

Unit I

David Hume

“Hume is our Politics, Hume is our Trade, Hume is our Philosophy, Hume is our Religion.” This statement by nineteenth century philosopher James Hutchison Stirling reflects the unique position in intellectual thought held by Scottish philosopher David Hume. Part of Hume’s fame and importance owes to his boldly skeptical approach to a range of philosophical subjects. In epistemology, he questioned common notions of personal identity, and argued that there is no permanent “self” that continues over time. He dismissed standard accounts of causality and argued that our conceptions of cause-effect relations are grounded in habits of thinking, rather than in the perception of causal forces in the external world itself. He defended the skeptical position that human reason is inherently contradictory, and it is only through naturally-instilled beliefs that we can navigate our way through common life. In the philosophy of religion, he argued that it is unreasonable to believe testimonies of alleged miraculous events, and he hints, accordingly, that we should reject religions that are founded on miracle testimonies. Against the common belief of the time that God’s existence could be proven through a design or causal argument, Hume offered compelling criticisms of standard theistic proofs. He also advanced theories on the origin of popular religious beliefs, grounding such notions in human psychology rather than in rational argument or divine revelation. The larger aim of his critique was to disentangle philosophy from religion and thus allow philosophy to pursue its own ends without rational over-extension or psychological corruption. In moral theory, against the common view that God plays an important role in the creation and reinforcement of moral values, he offered one of the first purely secular moral theories, which grounded morality in the pleasing and useful consequences that result from our actions. He introduced the term “utility” into our moral vocabulary, and his theory is the immediate forerunner to the classic utilitarian views of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. He is famous for the position that we cannot derive *ought* from *is*, the view that statements of moral obligation cannot simply be deduced from statements of fact. Some see Hume as an early proponent of the emotivist metaethical view that moral judgments principally express our feelings. He also made important contributions to aesthetic theory with his view that there is a uniform standard of taste within human nature, in political theory with his critique of social contractarianism, and economic theory with his anti-mercantilist views. As a philosophical historian, he defended the conservative view that British governments are best run through a strong monarchy.

Life

David Hume was born in 1711 to a moderately wealthy family from Berwickshire Scotland, near Edinburgh. His background was politically Whiggish and religiously Calvinistic. As a child he faithfully attended the local Church of Scotland, pastored by his uncle. Hume was educated by his widowed mother until he left for the University of Edinburgh at the age of eleven. His letters describe how as a young student he took religion seriously and obediently followed a list of moral guidelines taken from *The Whole Duty of Man*, a popular Calvinistic devotional.

Leaving the University of Edinburgh around the age of fifteen to pursue his education privately, he was encouraged to consider a career in law, but his interests soon turned to philosophy. During these years of private study he began raising serious questions about religion, as he recounts in the following letter:

Tis not long ago that I burn’d an old Manuscript Book, wrote before I was twenty; which contain’d, Page after Page, the gradual Progress of my Thoughts on that head [i.e. religious belief]. It begun with an anxious Search after Arguments, to confirm the common Opinion: Doubts stole in, dissipated, return’d, were again dissipated, return’d again [To Gilbert Elliot of Minto, March 10, 1751].

Although his manuscript book was destroyed, several pages of his study notes survive from his early twenties. These show a preoccupation with proofs for God’s existence as well as atheism, particularly as he read on these

topics in classical Greek and Latin texts and in Pierre Bayle's skeptical *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. During these years of private study, some of which were in France, he composed his three-volume *Treatise of Human Nature*, which was published anonymously in two installments before he was thirty (1739, 1740). The *Treatise* explores several philosophical topics such as space, time, causality, external objects, the passions, free will, and morality, offering original and often skeptical appraisals of these notions. Book I of the *Treatise* was unfavorably reviewed in the *History of the Works of the Learned* with a succession of sarcastic comments. Although scholars today recognized it as a philosophical masterpiece, Hume was disappointed with the minimal interest his book spawned and said that "It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinctions even to excite a murmur among the zealots" (*My Own Life*).

In 1741 and 1742 Hume published his two-volume *Essays, Moral and Political*, which were written in a popular style and were more successful than the *Treatise*. In 1744-1745 he was a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Town Council was responsible for electing a replacement, and critics opposed Hume by condemning his anti-religious writings. Chief among the critics was clergyman William Wishart (d. 1752), the Principal of the University of Edinburgh. Lists of allegedly dangerous propositions from Hume's *Treatise* circulated, presumably penned by Wishart himself. In the face of such strong opposition, the Edinburgh Town Council consulted the Edinburgh ministers. Hoping to win over the clergy, Hume composed a point by point reply to the circulating lists of dangerous propositions, which was published as *A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh*. The clergy were not swayed, 12 of the 15 ministers voted against Hume, and he quickly withdrew his candidacy. In 1745 Hume accepted an invitation from General St Clair to attend him as secretary. He wore the uniform of an officer, and accompanied the general on an expedition against Canada (which ended in an incursion on the coast of France) and to an embassy post in the courts of Vienna and Turin.

Because of the success of his *Essays*, Hume was convinced that the poor reception of his *Treatise* was caused by its style rather than by its content. In 1748 he published his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, a more popular rendition of portions of Book I of the *Treatise*. The *Enquiry* also includes two sections not found in the *Treatise*: "Of Miracles" and a dialogue titled "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State." Each section contains direct attacks on religious belief. In 1751 he published his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, which recasts parts of Book III of the *Treatise* in a very different form. The work establishes a system of morality upon utility and human sentiments alone, and without appeal to divine moral commands. By the end of the century Hume was recognized as the founder of the moral theory of utility, and utilitarian political theorist Jeremy Bentham acknowledged Hume's direct influence upon him. The same year Hume also published his *Political Discourses*, which drew immediate praise and influenced economic thinkers such as Adam Smith, William Godwin, and Thomas Malthus.

In 1751-1752 Hume sought a philosophy chair at the University of Glasgow, and was again unsuccessful. In 1752 his new employment as librarian of the Advocate's Library in Edinburgh provided him with the resources to pursue his interest in history. There, he wrote much of his highly successful six-volume *History of England* (published from 1754 to 1762). The first volume was unfavorably received, partially for its defense of Charles I, and partially for two sections which attack Christianity. In one passage Hume notes that the first Protestant reformers were fanatical or "inflamed with the highest *enthusiasm*" in their opposition to Roman Catholic domination. In the second passage he labels Roman Catholicism a superstition which "like all other species of superstition. . . rouses the vain fears of unhappy mortals." The most vocal attack against Hume's *History* came from Daniel MacQueen in his 300 page *Letters on Mr. Hume's History*. MacQueen scrutinizes the first volume of Hume's work, exposing all the allegedly "loose and irreligious sneers" Hume makes against Christianity. Ultimately, this negative response led Hume to delete the two controversial passages from succeeding editions of the *History*.

Around this time Hume also wrote his two most substantial works on religion: *The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and *The Natural History of Religion*. The *Natural History* appeared in 1757, but, on the advice of friends who wished to steer Hume away from religious controversy, the *Dialogues* remained unpublished

until 1779, three years after his death. The *Natural History* aroused controversy even before it was made public. In 1756 a volume of Hume's essays titled *Five Dissertations* was printed and ready for distribution. The essays included (1) "The Natural History of Religion;" (2) "Of the Passions;" (3) "Of Tragedy;" (4) "Of Suicide;" and (5) "Of the Immortality of the Soul." The latter two essays made direct attacks on common religious doctrines by defending a person's moral right to commit suicide and by criticizing the idea of life after death. Early copies were passed around, and Hume's publisher was threatened with prosecution if the book was distributed as it was. The printed copies of *Five Dissertations* were then physically altered by removing the essays on suicide and immortality, and inserting a new essay "Of the Standard of Taste" in their place. Hume also took this opportunity to alter two particularly offending paragraphs in the *Natural History*. The essays were then bound with the new title *Four Dissertations* and distributed in January, 1757.

In the years following *Four Dissertations*, Hume completed his last major literary work, *The History of England*, which gave him a reputation as an historian that equaled, if not overshadowed, his reputation as a philosopher. In 1763, at age 50, he was invited to accompany the Earl of Hertford to the embassy in Paris, with a near prospect of being his secretary. He eventually accepted, and remarks at the reception he received in Paris "from men and women of all ranks and stations." He returned to Edinburgh in 1766, and continued developing relations with the greatest minds of the time. Among these was Jean Jacques Rousseau who in 1766 was ordered out of Switzerland by the government in Berne. Hume offered Rousseau refuge in England and secured him a government pension. In England, Rousseau became suspicious of plots, and publicly charged Hume with conspiring to ruin his character, under the appearance of helping him. Hume published a pamphlet defending his actions and was exonerated. Another secretary appointment took him away from 1767-1768. Returning again to Edinburgh, his remaining years were spent revising and refining his published works, and socializing with friends in Edinburgh's intellectual circles. In 1770, fellow Scotsman James Beattie published one of the harshest attacks on Hume's philosophy to ever appear in print, entitled *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism*. Hume was upset by Beattie's relentless verbal attacks against him in the work, but the book made Beattie famous and King George III, who admired it, awarded Beattie a pension of £200 per year.

In 1776, at age sixty-five, Hume died from an internal disorder which had plagued him for many months. After his death, his name took on new significance as several of his previously unpublished works appeared. The first was a brief autobiography, *My Own Life*, but even this unpretentious work aroused controversy. As his friends, Adam Smith and S.J. Pratt, published affectionate eulogies describing how he died with no concern for an afterlife, religious critics responded by condemning this unjustifiable admiration of Hume's infidelity. Two years later, in 1779, Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* appeared. Again, the response was mixed. Admirers of Hume considered it a masterfully written work, while religious critics branded it as dangerous to religion. Finally, in 1782, Hume's two suppressed essays on suicide and immortality were published. Their reception was almost unanimously negative.

Origin and Association of Ideas

Drawing heavily on John Locke's empiricism, the opening sections of both the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* discuss the origins of mental perceptions as laid out in the following categorical scheme:

Perceptions

A. Ideas

1. From memory
2. From imagination

a. From fancy

b. From understanding

(1) Involving relations of ideas

(2) Involving matters of fact

B. Impressions

1. Of sensation (external)

2. Of reflection (internal)

Hume begins by dividing all mental perceptions between ideas (thoughts) and impressions (sensations and feelings), and then makes two central claims about the relation between them. First, advancing what is commonly called Hume's *copy thesis*, he argues that all ideas are ultimately copied from impressions. That is, for any idea we select, we can trace the component parts of that idea to some external sensation or internal feeling. This claim places Hume squarely in the empiricist tradition, and he regularly uses this principle as a test for determining the content of an idea under consideration. As proof of the copy thesis, Hume challenges anyone who denies it "to shew a simple impression, that has not a correspondent idea, or a simple idea, that has not a correspondent impression" (*Treatise*, 1.1.1). Second, advancing what we may call Hume's *liveliness thesis*, he argues that ideas and impressions differ only in terms of liveliness. For example, my impression of a tree is simply more vivid than my idea of that tree. One of his early critics, Lord Monboddo (1714–1799) pointed out an important implication of the liveliness thesis, which Hume himself presumably hides. Most modern philosophers held that ideas reside in our spiritual minds, whereas impressions originate in our physical bodies. So, when Hume blurs the distinction between ideas and impressions, he is ultimately denying the spiritual nature of ideas and instead grounding them in our physical nature. In short, all of our mental operations—including our most rational ideas—are physical in nature. As Monboddo writes, "One consequence, which Mr Hume has drawn from this doctrine, is, that, as our Mind can only operate by the organs of the Body, it must perish with the Body" (*Ancient Metaphysics*, 1782, 2.2.2).

Hume goes on to explain that there are several mental faculties that are responsible for producing our various ideas. He initially divides ideas between those produced by the memory, and those produced by the imagination. The memory is a faculty that conjures up ideas based on experiences as they happened. For example, the memory I have of my drive to the store is a comparatively accurate copy of my previous sense impressions of that experience. The imagination, by contrast, is a faculty that breaks apart and combines ideas, thus forming new ones. Hume uses the familiar example of a golden mountain: this idea is a combination of an idea of gold and an idea of a mountain. As our imagination takes our most basic ideas and leads us to form new ones, it is directed by three principles of association, namely, *resemblance*, *contiguity*, and *cause and effect*. By virtue of resemblance, an illustration or sketch, of a person leads me to an idea of that actual person. The idea of one apartment in a building leads me to think of the apartment contiguous to—or next to—the first. The thought of a scar on my hand leads me to think of a broken piece of glass that caused the scar.

As indicated in the above chart, our more complex ideas of the imagination are further divided between two categories. Some imaginative ideas represent flights of the fancy, such as the idea of a golden mountain; however, other imaginative ideas represent solid reasoning, such as predicting the trajectory of a thrown ball. The fanciful ideas are derived from the faculty of the *fancy*, and are the source of fantasies, superstitions, and bad philosophy. By contrast, sound ideas are derived from the faculty of the *understanding*—or reason—and are of two types: (1) involving relations of ideas; or (2) involving matters of fact. A relation of ideas (or relation between ideas) is a mathematical relation that is "discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe," such as the mathematical statement "the square of

the hypotenuse is equal to the square of the two sides” (*Enquiry*, 4). By contrast, a matter of fact, for Hume, is any object or circumstance which has physical existence, such as “the sun will rise tomorrow”. This split between relations of ideas and matters of fact is commonly called “Hume’s Fork”, and Hume himself uses it as a radical tool for distinguishing between well-founded ideas of the understanding, and unfounded ideas of the fancy. He dramatically makes this point at the conclusion of his *Enquiry*:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: For it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion (*Enquiry*, 12).

For Hume, when we imaginatively exercise our understanding regarding relations of ideas and matters of fact, our minds are guided by seven philosophical or “reasoning” relations, which are as follows:

Principles of reasoning concerning relations of ideas (involving demonstration): (1) resemblance; (2) contrariety; (3) degrees in quality; and (4) proportions in quantity or number

Principles of reasoning concerning matters of fact (involving judgments of probability): (5) identity; (6) relations in time and place; and (7) causation

Human understanding and reasoning at its best, then, involves ideas that are grounded in the above seven principles.

Epistemological Issues

Much of Hume’s epistemology is driven by a consideration of philosophically important issues, such as space and time, cause-effect, external objects, personal identity, and free will. In his analysis of these issues in the *Treatise*, he repeatedly does three things. First, he skeptically argues that we are unable to gain complete knowledge of some important philosophical notion under consideration. Second, he shows how the understanding gives us a very limited idea of that notion. Third, he explains how some erroneous views of that notion are grounded in the fancy, and he accordingly recommends that we reject those erroneous ideas. We will follow this three-part scheme as we consider Hume’s discussions of various topics.

a. Space

On the topic of space, Hume argues that our proper notions of space are confined to our visual and tactile experiences of the three-dimensional world, and we err if we think of space more abstractly and independently of those visual and tactile experiences. In essence, our proper notion of space is like what Locke calls a “secondary quality” of an object, which is spectator dependent, meaning grounded in the physiology of our perceptual mental processes. Thus, our proper notion of space is not like a “primary quality” that refers to some external state of affairs independent of our perceptual mental process. Following the above three-part scheme, (1) Hume skeptically argues that we have no ideas of infinitely divisible space (*Treatise*, 1.2.2.2). (2) When accounting for the idea we do have of space, he argues that “the idea of space is convey’d to the mind by two senses, the sight and touch; nor does any thing ever appear extended, that is not either visible or tangible” (*Treatise*, 1.2.3.15). Further, he argues that these objects—which are either visible or tangible—are composed of finite atoms or corpuscles, which are themselves “endow’d with colour and solidity.” These impressions are then “comprehended” or conceived by the imagination; it is from the structuring of these impressions that we obtain a limited idea of space. (3) In contrast to this idea of space, Hume argues that we frequently presume to have an idea of space that lacks visibility or solidity. He accounts for this erroneous notion in terms of a mistaken association that people naturally make between visual and tactile space (*Treatise*, 1.2.5.21).

b. Time

Hume's treatment of our idea of time is like his treatment of the idea of space, in that our proper idea of time is like a secondary quality, grounded in our mental operations, not a primary quality grounded in some external phenomenon beyond our experience. (1) He first maintains that we have no idea of infinitely divisible time (*Treatise*, 1.2.4.1). (2) He then notes Locke's point that our minds operate at a range of speeds that are "fix'd by the original nature and constitution of the mind, and beyond which no influence of external objects on the senses is ever able to hasten or retard our thought" (*Treatise*, 1.2.3.7). The idea of time, then, is not a simple idea derived from a simple impression; instead, it is a copy of impressions as they are perceived by the mind at its fixed speed (*Treatise*, 1.2.3.10). (3) In contrast to this limited view of time, he argues that we frequently entertain a faulty notion of time that does not involve change or succession. The psychological account of this erroneous view is that we mistake time for the cause of succession instead of seeing it as the effect (*Treatise*, 1.2.5.29).

c. Necessary Connection between Causes and Effects

According to Hume, the notion of cause-effect is a complex idea that is made up of three more foundational ideas: priority in time, proximity in space, and necessary connection. Concerning priority in time, if I say that event A causes event B, one thing I mean is that A occurs prior to B. If B were to occur before A, then it would be absurd to say that A was the cause of B. Concerning the idea of proximity, if I say that A causes B, then I mean that B is in proximity to, or close to A. For example, if I throw a rock, and at that moment someone's window in China breaks, I would not conclude that my rock broke a window on the other side of the world. The broken window and the rock must be in proximity with each other. Priority and proximity alone, however, do not make up our entire notion of causality. For example, if I sneeze and the lights go out, I would not conclude that my sneeze was the cause, even though the conditions of priority and proximity were fulfilled. We also believe that there is a necessary connection between cause A and effect B. During the modern period of philosophy, philosophers thought of necessary connection as a power or force connecting two events. When billiard ball A strikes billiard ball B, there is a power that the one event imparts to the other. In keeping with his empiricist copy thesis, that all ideas are copied from impressions, Hume tries to uncover the experiences which give rise to our notions of priority, proximity, and necessary connection. The first two are easy to explain. Priority traces back to our various experiences of time. Proximity traces back to our various experiences of space. But what is the experience which gives us the idea of necessary connection? This notion of necessary connection is the specific focus of Hume's analysis of cause-effect.

