves as well as reactions from the main parties.

Despite the taboo nature of the two central problems -- race and immigration – Jillian Becker is not afraid to draw conclusions. She points out that while one must never underestimate neo-Nazi groups anywhere, least of all in Germany, the actual incidents have been few, the groups are small and the overwhelming German reactions, especially in the western part, have been disgust and horror. But there is a danger: the small groups have emerged as parasites because not all is well with the body politic. There are economic problems, the after-effects of an over-hasty reunification, above all, the festering problem of unbridled immigration. Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic state experiments are failing everywhere and Europe has to accept that. Jillian Becker maintains that Germany has to face up to it together with the other countries. The post-war state has grown up and its politicians must take responsibility for unpalatable policies and not try to hide behind the European Community. German democracy will survive limitations on immigration.

She has been proved right: the main parties have agreed to control immigration as a necessary first step to improving the situation between the ethnic groups within the country and to take the wind out of the neo-Nazi groups' sails. German democracy did not collapse.

HS.

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