Hume's view is that our proper idea of necessary connection is like a secondary quality that is formed by the mind, and not, like a primary quality, a feature of the external world. (1) He skeptically argues that we cannot get an idea of necessary connection by observing it through sensory experiences (*Treatise*, 1.3.14.12 ff.). We have no external sensory impression of causal power when we observe cause-effect relationships; all that we ever see is cause A constantly conjoined with effect B. Neither does it arise from an internal impression, such as when we introspectively reflect on willed bodily motions or willing the creation of thoughts. These internal experiences are too elusive, and nothing in them can give content to our idea of necessary connection. (2) The idea we have of necessary connection arises as follows: we experience a constant conjunction of events A and B—repeated sense experiences where events resembling A are always followed by events resembling B. This produces a habit such that upon any further appearance of A, we expect B to follow. This, in turn, produces an internal feeling of expectation "to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant," which is the impression from which the idea of necessary connection is copied (*Treatise*, 1.3.14.20). (3) A common but mistaken notion on this topic is that necessity resides within the objects themselves. He explains this mistaken belief by the natural tendency we have to impute subjectively perceived qualities to external things (*Treatise*, 1.3.14.24).

d. External Objects

Hume's view on external objects is that the mind is programmed to form some concept of the external world, although this concept or idea is really just a fabrication. (1) Hume's skeptical claim here is that we have no valid conception of the existence of external things (*Treatise*, 1.2.6.9). (2) Nevertheless, he argues that we have an unavoidable "vulgar" or common belief in the *continued* existence of objects, and this idea he accounts for. His explanation is lengthy, but involves the following features. Perceptions of objects are disjointed and have no unity in and of themselves (*Treatise*, 1.4.2.29). In an effort to organize our perceptions, we first naturally assume that there is no distinction between our perceptions and the objects that are perceived (this is the so-called "vulgar" view of perception). We then conflate all ideas (of perceptions), which put our minds in similar dispositions (*Treatise*, 1.4.2.33); that is, we associate resembling ideas and attribute identity to their causes. Consequently, we naturally invent the continued and external existence of the objects (or perceptions) that produced these ideas (*Treatise*, 1.4.2.35). Lastly, we go on to *believe* in the existence of these objects because of the force of the resemblance between ideas (*Treatise*, 1.4.2.36). Although this belief is philosophically unjustified, Hume feels he has given an accurate account of how we inevitably arrive at the idea of external existence. (3) In contrast to the previous explanation of this idea, he recommends that we doubt a more sophisticated but erroneous notion of existence—the so-called philosophical view—which distinguishes between perceptions and the external objects that cause perceptions. The psychological motivation for accepting this view is this: our imagination tells us that resembling perceptions have a continued existence, yet our reflection tells us that they are interrupted. Appealing to both forces, we ascribe interruption to perceptions and continuance to objects (*Treatise*, 1.4.2.52).

e. Personal Identity

Regarding the issue of personal identity, (1) Hume's skeptical claim is that we have no experience of a simple, individual impression that we can call *the self*—where the "self" is the totality of a person's conscious life. He writes, "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception" (*Treatise*, 1.4.6.3). (2) Even though my perceptions are fleeting and I am a bundle of different perceptions, I nevertheless have some idea of personal identity, and that must be accounted for (*Treatise*, 1.4.6.4). Because of the associative principles, the resemblance or causal connection within the chain of my perceptions gives rise to an idea of myself, and memory extends this idea past my immediate perceptions (*Treatise*, 1.4.6.18 ff.). (3) A common abuse of the notion of personal identity occurs when the idea of a soul or unchanging substance is added to give us a stronger or more unified concept of the self (*Treatise*, 1.4.6.6).

f. Free Will

On the issue of free will and determinism—or "liberty" and "necessity" in Hume's terminology—Hume defends necessity. (1) He first argues that "all actions of the will have particular causes" (*Treatise*, 2.3.2.8), and so there is no such thing as an uncaused willful action. (2) He then defends the notion of a will that consistently responds to prior motivational causes: "our actions have a constant union with our motives, tempers, and circumstances" (*Treatise*, 2.3.1.4). These motives produce actions that have the same causal necessity observed in cause-effect relations that we see in external objects, such as when billiard ball A strikes and moves billiard ball B. In the same way, we regularly observe the rock-solid connection between motive A and action B, and we rely on that predictable connection in our normal lives. Suppose that a traveler, in recounting his observation of the odd behavior of natives in a distant country, told us that identical motives led to entirely different actions among these natives. We would not believe the traveler's report. In business, politics, and military affairs, our leaders expect predicable behavior from us insofar as the same motives within us will always result in us performing the same action. A prisoner who is soon to be executed will assume that the motivations and actions of the prison guards and the executioner are so rigidly fixed that these people will mechanically carry out their duties and perform the execution, with no chance of a change of heart (*Treatise*, 2.3.1.5 ff.). (3) Lastly, Hume explains why people commonly believe in an uncaused will (*Treatise*, 2.3.2.1 ff.). One explanation is that people erroneously believe they have a feeling of liberty when performing actions. The reason is that, when we

perform actions, we feel a kind of “looseness or indifference” in how they come about, and some people wrongly see this as “an intuitive proof of human liberty” (*Treatise*, 2.3.2.2).

In the *Treatise* Hume rejects the notion of liberty completely. While he gives no definition of “liberty” in that work, he argues that the notion is incompatible with necessity, and, at best, “liberty” simply means chance. In the *Enquiry*, however, he takes a more compatibilist approach. All human actions are caused by specific prior motives, but liberty and necessity are reconcilable when we define liberty as “a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will” (*Enquiry*, 8). Nothing in this definition of liberty is in conflict with the notion of necessity.

Skepticism

In all of the above discussions on epistemological topics, Hume performs a balancing act between making skeptical attacks (step 1) and offering positive theories based on natural beliefs (step 2). In the conclusion to Book 1, though, he appears to elevate his skepticism to a higher level and exposes the inherent contradictions in even his best philosophical theories. He notes three such contradictions. One centers on what we call induction. Our judgments based on past experience all contain elements of doubt; we are then impelled to make a judgment about that doubt, and since this judgment is also based on past experience it will in turn produce a new doubt. Once again, though, we are impelled to make a judgment about this second doubt, and the cycle continues. He concludes that “no finite object can subsist under a decrease repeated *in infinitum*.” A second contradiction involves a conflict between two theories of external perception, each of which our natural reasoning process leads us to. One is our natural inclination to believe that we are directly seeing objects as they really are, and the other is the more philosophical view that we only ever see mental images or copies of external objects. The third contradiction involves a conflict between causal reasoning and belief in the continued existence of matter. After listing these contradictions, Hume despairs over the failure of his metaphysical reasoning:

The *intense* view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another [*Treatise*, 1.4.7.8].

He then pacifies his despair by recognizing that nature forces him to set aside his philosophical speculations and return to the normal activities of common life. He sees, though, that in time he will be drawn back into philosophical speculation in order to attack superstition and educate the world.

Hume’s emphasis on these conceptual contradictions is a unique aspect of his skepticism, and if any part of his philosophy can be designated “Humean skepticism” it is this. However, during the course of his writing the *Treatise* his view of the nature of these contradictions changed. At first he felt that these contradictions were restricted to theories about the external world, but theories about the mind itself would be free from them, as he explains here:

The essence and composition of external bodies are so obscure, that we must necessarily, in our reasonings, or rather conjectures concerning them, involve ourselves in contradictions and absurdities. But as the perceptions of the mind are perfectly known, and I have us'd all imaginable caution in forming conclusions concerning them, I have always hop'd to keep clear of those contradictions, which have attended every other system [*Treatise*, 2.2.6.2].

When composing the Appendix to the *Treatise* a year later, he changed his mind and felt that theories about the mind would also have contradictions:

I had entertained some hopes, that however deficient our theory of the intellectual world might be, it would be free from those contradictions, and absurdities, which seem to attend every explication, that human reason can give of the material world. But upon a more strict review of the section concerning I find myself involv'd in such a labyrinth, that, I must confess, I neither know how to correct my former opinions, nor how to render them consistent. If this be not a good *general* reason for scepticism, 'tis at least a sufficient one (if I were not already abundantly supplied) for me to entertain a diffidence and modesty in all my decisions [*Treatise*, Appendix].

Thus, in the *Treatise*, the skeptical bottom line is that even our best theories about both physical and mental phenomena will be plagued with contradictions. In the concluding section of his *Enquiry*, Hume again addresses the topic of skepticism, but treats the matter somewhat differently: he rejects extreme skepticism but accepts skepticism in a more moderate form. He associates extreme Pyrrhonian skepticism with blanket attacks on all reasoning about the external world, abstract reasoning about space and time, or causal reasoning about matters of fact. He argues, though, that we must reject such skepticism since “no durable good can ever result from it.” Instead, he recommends a more moderate or *Academic* skepticism that tones down Pyrrhonism by, first, exercising caution and modesty in our judgments, and, second, by restricting our speculations to abstract reasoning and matters of fact.

Theory of the Passions

Like many philosophers of his time, Hume developed a theory of the passions—that is, the emotions—categorizing them and explaining the psychological mechanisms by which they arise in the human mind. His most detailed account is in Book Two of the *Treatise*. Passions, according to Hume, fall under the category of impressions of reflection (as opposed to impressions of sensation). He opens his discussion with a taxonomy of types of passions, which are outlined here:

Reflective Impressions

1. Calm (reflective pleasures and pains)
2. Violent
 - a. Direct (desire, aversion, joy, grief, hope, fear)
 - b. Indirect (love, hate, pride, humility)

He initially divides passions between the calm and the violent. He concedes that this distinction is imprecise, but he explains that people commonly distinguish between types of passions in terms of their degrees of forcefulness. Adding more precision to this common distinction, he maintains that calm passions are emotional feelings of pleasure and pain associated with moral and aesthetic judgments. For example, when I see a person commit a horrible deed, I will experience a feeling of pain. When I view a good work of art, I will experience a feeling of pleasure. In contrast to the calm passions, violent ones constitute the bulk of our emotions, and these divide between direct and indirect passions. For Hume, the key direct passions are desire, aversion, joy, grief, hope, and fear. They are called “direct” because they arise immediately—without complex reflection on our part—whenever we see something good or bad. For example, if I consider an unpleasant thing, such as being burglarized, then I will feel the passion of aversion. He suggests that sometimes these passions are sparked instinctively—for example, by my desire for food when I am hungry. Others, though, are not connected with instinct and are more the result of social conditioning. There is an interesting logic to the six direct passions, which Hume borrowed from a tradition that can be traced to ancient Greek Stoicism. We can diagram the relation between the six with this chart:

When good/bad objects are considered abstractly

Desire (towards good objects)

Aversion (towards evil objects)

When good/bad objects are actually present

Joy (towards good objects)

Grief (towards evil objects)

When good/bad objects are only anticipated

Hope (towards good objects)

Fear (towards evil objects)

Compare, for example, the passions that I will experience regarding winning the lottery vs. having my house burglarized. Suppose that I consider them purely in the abstract—or “consider’d simply” as Hume says (*Treatise*, 2.3.9.6). I will then desire to win the lottery and have an aversion towards being burglarized. Suppose that both situations are actually before me; I will then experience joy over winning the lottery and grief over being burglarized. Suppose, finally, that I know that at some unknown time in the future I will win the lottery and be burglarized. I will then experience hope regarding the lottery and fear of being burglarized.

Hume devotes most of Book 2 to an analysis of the indirect passions, his unique contribution to theories of the passions. The four principal passions are love, hate, pride, and humility. They are called “indirect” since they are the secondary effects of a previous feeling of pleasure and pain. Suppose, for example, that I paint a picture, which gives me a feeling of pleasure. Since I am the artist, I will then experience an additional feeling of pride. He explains in detail the psychological process that triggers indirect passions such as pride. Specifically, he argues that these passions arise from a *double relation* between ideas and impressions, which we can illustrate here with the passion of pride:

1. I have an initial idea of some possession, or “subject”, such as my painting, and this idea gives me pleasure.
2. Through the associative principle of resemblance, I then immediately associate this feeling of pleasure with a resembling feeling of pride (this association constitutes the first relation in the double relation).
3. This feeling of pride then causes me to have an idea of myself, as the “object” of pride.
4. Through some associative principle such as causality, I then associate the idea of myself with the idea of my painting, which is the “subject” of my pride (this association constitutes the second relation in the double relation).

According to Hume, the three other principal indirect passions arise in parallel ways. For example, if my painting is ugly and causes me pain, then I will experience the secondary passion of *humility*—perhaps more accurately expressed as “humiliation”. By contrast, if someone else paints a pleasing picture, then this will trigger in me a feeling of *love* for that artist—perhaps more accurately expressed as “esteem”. If the artist paints a painfully ugly picture, then this will trigger in me a feeling of “hatred” towards the artist—perhaps more accurately expressed as “disesteem”.

One of the most lasting contributions of Hume's discussion of the passions is his argument that human actions must be prompted by passion, and never can be motivated by reason. Reason, he argues, is completely inert when it comes to motivating conduct, and without some emotion we would not engage in any action. Thus, he writes, "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (*Treatise*, 2.3.3.4).

Religious Belief

Like many of Hume's philosophical views, his position on religious belief is also skeptical. Critics of religion during the eighteenth-century needed to express themselves cautiously to avoid being fined, imprisoned, or worse. Sometimes this involved placing controversial views in the mouth of a character in a dialogue. Other times it involved adopting the persona of a deist or fideist as a means of concealing a more extreme religious skepticism. Hume used all of the rhetorical devices at his disposal, and left it to his readers to decode his most controversial conclusions on religious subjects. During the Enlightenment, there were two pillars of traditional Christian belief: natural and revealed religion. *Natural religion* involves knowledge of God drawn from nature through the use of logic and reason, and typically involves logical proofs regarding the existence and nature of God, such as the causal and design arguments for God's existence. *Revealed religion* involves knowledge of God contained in revelation, particularly the Bible, the quintessential examples of which are biblical prophecies and miracles where God intervenes in earthly affairs to confirm the Bible's message of salvation. Hume attacks both natural and revealed religious beliefs in his various writings.

a. Miracles

In a 1737 letter to Henry Home, Hume states that he intended to include a discussion of miracles in his *Treatise*, but ultimately left it out for fear of offending readers. His analysis of the subject eventually appeared some ten years later in his essay "Of Miracles" from the *Enquiry*, and is his first sustained attack on revealed religion. It is probably this main argument to which Hume refers. The first of this two-part essay contains the argument for which Hume is most famous: uniform experience of natural law outweighs the testimony of any alleged miracle. Let us imagine a scale with two balancing pans. In the first pan we place the strongest evidence in support of the occurrence of a miracle. In the second we place our life-long experience of consistent laws of nature. According to Hume, the second pan will always outweigh the first. He writes:

It is experience only, which gives authority to human testimony [regarding miracles]; and it is the same experience, which assures us of the laws of nature. When, therefore, these two kinds of experience are contrary, we have nothing to do but subtract the one from the other, and embrace an opinion, either on one side or the other, with that assurance which arises from the remainder. But according to the principle here explained, this subtraction, with regard to all popular religions, amounts to an entire annihilation [*Enquiry*, 10.1].

Regardless of how strong the testimony is in favor of a given miracle, it can never come close to counterbalancing the overwhelming experience of unvaried laws of nature. Thus, proportioning one's belief to the evidence, the wise person must reject the weaker evidence concerning the alleged miracle.

In the second part of "Of Miracles", Hume discusses four factors that count against the credibility of most miracle testimonies: (1) witnesses of miracles typically lack integrity; (2) we are naturally inclined to enjoy sensational stories, and this has us uncritically perpetuate miracle accounts; (3) miracle testimonies occur most often in less civilized countries; and (4) miracles support rival religious systems and thus discredit each other. But even if a miracle testimony is not encumbered by these four factors, we should still not believe it since it would be contrary to our consistent experience of laws of nature. He concludes his essay with the following cryptic comment about Christian belief in biblical miracles:

upon the whole, we may conclude, that the *Christian Religion* not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity: And whoever is moved by *Faith* to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience [*Enquiry*, 10.2].

At face value, his comment suggests a fideist approach to religious belief such as what Pascal recommends. That is, reason is incapable of establishing religious belief, and God must perform a miracle in our lives to make us open to belief through faith. However, according to the eighteenth-century Hume critic John Briggs, Hume's real point is that belief in Christianity requires "miraculous stupidity" (*The Nature of Religious Zeal*, 1775).

b. Psychology of Religious Belief

Another attack on revealed religion appears in Hume's essay "The Natural History of Religion" (1757). It is one of the first systematic attempts to explain the causes of religious belief solely in terms of psychological and sociological factors. We might see the "Natural History" as an answer to a challenge, such as the sort that William Adams poses here in his attack on Hume's "Of Miracles":

Whence could the religion and laws of this people [i.e., the Jews] so far exceed those of the wisest Heathens, and come out at once, in their first infancy, thus perfect and entire; when all human systems are found to grow up by degrees, and to ripen, after many improvements; into perfection [*An Essay*, Part 2]?

According to Adams, only divine intervention can account for the sophistication of the ancient Jewish religion. In the "Natural History," though, Hume offers an alternative explanation, and one that is grounded solely in human nature, without God's direct involvement in human history.

The work may be divided into three parts. In the first (Sections 1 and 4), Hume argues that polytheism, and not monotheism, was the original religion of primitive humans. Monotheism, he believes, was only a later development that emerged with the progress of various societies. The standard theory in Judeo-Christian theology was that early humans first believed in a single God, but as religious corruption crept in, people lapsed into polytheism. Hume was the first writer to systematically defend the position of original polytheism. In the second part (Sections 2-3, 5-8), Hume establishes the psychological principles that give rise to popular religious belief. His thesis is that natural instincts—such as fear and the propensity to adulate—are the true causes of popular religious belief, and not divine intervention or rational argument. The third part of this work (Sections 9-15) compares various aspects of polytheism with monotheism, showing that one is no more superior than the other. Both contain points of absurdity. From this he concludes that we should suspend belief on the entire subject of religious truth.

c. Arguments for God's Existence

Around the same time that Hume was composing his "Natural History of Religion" he was also working on his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, which appeared in print two decades later, after his death. As the title of the work implies, it is a critique of *natural* religion, in contrast with *revealed* religion. There are three principal characters in the *Dialogues*. A character named Cleanthes, who espouses religious empiricism, defends the design argument for God's existence, but rejects the causal argument. Next, a character named Demea, who is a religious rationalist, defends the causal argument for God's existence, but rejects the design argument. Finally, a character named Philo, who is a religious skeptic, argues against both the design and causal arguments. The main assaults on theistic proofs are conveyed by both Cleanthes and Philo, and, to that extent, both of their critiques likely represent Hume's views.

The specific version of the causal argument that Hume examines is one by Samuel Clarke (and Leibniz before him). Simplistic versions of the causal argument maintain that when we trace back the causes of things in the

universe, the chain of causes cannot go back in time to infinity past; there must be a first cause to the causal sequence, which is God. Clarke's version differs in that it is theoretically possible for causal sequences of events to trace back through time to infinity past. Thus, we cannot argue that God's existence is required to initiate a sequence of temporal causes. Nevertheless, Clarke argued, an important fact still needs to be explained: the fact that this infinite temporal sequence of causal events exists at all. Why does something exist rather than nothing? God, then, is the necessary cause of the whole series. In response, the character Cleanthes argues that the flaw in the cosmological argument consists in assuming that there is some larger fact about the universe that needs explaining beyond the particular items in the series itself. Once we have a sufficient explanation for each particular fact in the infinite sequence of events, it makes no sense to inquire about the origin of the *collection* of these facts. That is, once we adequately account for each individual fact, this constitutes a sufficient explanation of the whole collection. He writes, "Did I show you the particular causes of each individual in a collection of twenty particles of matter, I should think it very unreasonable, should you afterwards ask me, what was the cause of the whole twenty" (*Dialogues*, 9).

The design argument for God's existence is that the appearance of design in the natural world is evidence for the existence of a divine designer. The specific version of the argument that Hume examines is one from analogy, as stated here by Cleanthes:

The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human designs, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since, therefore, the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man (*Dialogues*, 2).

Philo presents several criticisms against the design argument, many of which are now standard in discussions of the issue. According to Philo, the design argument is based on a faulty analogy: we do not know whether the order in nature was the result of design, since, unlike our experience with the creation of machines, we did not witness the formation of the world. In Philo's words, "will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art like the human, because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance" (*ibid*). Further, the vastness of the universe also weakens any comparison with human artifacts. Although the universe is orderly here, it may be chaotic elsewhere. Similarly, if intelligent design is exhibited only in a small fraction of the universe, then we cannot say that it is the productive force of the *whole* universe. Philo states that "A very small part of this great system, during a very short time, is very imperfectly discovered to us; and do we thence pronounce decisively concerning the origin of the whole?" (*ibid*). Philo also argues that natural design may be accounted for by nature alone, insofar as matter may contain within itself a principle of order, and "This at once solves all difficulties" (*Dialogues*, 6). And even if the design of the universe is of divine origin, we are not justified in concluding that this divine cause is a single, all powerful, or all good being. According to Philo, "Whether all these attributes are united in one subject, or dispersed among several independent beings, by what phenomena in nature can we pretend to decide the controversy?" (*Dialogues* 5).

Moral Theory

Hume's moral theory appears in Book 3 of the *Treatise* and in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). He opens his discussion in the *Treatise* by telling us what moral approval is *not*: it is not a rational judgment about either conceptual relations or empirical facts. To make his case he criticizes Samuel Clarke's rationalistic account of morality, which is that we rationally judge the fitness or unfitness of our actions in reference to eternal laws of righteousness, that are self-evidently known to all humans, just as is our knowledge of mathematical relations. Hume presents several arguments against Clarke's view, one of which is an analogy from arboreal parricide: a young tree that overgrows and kills its parent exhibits the same alleged relations as a human child killing his parent. "Is not the one tree the cause of the other's existence; and the latter the cause of

the destruction of the former, in the same manner as when a child murders his parent?" (*Treatise*, 3.1.1.24). If morality is a question of relations, then the young tree is immoral, which is absurd. Hume also argues that moral assessments are not judgments about empirical facts. Take any immoral action, such as willful murder: "examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call *vice*" (*Treatise*, 3.1.1.25). You will not find any such fact, but only your own feelings of disapproval. In this context Hume makes his point that we cannot derive statements of obligation from statements of fact. When surveying various moral theories, Hume writes, "I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought* or an *ought not*" (*Treatise*, 3.1.1.26). This move from *is* to *ought* is illegitimate, he argues, and is why people erroneously believe that morality is grounded in rational judgments.

Thus far Hume has only told us what moral approval is not, namely a judgment of reason. So what then does moral approval consist of? It is an emotional response, not a rational one. The details of this part of his theory rest on a distinction between three psychologically distinct players: the moral agent, the receiver, and the moral spectator. The moral *agent* is the person who performs an action, such as stealing a car; the *receiver* is the person impacted by the conduct, such as the owner of the stolen car; and the moral *spectator* is the person who observes and, in this case, disapproves of the agent's action. This agent-receiver-spectator distinction is the product of earlier moral sense theories championed by the Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), Joseph Butler (1692-1752), and Francis Hutcheson (1694-1747). Most generally, moral sense theories maintained that humans have a faculty of *moral* perception, similar to our faculties of *sensory* perception. Just as our external senses detect qualities in external objects, such as colors and shapes, so too does our moral faculty detect good and bad moral qualities in people and actions.

For Hume, all actions of a moral agent are motivated by character traits, specifically either virtuous or vicious character traits. For example, if you donate money to a charity, then your action is motivated by a virtuous character trait. Hume argues that some virtuous character traits are instinctive or natural, such as benevolence, and others are acquired or artificial, such as justice. As an agent, your action will have an effect on a receiver. For example, if you as the agent give food to a starving person, then the receiver will experience an immediately agreeable feeling from your act. Also, the receiver may see the usefulness of your food donation, insofar as eating food will improve his health. When considering the usefulness of your food donation, then, the receiver will receive another agreeable feeling from your act. Finally, I, as a spectator, observe these agreeable feelings that the receiver experiences. I, then, will sympathetically experience agreeable feelings along with the receiver. These sympathetic feelings of pleasure *constitute* my moral approval of the original act of charity that you, the agent, perform. By sympathetically experiencing this pleasure, I thereby pronounce your motivating character trait to be a virtue, as opposed to a vice. Suppose, on the other hand, that you as an agent did something to hurt the receiver, such as steal his car. I as the spectator would then sympathetically experience the receiver's pain and thereby pronounce your motivating character trait to be a vice, as opposed to a virtue.

In short, that is Hume's overall theory. There are, though, some important details that should also be mentioned. First, it is tricky to determine whether an agent's motivating character trait is natural or artificial, and Hume decides this one virtue at a time. For Hume, the natural virtues include benevolence, meekness, charity, and generosity. By contrast, the artificial virtues include justice, keeping promises, allegiance and chastity. Contrary to what one might expect, Hume classifies the key virtues that are necessary for a well-ordered state as artificial, and he classifies only the more supererogatory virtues as natural. Hume's critics were quick to point out this paradox. Second, to spark a feeling of moral approval, the spectator does not have to actually witness the effect of an agent's action upon a receiver. The spectator might simply hear about it, or the spectator might even simply invent an entire scenario and think about the possible effects of hypothetical actions. This happens when we have moral reactions when reading works of fiction: "a very play or romance may afford us instances of this pleasure, which virtue conveys to us; and pain, which arises from vices" (*Treatise*, 3.1.2.2).

Third, although the agent, receiver, and spectator have psychologically distinct roles, in some situations a single person may perform more than one of these roles. For example, if I as an agent donate to charity, as a spectator

to my own action I can also sympathize with the effect of my donation on the receiver. Finally, given various combinations of spectators and receivers, Hume concludes that there are four irreducible categories of qualities that exhaustively constitute moral virtue: (1) qualities useful to others, which include benevolence, meekness, charity, justice, fidelity and veracity; (2) qualities useful to oneself, which include industry, perseverance, and patience; (3) qualities immediately agreeable to others, which include wit, eloquence and cleanliness; and (4) qualities immediately agreeable to oneself, which include good humor, self-esteem and pride. For Hume, most morally significant qualities and actions seem to fall into more than one of these categories. When Hume spoke about an agent's "useful" consequences, he often used the word "utility" as a synonym. This is particularly so in the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* where the term "utility" appears over 50 times. Moral theorists after Hume thus depicted his moral theory as the "theory of utility"—namely, that morality involves assessing the pleasing and painful consequences of actions on the receiver. It is this concept and terminology that inspired classic utilitarian philosophers, such as Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832).

Aesthetic, Political, and Economic Theory

Hume wrote two influential essays on the subject of aesthetic theory. In "Of Tragedy" (1757) he discusses the psychological reasons why we enjoy observing depictions of tragic events in theatrical production. He argues that "the energy of expression, the power of numbers, and the charm of imitation" convey the sense of pleasure. He particularly stresses the technical artistry involved when an artistic work imitates the original. In "*Of the Standard of Taste*" (1757) he argues that there is a uniform sense of artistic judgment in human nature, similar to our uniform sense of moral judgment. Specific objects consistently trigger feelings of beauty within us, as our human nature dictates. Just as we can refine our external senses such as our palate, we can also refine our sense of artistic beauty and thus cultivate a delicacy of taste. In spite of this uniform standard of taste, two factors create some difference in our judgments: "the one is the different humours of particular men; the other, the particular manners and opinions of our age and country."

In political theory, Hume has both theoretical discussions on the origins of government and more informal essays on popular political controversies of his day. In his theoretical discussions, he attacks two basic notions in eighteenth-century political philosophy: the social contract and the instinctive nature of justice regarding private property. In his 1748 essay "Of the Original Contract," he argues that political allegiance is not grounded in any social contract, but instead on our general observation that society cannot be maintained without a governmental system. He concedes that in savage times there may have been an unwritten contract among tribe members for the sake of peace and order. However, he argues, this was no permanent basis of government as social contract theorists pretend. There is nothing to transmit that original contract onwards from generation to generation, and our experience of actual political events shows that governmental authority is founded on conquest, not elections or consent. We do not even tacitly consent to a contract since many of us have no real choice about remaining in our countries: "Can we seriously say that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives from day to day by the small wages which he acquires?" Political allegiance, he concludes, is ultimately based on a primary instinct of selfishness, and only through reflection will we see how we benefit from an orderly society.

Concerning private property, in both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Hume in essence argues against Locke's notion of the natural right to private property. For Hume, we have no primary instinct to recognize private property, and all conceptions of justice regarding property are founded solely on how useful the convention of property is to us. We can see how property ownership is tied to usefulness when considering scenarios concerning the availability of necessities. When necessities are in overabundance, I can take what I want any time, and there is no usefulness in my claiming any property as my own. When the opposite happens and necessities are scarce, I do not acknowledge anyone's claim to property and take what I want from others for my own survival. Thus, "the rules of equity or justice [regarding property] depend entirely on the particular state and condition in which men are placed, and owe their origin and existence to that utility, which results to the public from their strict and regular observance" (*Enquiry*

Concerning the Principles of Morals, 3). Further, if we closely inspect human nature, we will never find a primary instinct that inclines us to acknowledge private property. It is nothing like the primary instinct of nest building in birds. While the sense of justice regarding private property is a firmly fixed habit, it is nevertheless its usefulness to society that gives it value.

As for Hume's informal essays on popular political controversies, several of these involve party disputes between the politically conservative Tory party that supported a strong monarchy, and the politically liberal Whig party which supported a constitutional government. Two consistent themes emerge in these essays. First, in securing peace, a monarchy with strong authority is probably better than a pure republic. Hume sides with the Tories because of their traditional support of the monarchy. Except in extreme cases, he opposes the Lockean argument offered by Whigs that justifies overthrowing political authorities when those authorities fail to protect the rights of the people. Hume notes, though, that monarchies and republics each have their strong points. Monarchies encourage the arts, and republics encourage science and trade. Hume also appreciates the mixed form of government within Great Britain, which fosters liberty of the press. The second theme in Hume's political essays is that revolutions and civil wars principally arise from zealotry within party factions. Political moderation, he argues, is the best antidote to potentially ruinous party conflict.

In economic theory, Hume wrote influential essays on money, interest, trade, credit, and taxes. Many of these target the mercantile system and its view that a country increases its wealth by increasing the quantity of gold and silver in that country. For mercantilists, three means were commonly employed to this end: (1) capture gold, silver and raw material from other countries through colonization; (2) discourage imports through tariffs and monopolies, which keeps acquired gold and silver within one's country's borders; and, (3) increase exports, which brings in money from outside countries. In Great Britain, mercantile policies were instituted through the Navigation Acts, which prohibited trade between British colonies and foreign countries. These protectionist laws ultimately led to the American Revolution. The most famous of Hume's anti-mercantilist arguments is now called *Hume's gold-flow theory*, and appears in his essays "Of Money" (1752) and "*Of the Balance of Trade*" (1752). Contrary to mercantilists who advocated locking up money in one's home country, Hume argued that increased money in one country automatically disperses to other countries. Suppose, for example, that Great Britain receives an influx of new money. This new money will drive up prices of labor and domestic products in Great Britain. Products in foreign countries, then, will be cheaper than in Great Britain; Britain, then, will import these products, thereby sending new money to foreign countries. Hume compares this reshuffling of wealth to the level of fluids in interconnected chambers: if I add fluid to one chamber, then, under the weight of gravity, this will disperse to the others until the level is the same in all chambers. A similar phenomenon will occur if we *lose* money in our home country by purchasing imports from foreign countries. As the quantity of money decreases in our home country, this will drive down the prices of labor and domestic products. Our products, then, will be cheaper than foreign products, and we will gain money through exports. On the fluid analogy, by removing fluid from one chamber, more fluid is drawn in from surrounding chambers.

History and Philosophy

Although Hume is now remembered mainly as a philosopher, in his own day he had at least as much impact as a historian. His *History of England* appeared in four installments between 1754 and 1762 and covers the periods of British history from most ancient times through the seventeenth-century. To his 18th and 19th century readers, he was not just another historian, but a uniquely *philosophical* historian who had an ability to look into the minds of historical figures and uncover the motives behind their conduct. A political theme underlying the whole *History* is, once again, a conflict between Tory and Whig ideology. In the Britain of Hume's day, a major point of contention between the two parties was whether the English government was historically an absolute or limited monarchy. Tories believed that it was traditionally absolute, with governmental authority being grounded in royal prerogative. Whigs, on the other hand, believed that it was traditionally limited, with the foundation of government resting in the individual liberty of the people, as expressed in the parliamentary voice

of the commons. As a historian, Hume felt that he was politically moderate, tending to see both the strengths and weaknesses in opposing viewpoints:

With regard to politics and the character of princes and great men, I think I am very moderate. My views of things are more conformable to Whig principles; my representations of persons to Tory prejudices. Nothing can so much prove that men commonly regard more persons than things, as to find that I am commonly numbered among the Tories [Hume to John Clephane, 1756].

However, to radical Whig British readers, Hume was a conservative Tory who defended royal prerogative.

Hume takes two distinct positions on the prerogative issue. From a theoretical and idealistic perspective, he favored a mixed constitution, mediating between the authority of the monarch and that of the Parliament. Discussing this issue in his 1741 *Essays*, he holds that we should learn “the lesson of moderation in all our political controversies.” However, from the perspective of how British history actually unfolded, he emphasized royal prerogative. And, as a “philosophical historian,” he tried to show how human nature gave rise to the tendency towards royal prerogative. In his brief autobiography, “My Own Life,” he says that he rejected the “senseless clamour” of Whig ideology, and believed “It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution before that period [of the Stuart Monarchs] as a regular plan of liberty.” Gilbert Stuart best encapsulated Hume’s historical stance on the prerogative issue: “his history, from its beginning to its conclusion, is chiefly to be regarded as a plausible defence of prerogative” (*A View of Society in Europe*, 1778, 2.1.1). In short, Hume’s Tory narrative is this. As early as the Anglo Saxon period, the commons did not participate in the king’s advisory council. The Witenagemot, for example, was only a council of nobles and bishops, which the king could listen to or ignore as he saw fit. Throughout the succeeding centuries, England’s great kings were those who exercised absolute rule, and took advantage of prerogative courts such as the Star Chamber. Elizabeth—England’s most beloved monarch—was in fact a tyrant, and her reign was much like that of a Turkish sultan. Charles I—a largely virtuous man—tried to follow in her footsteps as a strong monarch. After a few minor lapses in judgment, and a few too many concessions to Catholics, Protestant zealots rose up against him, and he was ultimately executed. To avoid over-characterizing royal prerogative, Hume occasionally condemns arbitrary actions of monarchs and praises efforts for preserving liberty. Nevertheless, Whig critics like Gilbert Stuart argued that Hume’s emphasis was decisively in favor of prerogative.

There is an irony to Hume’s preference for prerogative over civil liberty. His philosophical writings were among the most controversial pieces of literature of the time, and would have been impossible to publish if Britain was not a friend to liberty. Although Hume was certainly no enemy to liberty, he believed that it was best achieved through moderation rather than Whig radicalism. He writes, “If any other rule than established practice be followed, factions and dissensions must multiply without end” (*History*, Appendix 3). To Hume’s way of thinking, the loudest voices favoring liberty were Calvinistic religious fanatics who accomplished little more than dissension. A strong, centralized and moderating force was the best way to avoid factious disruption from the start.

About David Hume

David Hume was born David Home on April 26, 1711, in Edinburgh, Scotland. Hume’s father, lawyer Joseph Home, died in 1713, and Hume’s mother, Katherine, raised their three children alone. With his Calvinist family, young Hume faithfully attended services in Church of Scotland, where his uncle served as pastor. The boy’s family had a comfortable life and a moderate income, enough to provide him with a good education. He left home at age twelve to study law at the University of Edinburgh.

Although Hume’s earliest letters reveal that he took religion seriously, he developed a stronger interest in philosophy and literature while a student at Edinburgh. In 1729, Hume left Edinburgh to pursue a self-directed education. He worked briefly for a sugar merchant in England and left for France in 1734, where he wrote his

first book, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. When he returned to Britain, he anonymously published three of the five volumes of the *Treatise*: Books I and II in 1739 and book III in 1740—a remarkable accomplishment for a twenty-nine-year-old. Many scholars today believe that the *Treatise* is Hume's masterpiece, but it was not well received by the English public. The book was not widely reviewed and failed to arouse the public debate Hume hoped for.

In 1741 and 1742, Hume published his two-volume *Essays, Moral and Political*, which met with better success than the *Treatise*. Hume decided that the problem with his *Treatise* was its style, not its content, so he reworked it into several smaller publications. Two of these publications became major works: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. This time, Hume caused a stir by advocating a system of morality based on utility, or usefulness, instead of God's authority. His newfound success encouraged him to seek a department chair position at the University of Edinburgh, but the town council rejected him because of his antireligious philosophy. The new books established Hume as the founder of the moral theory of utility and inspired the utilitarian movement, but they also made him known as an atheist, and he was rejected from yet another chair position at the University of Glasgow.

In 1752, Hume became a librarian for the College of Advocates in Edinburgh, where he wrote and published his six-volume *History of England*. Although it was not a philosophical work in the strictest sense, Hume felt that *History* was the next step in his philosophical evolution. He described the series as the practical application of his ideas about politics. During this period he also published *Four Dissertations: The Natural History of Religion, Of the Passions, Of Tragedy, Of the Standard of Taste*. These works aroused controversy in the religious community before they became public. Early copies were passed around, and someone of influence threatened to prosecute Hume's publisher if the book was distributed as it was. Hume deleted two essays and removed some particularly offensive passages, then published the book to moderate success. But the larger success of *History of England* restored Hume's reputation and provided him with the income he needed to live comfortably.

In 1763, Hume left the library and returned to the world of politics, accompanying Lord Hertford, the British ambassador to France, as his personal secretary. Hume was a controversial figure in England, but Enlightenment Paris received him warmly. In 1766, Hume returned to London as under-secretary of state, bringing along the persecuted writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Despite the generosity of his good-natured host, Rousseau eventually grew paranoid and bitter over his enemies' public attacks against him, and he broke with Hume in 1767. Rousseau wrote a public pamphlet accusing Hume of plotting against him while he was Hume's guest. Hume effectively cleared his own name by publishing a response that explained the reasons for their dispute.

Another secretary appointment took Hume away from England for a year, but in 1768, he retired to Edinburgh, where he spent his remaining years revising his works and socializing. He died from a painful internal disorder on April 26, 1776, at age sixty-five. After his death, several of his unpublished works appeared in print. The first was the short autobiography *My Own Life*, in which he finally acknowledges that he had authored the *Treatise* and which aroused immediate religious controversy because of his professed happiness as an atheist. In 1779, Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* appeared after being suppressed for years by his closest friends. Again, the response was mixed. Admirers of Hume considered it a masterful work, whereas critics railed against its hostility to religion. In 1782, Hume's last two suppressed essays, *Of Suicide* and *Of the Immortality of the Soul*, appeared to overwhelmingly negative criticism.

Hume is widely regarded as the third and most radical of the British empiricists, after John Locke and George Berkeley. Like Locke and Berkeley, Hume argued that all knowledge results from our experiences and is not received from God or innate to our minds. This kind of empiricism led to today's "scientific method," which holds that knowledge should be based on observations rather than intuition or faith. Radical empiricism went further, arguing that our knowledge is nothing more than the sum of our experiences. Unlike Locke and

Berkeley, Hume removed God from the equation completely and argued forcefully against the possibility of his existence as his contemporaries envisioned it.

Hume excelled as a moral philosopher, historian, and economist. He was the leader of the Scottish Enlightenment, a movement that took place in the fifty years between 1740 and 1790. This period was a very stable one in Scottish history, free of the civil strife and turmoil of earlier eras, and it gave rise to a remarkable number of notable intellectuals. The French Enlightenment had already spread throughout continental Europe and was beginning to influence Scottish academics, including Hume. Although they shared the French spirit, the Scottish philosophers practiced extreme skepticism and identified more strongly with utilitarianism, which posits that actions should be measured by their effect on the greater good of the world, not their consequences for the individual.

Despite Hume's nay-saying contemporaries, his theories of the "evolution" of ethics, institutions, and social conventions proved highly influential for later philosophers. Attention to his works grew after the great philosopher Immanuel Kant credited Hume with awakening him from "dogmatic slumber."

Themes, Arguments, and Ideas

The Uncertainty of Causation

Hume observes that while we may perceive two events that seem to occur in conjunction, there is no way for us to know the nature of their connection. Based on this observation, Hume argues against the very concept of causation, or cause and effect. We often assume that one thing causes another, but it is just as possible that one thing does *not* cause the other. Hume claims that causation is a habit of association, a belief that is unfounded and meaningless. Still, he notes that when we repeatedly observe one event following another, our assumption that we are witnessing cause and effect seems logical to us. Hume holds that we have an instinctive belief in causality, rooted in our own biological habits, and that we can neither prove nor discount this belief. However, if we accept our limitations, we can still function without abandoning our assumptions about cause and effect. Religion suggests that the world operates on cause and effect and that there must therefore be a First Cause, namely God. In Hume's worldview, causation is assumed but ultimately unknowable. We do not *know* there is a First Cause, or a place for God.

The Problem of Induction

Induction is the practice of drawing general conclusions based on particular experiences. Although this method is essential to empiricism and the scientific method, there is always something inherently uncertain about it, because we may acquire new data that are different and that disprove our previous conclusions. Essentially, the principle of induction teaches us that we can predict the future based on what has happened in the past, which we cannot. Hume argues that in the absence of real knowledge of the nature of the connection between events, we cannot adequately justify inductive assumptions. Hume suggests two possible justifications and rejects them both. The first justification is functional: It is only logical that the future must resemble the past. Hume pointed out that we can just as easily imagine a world of chaos, so logic cannot guarantee our inductions. The second justification is that we can assume that something will continue to happen because it has always happened before. To Hume, this kind of reasoning is circular and lacks a foundation in reason. Despite the efforts of John Stuart Mill and others, some might argue that the problem of induction has never been adequately resolved. Hume left the discussion with the opinion that we have an instinctual belief in induction, rooted in our own biological habits, that we cannot shake and yet cannot prove. Hume allows that we can still use induction, like causation, to function on a daily basis as long as we recognize the limitations of our knowledge.

Religious Morality Versus Moral Utility

Hume proposes the idea that moral principles are rooted in their utility, or usefulness, rather than in God's will. His version of this theory is unique. Unlike his Utilitarian successors, such as John Stuart Mill, Hume did not think that moral truths could be arrived at scientifically, as if we could add together units of utility and compare the relative utility of various actions. Instead, Hume was a moral sentimentalist who believed that moral principles cannot be intellectually justified as scientific solutions to social problems. Hume argues that some principles simply appeal to us and others do not. Moral principles appeal to us because they promote our interests and those of our fellow human beings, with whom we naturally sympathize. In other words, humans are biologically inclined to approve and support whatever helps society, since we all live in a community and stand to benefit. Hume used this simple but controversial insight to explain how we evaluate a wide array of phenomena, from social institutions and government policies to character traits and individual behavior.

The Division of Reason and Morality

Hume denies that reason plays a determining role in motivating or discouraging behavior. Instead, he believes that the determining factor in human behavior is passion. As proof, he asks us to evaluate human actions according to the criterion of "instrumentalism"—that is, whether an action serves the agent's purpose. Generally, we see that they do not and that human beings tend to act out of some other motivation than their best interest. Based on these arguments, Hume concludes that reason alone cannot motivate anyone to act. Rather, reason helps us arrive at judgments, but our own desires motivate us to act on or ignore those judgments. Therefore, reason does not form the basis of morality—it plays the role of an advisor rather than that of a decision-maker. Likewise, immorality is immoral not because it violates reason but because it is displeasing to us. This argument angered English clergy and other religious philosophers who believed that God gave humans reason to use as a tool to discover and understand moral principles. By removing reason from its throne, Hume denied God's role as the source of morality.

Finding God in an Orderly Universe

Hume argues that an orderly universe does not necessarily prove the existence of God. Those who hold the opposing view claim that God is the creator of the universe and the source of the order and purpose we observe in it, which resemble the order and purpose we ourselves create. Therefore, God, as creator of the universe, must possess intelligence similar, though superior, to ours. Hume explains that for this argument to hold up, it must be true that order and purpose appear only as a direct result of design. He points out that we can observe order in many mindless processes, such as generation and vegetation. Hume further argues that even if we accept that the universe has a design, we cannot know anything about the designer. God could be morally ambiguous, unintelligent, or even mortal. The design argument does not prove the existence of God in the way we conceive him: all-knowing, all-powerful, and entirely beneficent. The existence of evil, Hume holds, proves that if God exists, God cannot fit these criteria. The presence of evil suggests God is either all-powerful but not completely good or he is well-meaning but unable to destroy evil, and so not all-powerful.

The Bundle Theory of the Self

Hume asks us to consider what impression gives us our concept of self. We tend to think of ourselves as selves—stable entities that exist over time. But no matter how closely we examine our own experiences, we never observe anything beyond a series of transient feelings, sensations, and impressions. We cannot observe ourselves, or what we are, in a unified way. There is no impression of the "self" that ties our particular impressions together. In other words, we can never be directly aware of ourselves, only of what we are experiencing at any given moment. Although the relations between our ideas, feelings, and so on, may be traced through time by memory, there is no real evidence of any core that connects them. This argument also applies to the concept of the soul. Hume suggests that the self is just a bundle of perceptions, like links in a chain. To look

for a unifying self beyond those perceptions is like looking for a chain apart from the links that constitute it. Hume argues that our concept of the self is a result of our natural habit of attributing unified existence to any collection of associated parts. This belief is natural, but there is no logical support for it.

Influence

Attention to Hume's philosophical works grew after the German philosopher Immanuel Kant credited Hume with awakening him from "dogmatic slumbers" (*circa* 1770).

According to Schopenhauer, "there is more to be learned from each page of David Hume than from the collected philosophical works of Hegel, Herbart and Schleiermacher taken together."

A. J. Ayer, while introducing his classic exposition of logical positivism in 1936, claimed: "The views which are put forward in this treatise derive from ... doctrines ... which are themselves the logical outcome of the empiricism of Berkeley and David Hume." Albert Einstein, in 1915, wrote that he was inspired by Hume's positivism when formulating his theory of special relativity.

Hume's problem of induction was also of fundamental importance to the philosophy of Karl Popper. In his autobiography, *Unended Quest*, he wrote: "Knowledge ... is *objective*; and it is hypothetical or conjectural. This way of looking at the problem made it possible for me to reformulate Hume's *problem of induction*". This insight resulted in Popper's major work The Logic of Scientific Discovery. Also, in his Conjectures and Refutations, he wrote:

I approached the problem of induction through Hume. Hume, I felt, was perfectly right in pointing out that induction cannot be logically justified.

The writings of Scottish philosopher and contemporary of Hume, Thomas Reid, were often criticisms of Hume's scepticism. Reid formulated his common sense philosophy in part as a reaction against Hume's views.

Hume influenced and was influenced by the Christian philosopher Joseph Butler. Hume was impressed by Butler's way of thinking about religion, and Butler may well have been influenced by Hume's writings.

Hume's rationalism in religious subjects influenced, via German-Scottish theologian Johann Joachim Spalding, the German neology school and rational theology, and contributed to the transformation of German theology in the age of enlightenment. Hume pioneered a comparative history of religion, tried to explain various rites and traditions as being based on deception and challenged various aspects of rational and natural theology, such as the argument from design.

Danish theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard adopted "Hume's suggestion that the role of reason is not to make us wise but to reveal our ignorance." However, Kierkegaard took this as a reason for the necessity of religious faith, or fideism. The "fact that Christianity is contrary to reason ... is the necessary precondition for true faith." Political theorist Isaiah Berlin, for example, has pointed out the similarities between the arguments of Hume and Kierkegaard against rational theology. Berlin also writes about Hume's influence on what Berlin calls the counter-enlightenment, and German anti-rationalism.

Works

- *A Kind of History of My Life* (1734) Mss 23159 National Library of Scotland. A letter to an unnamed physician, asking for advice about "the Disease of the Learned" that then afflicted him. Here he reports that at the age of eighteen "there seem'd to be open'd up to

me a new Scene of Thought" that made him "throw up every other Pleasure or Business" and turned him to scholarship.

- A Treatise of Human Nature: *Being an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. (1739–40) Hume intended to see whether the Treatise of Human Nature met with success, and if so to complete it with books devoted to Politics and Criticism. However, it did not meet with success. As Hume himself said, "It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots" and so was not completed.
- *An Abstract of a Book lately Published: Entitled A Treatise of Human Nature etc.* (1740) Anonymously published, but almost certainly written by Hume in an attempt to popularise his *Treatise*. Of considerable philosophical interest, because it spells out what he considered "The Chief Argument" of the *Treatise*, in a way that seems to anticipate the structure of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*.
- Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary (first ed. 1741–2) A collection of pieces written and published over many years, though most were collected together in 1753–4. Many of the essays are focused on topics in politics and economics, though they also range over questions of aesthetic judgement, love, marriage and polygamy, and the demographics of ancient Greece and Rome, to name just a few of the topics considered. The Essays show some influence from Addison's Tatler and The Spectator, which Hume read avidly in his youth.
- *A Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh: Containing Some Observations on a Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality, said to be maintain'd in a Book lately publish'd, intituled A Treatise of Human Nature etc.* Edinburgh (1745). Contains a letter written by Hume to defend himself against charges of atheism and scepticism, while applying for a chair at Edinburgh University.
- An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (1748) Contains reworking of the main points of the *Treatise*, Book 1, with the addition of material on free will (adapted from Book 2), miracles, the Design Argument, and mitigated scepticism. Of Miracles, section X of the *Enquiry*, was often published separately.
- An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals (1751) A reworking of material from Book 3 of the *Treatise*, on morality, but with a significantly different emphasis. It "was thought by Hume to be the best of his writings".
- *Political Discourses*, (part II of Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary within vol. 1 of the larger *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*) Edinburgh (1752). Included in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1753–56) reprinted 1758–77.
- *Political Discourses/Discours politiques* (1752–1758), *My Own life* (1776), *Of Essay writing*, 1742. Bilingual English-French (translated by Fabien Grandjean). Mauvezin, France: Trans-Europ-Repress, 1993, 22 cm, V-260 p. Bibliographic notes, index.
- Four Dissertations London (1757). Included in reprints of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (above).
- The History of England (Sometimes referred to as The History of Great Britain) (1754–62) More a category of books than a single work, Hume's history spanned "from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688" and went through over 100 editions. Many considered it *the* standard history of England in its day.
- The Natural History of Religion. Included in "Four Dissertations" (1757)
- "My Own Life" (1776) Penned in April, shortly before his death, this autobiography was intended for inclusion in a new edition of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*. It was first published by Adam Smith who claimed that by doing so he had incurred "ten times more abuse than the very violent attack I had made upon the whole commercial system of Great Britain."
- Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779) Published posthumously by his nephew, David Hume the Younger. Being a discussion among three fictional characters

concerning the nature of God, and is an important portrayal of the argument from design. Despite some controversy, most scholars agree that the view of Philo, the most sceptical of the three, comes closest to Hume's own.

Leo Tolstoy

by Gary Saul Morson

Leo Tolstoy, Tolstoy also spelled **Tolstoi**, Russian in full Lev Nikolayevich, Count (Graf) Tolstoy (born Aug. 28 [Sept. 9, New Style], 1828, Yasnaya Polyana, Tula province, Russian Empire—died Nov. 7 [Nov. 20], 1910, Astapovo, Ryazan province), Russian author, a master of realistic fiction and one of the world's greatest novelists.

Tolstoy is best known for his two longest works, War and Peace and Anna Karenina, which are commonly regarded as among the finest novels ever written. *War and Peace* in particular seems virtually to define this form for many readers and critics. Among Tolstoy's shorter works, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* is usually classed among the best examples of the novella. Especially during his last three decades Tolstoy also achieved world renown as a moral and religious teacher. His doctrine of nonresistance to evil had an important influence on Gandhi. Although Tolstoy's religious ideas no longer command the respect they once did, interest in his life and personality has, if anything, increased over the years.

Most readers will agree with the assessment of the 19th-century British poet and critic Matthew Arnold that a novel by Tolstoy is not a work of art but a piece of life; the 20th-century Russian author Isaak Babel commented that, if the world could write by itself, it would write like Tolstoy. Critics of diverse schools have agreed that somehow Tolstoy's works seem to elude all artifice. Most have stressed his ability to observe the smallest changes of consciousness and to record the slightest movements of the body. What another novelist would describe as a single act of consciousness, Tolstoy convincingly breaks down into a series of infinitesimally small steps. According to the English writer Virginia Woolf, who took for granted that Tolstoy was "the greatest of all novelists," these observational powers elicited a kind of fear in readers, who "wish to escape from the gaze which Tolstoy fixes on us." Those who visited Tolstoy as an old man also reported feelings of great discomfort when he appeared to understand their unspoken thoughts. It was commonplace to describe him as godlike in his powers and titanic in his struggles to escape the limitations of the human condition. Some viewed Tolstoy as the embodiment of nature and pure vitality, others saw him as the incarnation of the world's conscience, but for almost all who knew him or read his works, he was not just one of the greatest writers who ever lived but a living symbol of the search for life's meaning.

Early Years

The scion of prominent aristocrats, Tolstoy was born at the family estate, about 130 miles (210 kilometres) south of Moscow, where he was to live the better part of his life and write his most important works. His mother, Mariya Nikolayevna, née Princess Volkonskaya, died before he was two years old, and his father Nikolay Ilich, Count Tolstoy, followed her in 1837. His grandmother died 11 months later, and then his next guardian, his aunt Aleksandra, in 1841. Tolstoy and his four siblings were then transferred to the care of another aunt in Kazan, in western Russia. Tolstoy remembered a cousin who lived at Yasnaya Polyana, Tatyana Aleksandrovna Yergolskaya ("Aunt Toinette," as he called her), as the greatest influence on his childhood, and later, as a young man, Tolstoy wrote some of his most touching letters to her. Despite the constant presence of death, Tolstoy remembered his childhood in idyllic terms. His first published work, *Detstvo* (1852; Childhood), was a fictionalized and nostalgic account of his early years.

Educated at home by tutors, Tolstoy enrolled in the University of Kazan in 1844 as a student of Oriental languages. His poor record soon forced him to transfer to the less demanding law faculty, where he wrote a comparison of the French political philosopher Charles de Secondat de Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* and Catherine II the Great's *nakaz* (instructions for a law code). Interested in literature and ethics, he was drawn to the works of the English novelists Laurence Sterne and Charles Dickens and, especially, to the writings of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau; in place of a cross, he wore a medallion with a portrait of Rousseau. But he spent most of his time trying to be *comme il faut* (socially correct), drinking, gambling, and engaging in debauchery. After leaving the university in 1847 without a degree, Tolstoy returned to Yasnaya Polyana, where he planned to educate himself, to manage his estate, and to improve the lot of his serfs. Despite frequent resolutions to change his ways, he continued his loose life during stays in Tula, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. In 1851 he joined his older brother Nikolay, an army officer, in the Caucasus and then entered the army himself. He took part in campaigns against the native Caucasian tribes and, soon after, in the Crimean War (1853–56). In 1847 Tolstoy began keeping a diary, which became his laboratory for experiments in self-analysis and, later, for his fiction. With some interruptions, Tolstoy kept his diaries throughout his life, and he is therefore one of the most copiously documented writers who ever lived. Reflecting the life he was leading, his first diary begins by confiding that he may have contracted a venereal disease. The early diaries record a fascination with rule-making, as Tolstoy composed rules for diverse aspects of social and moral behaviour. They also record the writer's repeated failure to honour these rules, his attempts to formulate new ones designed to ensure obedience to old ones, and his frequent acts of self-castigation. Tolstoy's later belief that life is too complex and disordered ever to conform to rules or philosophical systems perhaps derives from these futile attempts at self-regulation.

First Publications

Concealing his identity, Tolstoy submitted *Childhood* for publication in Sovremennik ("The Contemporary"), a prominent journal edited by the poet Nikolay Nekrasov. Nekrasov was enthusiastic, and the pseudonymously published work was widely praised. During the next few years Tolstoy published a number of stories based on his experiences in the Caucasus, including "Nabeg" (1853; "The Raid") and his three sketches about the Siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War: "Sevastopol v dekabre mesyatsa" ("Sevastopol in December"), "Sevastopol v maye" ("Sevastopol in May"), and "Sevastopol v avguste 1855 goda" ("Sevastopol in August"; all published 1855–56). The first sketch, which deals with the courage of simple soldiers, was praised by the tsar. Written in the second person as if it were a tour guide, this story also demonstrates Tolstoy's keen interest in formal experimentation and his lifelong concern with the morality of observing other people's suffering. The second sketch includes a lengthy passage of a soldier's stream of consciousness (one of the early uses of this device) in the instant before he is killed by a bomb. In the story's famous ending, the author, after commenting that none of his characters are truly heroic, asserts that "the hero of my story—whom I love with all the power of my soul . . . who was, is, and ever will be beautiful—is the truth." Readers ever since have remarked on Tolstoy's ability to make such "absolute language," which usually ruins realistic fiction, aesthetically effective.

After the Crimean War Tolstoy resigned from the army and was at first hailed by the literary world of St. Petersburg. But his prickly vanity, his refusal to join any intellectual camp, and his insistence on his complete independence soon earned him the dislike of the radical intelligentsia. He was to remain throughout his life an "archaist," opposed to prevailing intellectual trends. In 1857 Tolstoy traveled to Paris and returned after having gambled away his money.

After his return to Russia, he decided that his real vocation was pedagogy, and so he organized a school for peasant children on his estate. After touring western Europe to study pedagogical theory and practice, he published 12 issues of a journal, *Yasnaya Polyana* (1862–63), which included his provocative articles "Progress i opredeleniye obrazovaniya" ("Progress and the Definition of Education"), which denies that history has any underlying laws, and "Komu u kogu uchitsya pisat, krestyanskim rebyatam u nas ili nam u krestyanskikh rebyat?" ("Who Should Learn Writing of Whom: Peasant Children of Us, or We of Peasant Children?"), which reverses the usual answer to the question. Tolstoy married Sofya (Sonya) Andreyevna Bers, the daughter of a

prominent Moscow physician, in 1862 and soon transferred all his energies to his marriage and the composition of *War and Peace*. Tolstoy and his wife had 13 children, of whom 10 survived infancy.

Tolstoy's works during the late 1850s and early 1860s experimented with new forms for expressing his moral and philosophical concerns. To *Childhood* he soon added *Otrochestvo* (1854; Boyhood) and *Yunost* (1857; Youth). A number of stories centre on a single semiautobiographical character, Dmitry Nekhlyudov, who later reappeared as the hero of Tolstoy's novel Resurrection. In "Lyutsern" (1857; "Lucerne"), Tolstoy uses the diary form first to relate an incident, then to reflect on its timeless meaning, and finally to reflect on the process of his own reflections. "Tri smerti" (1859; "Three Deaths") describes the deaths of a noblewoman who cannot face the fact that she is dying, of a peasant who accepts death simply, and, at last, of a tree, whose utterly natural end contrasts with human artifice. Only the author's transcendent consciousness unites these three events.

"Kholstomer" (written 1863; revised and published 1886; "Kholstomer: The Story of a Horse") has become famous for its dramatic use of a favourite Tolstoyan device, "defamiliarization"—that is, the description of familiar social practices from the "naive" perspective of an observer who does not take them for granted. Readers were shocked to discover that the protagonist and principal narrator of "Kholstomer" was an old horse. Like so many of Tolstoy's early works, this story satirizes the artifice and conventionality of human society, a theme that also dominates Tolstoy's novel *Kazaki* (1863; The Cossacks). The hero of this work, the dissolute and self-centred aristocrat Dmitry Olenin, enlists as a cadet to serve in the Caucasus. Living among the Cossacks, he comes to appreciate a life more in touch with natural and biological rhythms. In the novel's central scene, Olenin, hunting in the woods, senses that every living creature, even a mosquito, "is just such a separate Dmitry Olenin as I am myself." Recognizing the futility of his past life, he resolves to live entirely for others.

The Period of the Great Novels (1863–77)

Happily married and ensconced with his wife and family at Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoy reached the height of his creative powers. He devoted the remaining years of the 1860s to writing *War and Peace*. Then, after an interlude during which he considered writing a novel about Peter I the Great and briefly returned to pedagogy (bringing out reading primers that were widely used), Tolstoy wrote his other great novel, *Anna Karenina*. These two works share a vision of human experience rooted in an appreciation of everyday life and prosaic virtues.

War and Peace

Voina i mir (1865–69; *War and Peace*) contains three kinds of material—a historical account of the Napoleonic wars, the biographies of fictional characters, and a set of essays about the philosophy of history. Critics from the 1860s to the present have wondered how these three parts cohere, and many have faulted Tolstoy for including the lengthy essays, but readers continue to respond to them with undiminished enthusiasm.

The work's historical portions narrate the campaign of 1805 leading to Napoleon's victory at the Battle of Austerlitz, a period of peace, and Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Contrary to generally accepted views, Tolstoy portrays Napoleon as an ineffective, egomaniacal buffoon, Tsar Alexander I as a phrasemaker obsessed with how historians will describe him, and the Russian general Mikhail Kutuzov (previously disparaged) as a patient old man who understands the limitations of human will and planning. Particularly noteworthy are the novel's battle scenes, which show combat as sheer chaos. Generals may imagine they can "anticipate all contingencies," but battle is really the result of "a hundred million diverse chances" decided on the moment by unforeseeable circumstances. In war as in life, no system or model can come close to accounting for the infinite complexity of human behaviour.

Among the book's fictional characters, the reader's attention is first focused on Prince Andrey Bolkonsky, a proud man who has come to despise everything fake, shallow, or merely conventional. Recognizing the artifice of high society, he joins the army to achieve glory, which he regards as truly meaningful. Badly wounded at Austerlitz, he comes to see glory and Napoleon as no less petty than the salons of St. Petersburg. As the novel

progresses, Prince Andrey repeatedly discovers the emptiness of the activities to which he has devoted himself. Tolstoy's description of his death in 1812 is usually regarded as one of the most effective scenes in Russian literature.

The novel's other hero, the bumbling and sincere Pierre Bezukhov, oscillates between belief in some philosophical system promising to resolve all questions and a relativism so total as to leave him in apathetic despair. He at last discovers the Tolstoyan truth that wisdom is to be found not in systems but in the ordinary processes of daily life, especially in his marriage to the novel's most memorable heroine, Natasha. When the book stops—it does not really end but just breaks off—Pierre seems to be forgetting this lesson in his enthusiasm for a new utopian plan.

In accord with Tolstoy's idea that prosaic, everyday activities make a life good or bad, the book's truly wise characters are not its intellectuals but a simple, decent soldier, Natasha's brother Nikolay, and a generous pious woman, Andrey's sister Marya. Their marriage symbolizes the novel's central prosaic values.

The essays in *War and Peace*, which begin in the second half of the book, satirize all attempts to formulate general laws of history and reject the ill-considered assumptions supporting all historical narratives. In Tolstoy's view, history, like battle, is essentially the product of contingency, has no direction, and fits no pattern. The causes of historical events are infinitely varied and forever unknowable, and so historical writing, which claims to explain the past, necessarily falsifies it. The shape of historical narratives reflects not the actual course of events but the essentially literary criteria established by earlier historical narratives.

According to Tolstoy's essays, historians also make a number of other closely connected errors. They presume that history is shaped by the plans and ideas of great men—whether generals or political leaders or intellectuals like themselves—and that its direction is determined at dramatic moments leading to major decisions. In fact, however, history is made by the sum total of an infinite number of small decisions taken by ordinary people, whose actions are too unremarkable to be documented. As Tolstoy explains, to presume that grand events make history is like concluding from a view of a distant region where only treetops are visible that the region contains nothing but trees. Therefore Tolstoy's novel gives its readers countless examples of small incidents that each exert a tiny influence—which is one reason that *War and Peace* is so long. Tolstoy's belief in the efficacy of the ordinary and the futility of system-building set him in opposition to the thinkers of his day. It remains one of the most controversial aspects of his philosophy.

Anna Karenina

In *Anna Karenina* (1875–77) Tolstoy applied these ideas to family life. The novel's first sentence, which indicates its concern with the domestic, is perhaps Tolstoy's most famous: "All happy families resemble each other; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." *Anna Karenina* interweaves the stories of three families, the Oblonskys, the Karenins, and the Levins.

The novel begins at the Oblonskys, where the long-suffering wife Dolly has discovered the infidelity of her genial and sybaritic husband Stiva. In her kindness, care for her family, and concern for everyday life, Dolly stands as the novel's moral compass. By contrast, Stiva, though never wishing ill, wastes resources, neglects his family, and regards pleasure as the purpose of life. The figure of Stiva is perhaps designed to suggest that evil, no less than good, ultimately derives from the small moral choices human beings make moment by moment.

Stiva's sister Anna begins the novel as the faithful wife of the stiff, unromantic, but otherwise decent government minister Aleksey Karenin and the mother of a young boy, Seryozha. But Anna, who imagines herself the heroine of a romantic novel, allows herself to fall in love with an officer, Aleksey Vronsky. Schooling herself to see only the worst in her husband, she eventually leaves him and her son to live with Vronsky. Throughout the novel, Tolstoy indicates that the romantic idea of love, which most people identify with love itself, is entirely incompatible with the superior kind of love, the intimate love of good families. As the novel progresses, Anna, who suffers pangs of conscience for abandoning her husband and child, develops a habit of lying to herself until she reaches a state of near madness and total separation from reality. She at last

commits suicide by throwing herself under a train. The realization that she may have been thinking about life incorrectly comes to her only when she is lying on the track, and it is too late to save herself.

The third story concerns Dolly's sister Kitty, who first imagines she loves Vronsky but then recognizes that real love is the intimate feeling she has for her family's old friend, Konstantin Levin. Their story focuses on courtship, marriage, and the ordinary incidents of family life, which, in spite of many difficulties, shape real happiness and a meaningful existence. Throughout the novel, Levin is tormented by philosophical questions about the meaning of life in the face of death. Although these questions are never answered, they vanish when Levin begins to live correctly by devoting himself to his family and to daily work. Like his creator Tolstoy, Levin regards the systems of intellectuals as spurious and as incapable of embracing life's complexity.

Both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* advance the idea that ethics can never be a matter of timeless rules applied to particular situations. Rather, ethics depends on a sensitivity, developed over a lifetime, to particular people and specific situations. Tolstoy's preference for particularities over abstractions is often described as the hallmark of his thought.

Conversion and Religious Beliefs

Upon completing *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy fell into a profound state of existential despair, which he describes in his *Ispoved* (1884; My Confession). All activity seemed utterly pointless in the face of death, and Tolstoy, impressed by the faith of the common people, turned to religion. Drawn at first to the Russian Orthodox church into which he had been born, he rapidly decided that it, and all other Christian churches, were corrupt institutions that had thoroughly falsified true Christianity. Having discovered what he believed to be Christ's message and having overcome his paralyzing fear of death, Tolstoy devoted the rest of his life to developing and propagating his new faith. He was excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox church in 1901.

In the early 1880s he wrote three closely related works, *Issledovaniye dogmaticheskogo bogosloviya* (written 1880; An Examination of Dogmatic Theology), *Soyedineniye i perevod chetyrokh yevangelii* (written 1881; Union and Translation of the Four Gospels), and *V chyom moya vera?* (written 1884; What I Believe); he later added *Tsarstvo bozhiye vnutri vas* (1893; The Kingdom of God Is Within You) and many other essays and tracts. In brief, Tolstoy rejected all the sacraments, all miracles, the Holy Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and many other tenets of traditional religion, all of which he regarded as obfuscations of the true Christian message contained, especially, in the Sermon on the Mount. He rejected the Old Testament and much of the New, which is why, having studied Greek, he composed his own "corrected" version of the Gospels. For Tolstoy, "the man Jesus," as he called him, was not the son of God but only a wise man who had arrived at a true account of life. Tolstoy's rejection of religious ritual contrasts markedly with his attitude in *Anna Karenina*, where religion is viewed as a matter not of dogma but of traditional forms of daily life.

Stated positively, the Christianity of Tolstoy's last decades stressed five tenets: be not angry, do not lust, do not take oaths, do not resist evil, and love your enemies. Nonresistance to evil, the doctrine that inspired Gandhi, meant not that evil must be accepted but only that it cannot be fought with evil means, especially violence. Thus Tolstoy became a pacifist. Because governments rely on the threat of violence to enforce their laws, Tolstoy also became a kind of anarchist. He enjoined his followers not only to refuse military service but also to abstain from voting or from having recourse to the courts. He therefore had to go through considerable inner conflict when it came time to make his will or to use royalties secured by copyright even for good works. In general, it may be said that Tolstoy was well aware that he did not succeed in living according to his teachings.

Tolstoy based the prescription against oaths (including promises) on an idea adapted from his early work: the impossibility of knowing the future and therefore the danger of binding oneself in advance. The commandment against lust eventually led him to propose (in his afterword to *Kreytserova sonata* [1891; The Kreutzer Sonata]), a dark novella about a man who murders his wife) total abstinence as an ideal. His wife, already concerned about their strained relations, objected. In defending his most extreme ideas, Tolstoy compared Christianity to a

lamp that is not stationary but is carried along by human beings; it lights up ever new moral realms and reveals ever higher ideals as mankind progresses spiritually.

Fiction after 1880

Tolstoy's fiction after *Anna Karenina* may be divided into two groups. He wrote a number of moral tales for common people, including "Gde lyubov, tam i bog" (written 1885; "Where Love Is, God Is"), "Chem lyudi zhivy" (written 1882; "What People Live By"), and "Mnogo li cheloveku zemli nuzhno" (written 1885; "How Much Land Does a Man Need"), a story that the Irish novelist James Joyce rather extravagantly praised as "the greatest story that the literature of the world knows." For educated people, Tolstoy wrote fiction that was both realistic and highly didactic. Some of these works succeed brilliantly, especially *Smert Ivana Ilich* (written 1886; The Death of Ivan Ilyich), a novella describing a man's gradual realization that he is dying and that his life has been wasted on trivialities. *Otets Sergiy* (written 1898; Father Sergius), which may be taken as Tolstoy's self-critique, tells the story of a proud man who wants to become a saint but discovers that sainthood cannot be consciously sought. Regarded as a great holy man, Sergius comes to realize that his reputation is groundless; warned by a dream, he escapes incognito to seek out a simple and decent woman whom he had known as a child. At last he learns that not he but she is the saint, that sainthood cannot be achieved by imitating a model, and that true saints are ordinary people unaware of their own prosaic goodness. This story therefore seems to criticize the ideas Tolstoy espoused after his conversion from the perspective of his earlier great novels.

In 1899 Tolstoy published his third long novel, *Voskreseniye (Resurrection)*; he used the royalties to pay for the transportation of a persecuted religious sect, the Dukhobors, to Canada. The novel's hero, the idle aristocrat Dmitry Nekhlyudov, finds himself on a jury where he recognizes the defendant, the prostitute Katryusha Maslova, as a woman whom he once had seduced, thus precipitating her life of crime. After she is condemned to imprisonment in Siberia, he decides to follow her and, if she will agree, to marry her. In the novel's most remarkable exchange, she reproaches him for his hypocrisy: once you got your pleasure from me, and now you want to get your salvation from me, she tells him. She refuses to marry him, but, as the novel ends, Nekhlyudov achieves spiritual awakening when he at last understands Tolstoyan truths, especially the futility of judging others. The novel's most celebrated sections satirize the church and the justice system, but the work is generally regarded as markedly inferior to *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*.

Tolstoy's conversion led him to write a treatise and several essays on art. Sometimes he expressed in more extreme form ideas he had always held (such as his dislike for imitation of fashionable schools), but at other times he endorsed ideas that were incompatible with his own earlier novels, which he rejected. In *Chto takoye iskusstvo?* (1898; What Is Art?) he argued that true art requires a sensitive appreciation of a particular experience, a highly specific feeling that is communicated to the reader not by propositions but by "infection." In Tolstoy's view, most celebrated works of high art derive from no real experience but rather from clever imitation of existing art. They are therefore "counterfeit" works that are not really art at all. Tolstoy further divides true art into good and bad, depending on the moral sensibility with which a given work infects its audience. Condemning most acknowledged masterpieces, including Shakespeare's plays as well as his own great novels, as either counterfeit or bad, Tolstoy singled out for praise the biblical story of Joseph and, among Russian works, Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead* and some stories by his young friend Anton Chekhov. He was cool to Chekhov's drama, however, and, in a celebrated witticism, once told Chekhov that his plays were even worse than Shakespeare's.

Tolstoy's late works also include a satiric drama, *Zhivoy trup* (written 1900; The Living Corpse), and a harrowing play about peasant life, *Vlast tmy* (written 1886; The Power of Darkness). After his death, a number of unpublished works came to light, most notably the novella *Khadji-Murat* (1904; Hadji-Murad), a brilliant narrative about the Caucasus reminiscent of Tolstoy's earliest fiction.

Last Years

With the notable exception of his daughter Aleksandra, whom he made his heir, Tolstoy's family remained aloof from or hostile to his teachings. His wife especially resented the constant presence of disciples, led by the dogmatic V.G. Chertkov, at Yasnaya Polyana. Their once happy life had turned into one of the most famous bad marriages in literary history. The story of his dogmatism and her penchant for scenes has excited numerous biographers to take one side or the other. Because both kept diaries, and indeed exchanged and commented on each other's diaries, their quarrels are almost too well documented.

Tormented by his domestic situation and by the contradiction between his life and his principles, in 1910 Tolstoy at last escaped incognito from Yasnaya Polyana, accompanied by Aleksandra and his doctor. In spite of his stealth and desire for privacy, the international press was soon able to report on his movements. Within a few days, he contracted pneumonia and died of heart failure at the railroad station of Astapovo.

Assessment

In contrast to other psychological writers, such as Dostoyevsky, who specialized in unconscious processes, Tolstoy described conscious mental life with unparalleled mastery. His name has become synonymous with an appreciation of contingency and of the value of everyday activity. Oscillating between skepticism and dogmatism, Tolstoy explored the most diverse approaches to human experience. Above all, his greatest works, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, endure as the summit of realist fiction.

Biography by C. D. Merriman

Childhood: Days of Idyll, Moscow and Kazan University

Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy was born on 28 August 1828 into a long line of Russian nobility. He was the fourth child of Countess Maria Volkonsky (who Tolstoy does not remember, as she died after giving birth to his sister Mariya in 1830) and Count Nicolay Ilyich Tolstoy (1797-1837) a Lieutenant Colonel who was awarded the order of St. Vladimir for his service. At the age of sixteen he had fathered a son with a servant girl, Leo's half-brother Mishenka. When Count Tolstoy resigned from his last post with the Military Orphanage, a marriage was arranged between him and Maria Volkonsky. After her death the Count's distant cousin Tatyana Aleksandrovna Yergolskaya 'Aunt Tatyana', who already lived with them helped him in running the household, raising the children and overseeing their tutoring. Leo's paternal grandfather Count Ilya Andreyevich Tolstoy (d.1820) had been an overly generous and trusting man; by the time Leo was born the Tolstoy fortunes had dwindled and the newlyweds settled at the Volkonsky family estate 'Yasnaya Polyana' (meaning 'Clear Glade') located in Tula Region, Shchekino District of central Russia. Leo's maternal great grandfather Prince Nikolas Sergeyevich Volkonsky had established it in the early 1800s; upon his death his daughter Countess Volkonsky inherited it. It is now preserved as a State Memorial and National Preserve.

From Leo's Introduction to biographer Paul Birukoff's *Leo Tolstoy: Childhood and Early Manhood* (1906) we gather the very clear and fond memories he has of his early years and his loved ones: *my father never humbled himself before any one, nor altered his brisk, merry, and often chaffing tone*. Count Tolstoy was a gentle, easy going man. Quick to tell a joke, he was reluctant to mete out corporal punishment that was so common at the time to the hundreds of serfs on their estate. He disliked wolf-baiting and fox-hunting, preferring to ride in the fields and forests, or walking with his children and their pack of romping greyhounds. Leo recounts outings with his siblings, friends, and paternal grandmother Pelageya Nikolayevna Tolstoy (d.1838) to pick hazelnuts; she seemed a dreamy magical figure to him. Sometimes he spent the evening in her bedroom while their blind story-teller Lev Stepanovich narrated lengthy, enchanting tales.

Leo greatly admired his oldest brother Nikolay 'Koko' (1823-1860). In recollecting their childhood Leo revered him, along with his mother, as saintly in their modesty, humility, and unwillingness to condemn or judge others. His other siblings were Sergey (b.1826), Dmitriy (1827-1855) and Mariya (b.1830). The Tolstoy House was a bustling household, often with extended family members and friends visiting for dinner or staying for days at a time. The children and adults played Patience, the piano, put on plays, sang Russian and Gypsy folk songs and

read stories and poetry aloud. A voracious reader, Leo would visit his father in his study as he read and smoked his pipe. Sometimes the Count would have young Leo recite memorised passages from Alexander Pushkin. The family home still contains the library of over twenty thousand books in over thirty languages. When not indoors, there was no shortage of outdoor activities for the children: tobogganing in winter, horseback riding, playing in the orchards, forests, formal gardens, greenhouses and bathing in the large pond which Leo loved to do all his life.

Days in the country however were to come to an end when, in 1836, the Tolstoys moved to Moscow so that the boys could attend school. The following summer Count Tolstoy died suddenly. He was buried at Tula. Leo had a hard time accepting this inevitability of life; the loss of his father was a profound experience to such a young boy and as he watched his beloved grandmother Pelageya (who died two years later) suffer through her grief, he had his first spiritual questionings. His father's sister, Countess Aleksandra Osten Saken 'Aunt Aline' became the children's guardian and Nikolay and Sergey stayed with her in Moscow while Leo and his sister Mariya and Dmitriy moved back to Yasnaya Polyana to live with Aunt Tatyana.

When Aunt Aline died in 1841, Leo, now aged thirteen traveled with his brothers to Kazan where their next guardians lived, Aunt and Uncle Yushkof. Despite the pall of death, loss of innocence and upheavals in living arrangements, Leo started preparations for the entrance examinations to Kazan University, wanting to enter the faculty of Oriental languages. He studied Arabic, Turkish, Latin, German, English, and French, and geography, history, and religion. He also began in earnest studying the literary works of English, Russian and French authors including Charles Dickens, Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol, Mikhail Lermontov, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Laurence Sterne, Friedrich Schiller, and Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire.

Boyhood: Military Service and First Writings

In 1844, at the age of sixteen and the end of what Tolstoy says was his childhood, and the beginning of his youth, he entered the University of Kazan to study Turco-Arabic literature. While he did not graduate beyond the second year (he would later attempt to study law) this period of his life also corresponded with his coming out into society. He and his brothers moved out of their uncle's home and secured their own rooms. No longer the provincial, there were balls and galas to attend and other such manly pursuits as drinking, gambling and visiting brothels. Tolstoy did not have much success as a student, but he would become a polyglot with at least some working knowledge of a dozen languages. He did not respond to the universities' conventional system of learning and left in 1847 without obtaining his degree.

Back at Yasnaya Polyana and during the next few years Tolstoy agonized about what next to do with his life. He expressed his aspirations, confusion and disappointments in his diary and correspondence with his brothers and friends. He attempted to set the estates' affairs in order but again was caught up in the life of a young nobleman, travelling between the estate and Moscow and St. Petersburg. He was addicted to gambling, racking up huge debts and having to sell possessions to pay them off including parts of his estate. He would go on drinking binges, associating with various characters of ill-repute that his Aunt Tatyana repeatedly warned him about. To her and a few other confidantes he often confessed his remorse when sober and wrote in his diary; *I am living a completely brutish life....I have abandoned almost all my occupations and have greatly fallen in spirit.* (ibid, Ch. VI) He took to wearing peasant clothes including a style of blouse that would later be named after him, 'tolstovkas'. He again attempted university exams in the hope that he would obtain a position with the government, but also pondered the alternative, to serve in the army.

When his brother Nikolay, who was now an officer in the Caucasian army, came to visit Yasnaya Polyana for a short while, Tolstoy seized the opportunity to change his life. In the spring of 1851 they left for the Caucasus region at the southern edge of Russia. The unglamorous nomadic life they led, travelling through or staying in Cossack and Caucasian villages, meeting the simple folk who populated them, exalting in the mountainous vistas, and meeting the hardy souls who traversed and defended these regions left their indelible mark on Tolstoy. Having long corresponded with his Aunts, he now turned his pen to writing fiction. The first novel of

his autobiographical trilogy *Childhood* (1852) was published in the magazine *Sovremennik* which would serialise many more of his works. It was highly lauded and Tolstoy was encouraged to continue with *Boyhood* (1854) and *Youth* (1857), although, after his religious conversion he admitted that the series was *insincere* and a *clumsy confusion of truth with fiction* (ibid, Introduction).

In 1854, during the Crimean War Tolstoy transferred to Wallachia to fight against the French, British and Ottoman Empire to defend Sevastapol. The battle inspired *Sevastopol Sketches* written between 1855 and 1856, published in three installments in *The Contemporary* magazine. In 1855 he left the army, the same year he heard about his brother Dmitry's illness. He arrived at his bedside just before he succumbed to tuberculosis, the same disease to take his brother Nikolay's life on 20 September 1860. Again Tolstoy was in limbo, torn between his 'unrestrained passions' and setting forth a realistic plan for his life. He had tried unsuccessfully to educate the hundreds of *muzhiks* or peasants who tended his fields, founding a school for the children in the family estate's Kuzminsky House, but it proved to be frustrating and ultimately unsuccessful. He set off on travels throughout Western Europe. By this time *Childhood* had been translated to English and Tolstoy was a well-known author, enjoying a Counts' life as a bachelor. When he was unable to pay a gambling debt of 1,000 rubles to publisher Katkov, incurred while playing billiards with him, Tolstoy relinquished his unfinished manuscript of *The Cossacks* which was printed as-is in the January 1863 issue of the magazine *The Russian Messenger*. Again Tolstoy vacillated between bouts of sobriety and debauch;

I put men to death in war, I fought duels to slay others. I lost at cards, wasted the substance wrung from the sweat of peasants, punished the latter cruelly, rioted with loose women, and deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, and murder, all were committed by me, not one crime omitted, and yet I was not the less considered by my equals to be a comparatively moral man. Such was my life for ten years. (ibid, Ch. VI)

At times in these dark days he turned to the figure of his mother and all the good she represented and to which he aspired, for;

Such was the figure of my mother in my imagination. She appeared to me a creature so elevated, pure, and spiritual that often in the middle period of my life, during my struggle with overwhelming temptations, I prayed to her soul, begging her to aid me, and this prayer always helped me much. (ibid, Introduction)

But times were to change and things were soon to rapidly settle: Tolstoy fell in love.

Youth: Marriage, Children, War and Peace and Anna Karenina

In September of 1862, at the age of thirty four, Tolstoy married the sister of one of his friends, nineteen year old Sofia 'Sonya' Andreyevna Behrs (b.1844). Their children were: Sergey (b.1863), Tatiana (b.1864), Ilya (b.1866), Leo (b.1869), Marya 'Masha' (1871-1906), Petya (1872-1873), Nicholas (1874-1875), unnamed daughter who died shortly after birth in 1875, Andrey (b.1877), Alexis (1881-1886), Alexandra 'Sasha' (b.1884), and Ivan (1888-1895).

Wanting her to understand everything about him before they married, Tolstoy had given Sonya his diaries to read. Even though she consented to marriage it took her some time to get over the initial shock of their content. However, the tension and jealousy they sparked between them never clearly dissipated. In other matters Countess Tolstoy proved helpful to her husband's writing career: she organised his rough notes, copied out drafts, and assisted with his correspondence and business affairs of the estate. Thus Tolstoy plunged into his writing: he started *War and Peace* in 1862 and its six volumes were published between 1863 and 1869. Listless and depressed even though it was met with much enthusiasm, Tolstoy travelled to Samara in the steppes where he bought land and built an estate he could stay at in the summer.

He started writing his next epic *Anna Karenina* with the opening line that gloomily alluded to his own life *Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way* in 1873. The first chapters appeared in the *Russian Herald* in 1876. The same year it was published in its entirety, 1878, Count Tolstoy suffered the most intense bout of self-doubt and spiritual introspection yet; he became depressed and suicidal; his usually rational outlook on life became muddled with what he thought was a morally upright life as husband and father. He harshly examined his motives and criticised himself for his *egotistical family cares....concern for the increase of wealth, the attainment of literary success, and the enjoyment of every kind of pleasure*(ibid, Intro.).

So Tolstoy wrote his *Confessions* (1879) and began *the last period of my awakening to the truth which has given me the highest well-being in life and joyous peace in view of approaching death.* (ibid) A number of his non-fiction articles and novels outlining his ideology and harshly criticising the government and church followed including “The Census in Moscow”, *A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology* (1880), *A Short Exposition of the Gospels* (1881), *What I Believe*(1882), *What Then Must We Do?* (1886), and *On Life and Death* (1892). *The Death of Ivan Ilych* (1886), his drama *The Power of Darkness* (1888), *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1890), *Father Sergius* (written between 1890-98), *Hadji Murad* (written between 1896 and 1904), *The Young Czar* (1894), *What Is Art?* (1897), *The Forged Coupon* (1904), *Diary of Alexander I* (1905), and *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence* (1908) were also written around this time. With the publication of *Resurrection* (1901) Tolstoy was excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church; but his popularity with the public was unwavering. Tolstoy the author now had a large following of disciples devoted to ‘Tolstoyism’.

Conversion and Last Years

Tolstoy’s main follower was a wealthy army officer, Vladimir Chertkov (1854-1910). Sonya would soon be caught in a bitter battle with him for her husband’s private diaries. Having embraced the pacifist doctrine of non-resistance as per the teachings of Jesus outlined in the gospels, Tolstoy gave up meat, tobacco, alcohol and preached chastity. He wrote *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1893), titled after Luke’s Gospel in the New Testament. When Mahatma Gandhi read it he was profoundly moved and wrote to Tolstoy regarding the Passive Resistance movement. They started a correspondence and soon became friends. Tolstoy wrote “A Letter to a Hindu” in 1908. Admiring their ideals of a simple life of hard work, living off the land and following the teachings of Jesus, Tolstoy offered his friendship and moral and financial support to the Doukhobors. A Christian sect persecuted in Russia, many Tolstoyans assisted them in their mass emigration to Canada in 1899. Tolstoy was involved with many other causes including appealing to the Tsar to avoid civil war at all costs. In 1902 he moved back to Yasnya Polyana.

In January of 1903, as he writes in his diary, Tolstoy still struggled with his identity: where he had come from and who he had become;

I am now suffering the torments of hell: I am calling to mind all the infamies of my former life—these reminiscences do not pass away and they poison my existence. Generally people regret that the individuality does not retain memory after death. What a happiness that it does not! What an anguish it would be if I remembered in this life all the evil, all that is painful to the conscience, committed by me in a previous life....What a happiness that reminiscences disappear with death and that there only remains consciousness

The ruminations were prompted by his friend Paul Biryukov asking him for his assistance in penning his biography. His literary executor Chertkov would write *The Last Days of Leo Tolstoy* (1911). For as the last days of Tolstoy were playing out, he still at times agonised over his self-worth and regretted his actions from decades earlier. Having renounced his ancestral claim to his estate and all of his worldly goods, all in his family but his youngest daughter Alexandra scorned him. He was intent on starting a new life and did so on 28 October 1910, making it as far as the stationmaster’s home at the Astapovo train station. Leo Tolstoy died there of pneumonia on 20 November 1910. Although he wanted no ceremony or ritual, thousands showed up to pay their respects. He was buried in a simple wooden coffin near Nikolay’s ‘place of the little green stick’ by the ravine in the

Stary Zakaz Wood on the Yasnya Polyana estate; returned to that place of idylls where Nikolay told him one could find the secret to happiness and the end to all suffering.

Novels and Fictional Works

Tolstoy is one of the giants of Russian literature; his works include the novels War and Peace and Anna Karenina and novellas such as Hadji Murad and The Death of Ivan Ilyich. His contemporaries paid him lofty tributes. Fyodor Dostoyevsky thought him the greatest of all living novelists. Gustave Flaubert, on reading a translation of *War and Peace*, exclaimed, "What an artist and what a psychologist!" Anton Chekhov, who often visited Tolstoy at his country estate, wrote, "When literature possesses a Tolstoy, it is easy and pleasant to be a writer; even when you know you have achieved nothing yourself and are still achieving nothing, this is not as terrible as it might otherwise be, because Tolstoy achieves for everyone. What he does serves to justify all the hopes and aspirations invested in literature."

Later critics and novelists continue to bear testament to Tolstoy's art. Virginia Woolf declared him the greatest of all novelists. James Joyce noted that, "He is never dull, never stupid, never tired, never pedantic, never theatrical!". Thomas Mann wrote of Tolstoy's seemingly guileless artistry: "Seldom did art work so much like nature". Such sentiments were shared by the likes of Proust, Faulkner and Nabokov. The latter heaped superlatives upon The Death of Ivan Ilyich and *Anna Karenina*; he questioned, however, the reputation of *War and Peace*, and sharply criticized Resurrection and The Kreutzer Sonata.

Tolstoy's earliest works, the autobiographical novels Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth (1852–1856), tell of a rich landowner's son and his slow realization of the chasm between himself and his peasants. Though he later rejected them as sentimental, a great deal of Tolstoy's own life is revealed. They retain their relevance as accounts of the universal story of growing up.

Tolstoy served as a second lieutenant in an artillery regiment during the Crimean War, recounted in his Sevastapol Sketches. His experiences in battle helped stir his subsequent pacifism and gave him material for realistic depiction of the horrors of war in his later work.

His fiction consistently attempts to convey realistically the Russian society in which he lived. The Cossacks (1863) describes the Cossack life and people through a story of a Russian aristocrat in love with a Cossack girl. *Anna Karenina* (1877) tells parallel stories of an adulterous woman trapped by the conventions and falsities of society and of a philosophical landowner (much like Tolstoy), who works alongside the peasants in the fields and seeks to reform their lives. Tolstoy not only drew from his own life experiences but also created characters in his own image, such as Pierre Bezukhov and Prince Andrei in *War and Peace*, Levin in *Anna Karenina* and to some extent, Prince Nekhlyudov in *Resurrection*.

War and Peace is generally thought to be one of the greatest novels ever written, remarkable for its dramatic breadth and unity. Its vast canvas includes 580 characters, many historical with others fictional. The story moves from family life to the headquarters of Napoleon, from the court of Alexander I of Russia to the battlefields of Austerlitz and Borodino. Tolstoy's original idea for the novel was to investigate the causes of the Decembrist revolt, to which it refers only in the last chapters, from which can be deduced that Andrei Bolkonski's son will become one of the Decembrists. The novel explores Tolstoy's theory of history, and in particular the insignificance of individuals such as Napoleon and Alexander. Somewhat surprisingly, Tolstoy did not consider *War and Peace* to be a novel (nor did he consider many of the great Russian fictions written at that time to be novels). This view becomes less surprising if one considers that Tolstoy was a novelist of the realist school who considered the novel to be a framework for the examination of social and political issues in nineteenth-century life. *War and Peace* (which is to Tolstoy really an epic in prose) therefore did not qualify. Tolstoy thought that *Anna Karenina* was his first true novel.

After *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy concentrated on Christian themes, and his later novels such as *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886) and What Is to Be Done? develop a radical anarcho-pacifist Christian philosophy which led to his excommunication from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1901. For all the praise showered on *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*, Tolstoy rejected the two works later in his life as something not as true of reality.

Religious and Political Beliefs

After reading Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation, Tolstoy gradually became converted to the ascetic morality upheld in that work as the proper spiritual path for the upper classes: "Do you know what this summer has meant for me? Constant raptures over Schopenhauer and a whole series of spiritual delights which I've never experienced before. ... no student has ever studied so much on his course, and learned so much, as I have this summer"

In Chapter VI of A Confession, Tolstoy quoted the final paragraph of Schopenhauer's work. It explained how the nothingness that results from complete denial of self is only a relative nothingness, and is not to be feared. The novelist was struck by the description of Christian, Buddhist, and Hindu ascetic renunciation as being the path to holiness. After reading passages such as the following, which abound in Schopenhauer's ethical chapters, the Russian nobleman chose poverty and formal denial of the will:

But this very necessity of involuntary suffering (by poor people) for eternal salvation is also expressed by that utterance of the Savior (Matthew 19:24): "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Therefore those who were greatly in earnest about their eternal salvation, chose voluntary poverty when fate had denied this to them and they had been born in wealth. Thus Buddha Sakyamuni was born a prince, but voluntarily took to the mendicant's staff; and Francis of Assisi, the founder of the mendicant orders who, as a youngster at a ball, where the daughters of all the notabilities were sitting together, was asked: "Now Francis, will you not soon make your choice from these beauties?" and who replied: "I have made a far more beautiful choice!" "Whom?" "La povertà (poverty)": whereupon he abandoned every thing shortly afterwards and wandered through the land as a mendicant.

In 1884, Tolstoy wrote a book called "What I Believe", in which he openly confessed his Christian beliefs. He affirmed his belief in Jesus Christ's teachings and was particularly influenced by the Sermon on the Mount, and the injunction to turn the other cheek, which he understood as a "commandment of non-resistance to evil by force" and a doctrine of pacifism and nonviolence. In his work *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, he explains that he considered mistaken the Church's doctrine because they had made a "perversion" of Christ's teachings. Tolstoy also received letters from American Quakers who introduced him to the non-violence writings of Quaker Christians such as George Fox, William Penn and Jonathan Dymond. Tolstoy believed being a Christian required him to be a pacifist; the consequences of being a pacifist, and the apparently inevitable waging of war by government, are the reason why he is considered a philosophical anarchist.

Later, various versions of "Tolstoy's Bible" would be published, indicating the passages Tolstoy most relied on, specifically, the reported words of Jesus himself.

Tolstoy believed that a true Christian could find lasting happiness by striving for inner self-perfection through following the Great Commandment of loving one's neighbor and God rather than looking outward to the Church or state for guidance. His belief in nonresistance (nonviolence) when faced by conflict is another distinct attribute of his philosophy based on Christ's teachings. By directly influencing Mahatma Gandhi with this idea through his work The Kingdom of God Is Within You (full text of English translation available on Wikisource), Tolstoy has had a huge influence on the nonviolent resistance movement to this day. He believed that the aristocracy were a burden on the poor, and that the only solution to how we live together is through anarchism. He also opposed private property and the institution of marriage and valued the ideals of chastity and sexual abstinence (discussed in Father Sergius and his preface to *The Kreutzer Sonata*), ideals also held by the young Gandhi. Tolstoy's later work derives a passion and verve from the depth of his austere moral views. The sequence of the temptation of Sergius in *Father Sergius*, for example, is among his later triumphs. Gorky relates how Tolstoy once read this passage before himself and Chekhov and that Tolstoy was moved to tears by the end of the reading. Other later passages of rare power include the crises of self-faced by the protagonists of *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and Master and Man, where the main character in the former or the reader in the latter is made aware of the foolishness of the protagonists' lives.

Tolstoy had a profound influence on the development of Christian anarchist thought. The Tolstoyans were a small Christian anarchist group formed by Tolstoy's companion, Vladimir Chertkov (1854–1936), to spread

Tolstoy's religious teachings. Philosopher Peter Kropotkin wrote of Tolstoy in the article on anarchism in the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica:

Without naming himself an anarchist, Leo Tolstoy, like his predecessors in the popular religious movements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Chojecki, Denk and many others, took the anarchist position as regards the state and property rights, deducing his conclusions from the general spirit of the teachings of Jesus and from the necessary dictates of reason. With all the might of his talent he made (especially in *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*) a powerful criticism of the church, the state and law altogether, and especially of the present property laws. He describes the state as the domination of the wicked ones, supported by brutal force. Robbers, he says, are far less dangerous than a well-organized government. He makes a searching criticism of the prejudices which are current now concerning the benefits conferred upon men by the church, the state, and the existing distribution of property, and from the teachings of Jesus he deduces the rule of non-resistance and the absolute condemnation of all wars. His religious arguments are, however, so well combined with arguments borrowed from a dispassionate observation of the present evils, that the anarchist portions of his works appeal to the religious and the non-religious reader alike.

During the Boxer Rebellion in China, Tolstoy praised the Boxers. He was harshly critical of the atrocities committed by the Russians, Germans, and other western troops. He accused them of engaging in slaughter when he heard about the lootings, rapes, and murders, in what he saw as Christian brutality. Tolstoy also named the two monarchs most responsible for the atrocities; Nicholas II of Russia and Wilhelm II of Germany. Tolstoy, a famous sinophile, also read the works of Chinese thinker and philosopher, Confucius.

In hundreds of essays over the last twenty years of his life, Tolstoy reiterated the anarchist critique of the state and recommended books by Kropotkin and Proudhon to his readers, whilst rejecting anarchism's espousal of violent revolutionary means. In the 1900 essay, "On Anarchy", he wrote; "The Anarchists are right in everything; in the negation of the existing order, and in the assertion that, without Authority, there could not be worse violence than that of Authority under existing conditions. They are mistaken only in thinking that Anarchy can be instituted by a revolution. But it will be instituted only by there being more and more people who do not require the protection of governmental power ... There can be only one permanent revolution—a moral one: the regeneration of the inner man." Despite his misgivings about anarchist violence, Tolstoy took risks to circulate the prohibited publications of anarchist thinkers in Russia, and corrected the proofs of Kropotkin's "Words of a Rebel", illegally published in St Petersburg in 1906.

Tolstoy was enthused by the economic thinking of Henry George, incorporating it approvingly into later works such as Resurrection, the book that played a major factor in his excommunication.^[36]

In 1908, Tolstoy wrote A Letter to a Hindoo outlining his belief in non-violence as a means for India to gain independence from British colonial rule. In 1909, a copy of the letter fell into the hands of Mohandas Gandhi who was working as a lawyer in South Africa at the time and in the beginnings of becoming an activist. Tolstoy's letter was significant for Gandhi who wrote to the famous writer seeking proof that he was the real author, leading to further correspondence between them. Reading Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* also convinced Gandhi to avoid violence and espouse nonviolent resistance, a debt Gandhi acknowledged in his autobiography, calling Tolstoy "the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has produced". The correspondence between Tolstoy and Gandhi would only last a year, from October 1909 until Tolstoy's death in November 1910, but led Gandhi to give the name, the Tolstoy Colony, to his second ashram in South Africa. Besides non-violent resistance, the two men shared a common belief in the merits of vegetarianism, the subject of several of Tolstoy's essays.

Tolstoy also became a major supporter of the Esperanto movement. Tolstoy was impressed by the pacifist beliefs of the Doukhobors and brought their persecution to the attention of the international community, after they burned their weapons in peaceful protest in 1895. He aided the Doukhobors in migrating to Canada. In 1904, during the Russo-Japanese War, Tolstoy condemned the war and wrote to the Japanese Buddhist priest Soyen Shaku in a failed attempt to make a joint pacifist statement.

Works

Fiction

- Albert
- Anna Karenina
- Boyhood
- Childhood
- Father Sergius
- Hadji Murad
- Master and Man
- Resurrection
- The Cossacks
- The Death of Ivan Ilych
- The Forged Coupon
- The Kreutzer Sonata
- War and Peace
- Youth

Non-Fiction

- A Confession
- Bethink Yourselves
- The Kingdom of God is Within You
- Tolstoy on Shakespeare

Plays

- Fruits of Culture
- Redemption
- The Cause Of It All
- The First Distiller
- The Light Shines in Darkness
- The Live Corpse
- The Power of Darkness

Short Stories

- A Grain As Big As A Hen's Egg
- A Lost Opportunity
- A Prisoner in the Caucasus
- A Spark Neglected Burns the House
- After the Dance
- Alyosha the Pot
- An Old Acquaintance
- Esarhaddon, King of Assyria
- Evil Allures, But God Endures
- God Sees the Truth, But Waits
- How Much Land Does a Man Need?
- Ilyás
- Ivan the Fool
- Little Girls Wiser Than Men
- My Dream
- Polikushka
- The Bear Hunt
- The Candle

- The Coffee-House of Surat
- The Empty Drum
- The Godson
- The Imp and the Crust
- The Repentant Sinner
- The Young Tsar
- There Are No Guilty People
- Three Hermits
- Three Questions
- Too Dear!
- Two Old Men
- What Men Live By
- Where Love Is, God Is
- Work, Death, and Sickness

Essays

- A Letter to A Hindu
- On the Significance of Science and Art
- On Labour and Luxury
- To Women
- The Census in Moscow
- Concerning the Legal Status of the Jews

Unit II

George Bernard Shaw

George Bernard Shaw (26 July 1856 – 2 November 1950) was an Irish playwright and a co-founder of the London School of Economics. Although his first profitable writing was music and literary criticism, in which capacity he wrote many highly articulate pieces of journalism, his main talent was for drama, and he wrote more than 60 plays. He was also an essayist, novelist and short story writer. Nearly all his writings address prevailing social problems with a vein of comedy which makes their stark themes more palatable. Issues which engaged Shaw's attention included education, marriage, religion, government, health care, and class privilege.

He was most angered by what he perceived as the exploitation of the working class. An ardent socialist, Shaw wrote many brochures and speeches for the Fabian Society. He became an accomplished orator in the furtherance of its causes, which included gaining equal rights for men and women, alleviating abuses of the working class, rescinding private ownership of productive land, and promoting healthy lifestyles. For a short time he was active in local politics, serving on the London County Council.

Shaw was noted for expressing his views in uncompromising language, whether on vegetarianism (branding his own pre-vegetarian self a "cannibal"), the development of the human race (his own brand of eugenics was driven by encouragement of miscegenation and marrying across class lines), or on political questions (in spite of his own generally liberal views he was not an uncritical supporter of democracy, and is even recorded as supporting, or at least condoning, the dictators of the 1930s).

In 1898, Shaw married Charlotte Payne-Townshend, a fellow Fabian, whom he survived. They settled in Ayot St Lawrence in a house now called Shaw's Corner. Shaw died there, aged 94, from chronic problems exacerbated by injuries he incurred by falling from a ladder.

He is the only person to have been awarded both a Nobel Prize in Literature (1925) and an Academy Award (1938), for his contributions to literature and for his work on the film Pygmalion (an adaptation of his play of the same name), respectively. Shaw turned down all other awards and honours, including the offer of a knighthood.

Life and Career

George Bernard Shaw, the third and youngest child, and only son, of George Carr Shaw (1815–1885) and Lucinda Gurly (1830–1913), was born on 26th July 1856 at 3 Upper Synge Street (later 33 Synge Street), Dublin. Shaw's father, a corn merchant, was also an alcoholic and therefore there was very little money to spend on George's education. George went to local schools but never went to university and was largely self-taught.

Shaw began work on 26th October 1871, when he was fifteen, as a junior clerk in a Dublin estate agency run by two brothers, Charles Uniacke and Thomas Courtney Townshend, at a salary of £18 a year. He later recalled that he worked in "a stuffy little den counting another man's money... I enter and enter, and add and add, and take money and give change, and fill cheques and stamp receipts". He added that it was a "damnable waste of human life". According to his biographer, Stanley Weintraub: "While he performed his drudgery so conscientiously over fifteen months that his wages rose to £24." His parents moved to London and Shaw joined them in March 1876.

Shaw hoped to become a writer and during the next seven years wrote five unsuccessful novels. He was more successful with his journalism and contributed to Pall Mall Gazette. Shaw got on well with the newspaper's campaigning editor, William Stead, who attempted to use the power of the popular press to obtain social reform.

In 1882 Shaw heard Henry George lecture on land nationalization. This had a profound effect on Shaw and helped to develop his ideas on socialism. Shaw now joined the Social Democratic Federation and its leader, H. H. Hyndman, introduced him to the works of Karl Marx. Shaw was convinced by the economic theories in *Das Kapital* but was aware that it would have little impact on the working class. He later wrote that although the book had been written for the working man, "Marx never got hold of him for a moment. It was the revolting sons of the bourgeois itself - Lassalle, Marx, Liebknecht, Morris, Hyndman, Bax, all like myself, crossed with squirearchy - that painted the flag red. The middle and upper classes are the revolutionary element in society; the proletariat is the conservative element."

Shaw became an active member of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), and became friends with others in the movement including William Morris, Eleanor Marx, Annie Besant, Walter Crane, Edward Aveling and Belfort Bax. In May 1884 Shaw joined the Fabian Society and the following year, the Socialist League, an organisation that had been formed by Morris and Marx after a dispute with H. H. Hyndman, the leader of the SDF.

George Bernard Shaw gave lectures on socialism on street corners and helped distribute political literature. On 13th November he took part in a demonstration in London that resulted in the Bloody Sunday Riot. However, he always felt uncomfortable with trade union members and preferred debate to action.

By 1886, Shaw tended to concentrate his efforts on the work that he did with the Fabian Society. The society that included Edward Carpenter, Annie Besant, Walter Crane, Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb believed that capitalism had created an unjust and inefficient society. They agreed that the ultimate aim of the group should be to reconstruct "society in accordance with the highest moral possibilities". As Shaw pointed out: "Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not."

The Fabian Society rejected the revolutionary socialism of the Social Democratic Federation and were concerned with helping society to move to a socialist society "as painless and effective as possible". This is

reflected in the fact that the group was named after the Roman General, Quintus Fabius Maximus, who advocated the weakening the opposition by harassing operations rather than becoming involved in pitched battles.

The Fabian group was a "fact-finding and fact-dispensing body" and they produced a series of pamphlets on a wide variety of different social issues. Many of these were written by Shaw including The Fabian Manifesto (1884), The True Radical Programme (1887), Fabian Election Manifesto (1892), The Impossibilities of Anarchism (1893), Fabianism and the Empire (1900) and Socialism for Millionaires (1901). Max Beerbohm, who did not share Shaw's socialist beliefs, described him as "the most brilliant and remarkable journalist in London."

Frank Harris appointed Shaw as drama critics for The Fortnightly Review. He also published long articles by Shaw including Socialism and Superior Brains. Harris described Shaw as "thin as a rail, with a long, bony, bearded face. His untrimmed beard was reddish, though his hair was fairer. He was dressed carelessly in tweeds... His entrance into the room, his abrupt movements - as jerky as the ever-changing mind - his perfect unconstraint, his devilish look, all showed a man very conscious of his ability, very direct, very sharply decisive."

Shaw supported women's rights, and in 1891 wrote: "Unless woman repudiates her womanliness, her duty to her husband, to her children, to society, to the law, and to everyone but herself, she cannot emancipate herself. It is false to say that woman is now directly the slave of man: she is the immediate slave of duty; and as man's path to freedom is strewn with the wreckage of the duties and ideals he has trampled on, so must hers be."

Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary: "Bernard Shaw is a marvellously smart witty fellow with a crank for not making money. I have never known a man use his pen in such a workmanlike fashion or acquire such a thoroughly technical knowledge of any subject upon which he gives an opinion. As to his character, I do not understand it. He has been for twelve years a devoted propagandist, hammering away at the ordinary routine of Fabian Executive work with as much persistence as Graham Wallas or Sidney (Webb). He is an excellent friend - at least to men - but beyond this I know nothing.... Adored by many women, he is a born philanderer. A vegetarian, fastidious but unconventional in his clothes, six foot in height with a lithe, broad-chested figure and laughing blue eyes. Above all a brilliant talker, and, therefore, a delightful companion."

Edith Nesbit was one of the many women who he tried to seduce. She wrote to a friend: "George Bernard Shaw... has a fund of dry Irish humour that is simply irresistible. He is a clever writer and speaker - is the grossest flatterer I ever met, is horribly untrustworthy as he repeats everything he hears, and does not always stick to the truth, and is very plain like a long corpse with dead white face - sandy sleek hair, and a loathsome small straggly beard, and yet is one of the most fascinating men I ever met."

Jack Grein was the founder of Independent Theatre. According to his biographer, John P. Wearing: "Grein's major achievement was establishing the Independent Theatre in London in 1891.... Grein endeavoured to stage plays of high literary and artistic value rejected by the commercial theatre or suppressed by the censor (whom the Independent Theatre circumvented by being a subscription society)." A great admirer of Henrik Ibsen his first production was Ghosts.

The following year Grein met Shaw. During a walk in Hammersmith Grein said he was disappointed that he had not discovered any good British playwrights. Shaw replied that he had written a play "that you'll never have the courage to produce". Grein asked to see the play. He later recalled: "I spent a long and attentive evening in sorting and deciphering it. I had never had a doubt as to my acceptance... But I could very well understand how little chance that play would have had with the average theatre manager."

Widower's Houses opened at the Royalty Theatre in Dean Street, Soho on 9th December, 1892. Michael Holroyd, the author of Bernard Shaw (1998), points out: "The novelty of Widowers' Houses lay in the anti-

romantic use to which Shaw put theatrical cliché. When the father discovers his daughter in the arms of a stranger, he omits to horsewhip him, but pitches into negotiations over the marriage - and these negotiations reveal a naked money-for-social-position bargain." According to Holroyd: "At the end of the performance, Shaw hurried before the curtain to make a speech and was acclaimed with hisses. At the second and final performance, a matinee on 13th December, he again climbed on to the stage and, there being no critics present, was applauded."

This was followed by other plays by Ibsen including *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm* and *The Master Builder*. Shaw later wrote: "The Independent Theatre is an excellent institution, simply because it is independent. The disparagers ask what it is independent of.... It is, of course, independent of commercial success.... If Mr Grein had not taken the dramatic critics of London and put them in a row before *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck*, with a small but inquisitive and influential body of enthusiasts behind them, we should be far less advanced today than we are."

In his pamphlets George Bernard Shaw argued in favour of equality of income and advocated the equitable division of land and capital. Shaw believed that "property was theft" and believed like Karl Marx that capitalism was deeply flawed and was unlikely to last. However, unlike Marx, Shaw favoured gradualism over revolution. In a pamphlet, that he wrote in 1897 Shaw predicted that socialism "will come by prosaic installments of public regulation and public administration enacted by ordinary parliaments, vestries, municipalities, parish councils, school boards, etc."

Shaw worked closely with Sidney Webb in trying to establish a new political party that was committed to obtaining socialism through parliamentary elections. This view was expressed in their Fabian Society pamphlet A Plan on Campaign for Labour.

In 1893 Shaw was one of the Fabian Society delegates that attended the conference in Bradford that led to the formation of the Independent Labour Party. Three years later Shaw produced a report for the Trade Union Congress (TUC) that suggested a political party that had strong links with the trade union movement.

In 1894 Frank Harris was sacked by Frederick Chapman, the owner of the *The Fortnightly Review*, for publishing an article by Charles Malato, an anarchist who praised political murder as "propaganda... by deed". Harris now purchased *The Saturday Review* and once again appointed Shaw as his drama critic on a salary of £6 a week. Shaw later commented that was "not bad pay in those days" and added that Harris was "the very man for me, and I the very man for him". Shaw's hostile reviews led to some managements withdrawing their free seats. Some of the book reviewers were so severe that publishers cancelled their advertisements. Harris was forced to sell the journal for financial reasons in 1898. Michael Holroyd has argued: "There had been a number of libel cases and rumours of blackmail - later put down by Shaw to Harris's innocence of English business methods."

In January 1896 Beatrice Webb invited Shaw and Charlotte Payne-Townshend to their rented home in the village of Stratford St Andrew in Suffolk. Shaw took a strong liking to Charlotte. He wrote to Janet Achurch: "Instead of going to bed at ten, we go out and stroll about among the trees for a while. She, being also Irish, does not succumb to my arts as the unsuspecting and literal Englishwoman does; but we get on together all the better, repairing bicycles, talking philosophy and religion... or, when we are in a mischievous or sentimental humor, philandering shamelessly and outrageously." Beatrice wrote: "They were constant companions, pedaling round the country all day, sitting up late at night talking."

Shaw told Ellen Terry: "Kissing in the evening among the trees was very pleasant, but she knows the value of her unencumbered independence, having suffered a good deal from family bonds and conventionality before the death of her mother and the marriage of her sister left her free... The idea of tying herself up again by a marriage before she knows anything - before she has exploited her freedom and money power to the utmost."

When they returned to London she sent an affectionate letter to Shaw. He replied: "Don't fall in love: be your own, not mine or anyone else's.... From the moment that you can't do without me, you're lost... Never fear: if we want one another we shall find it out. All I know is that you made the autumn very happy, and that I shall always be fond of you for that."

Michael Holroyd has pointed out in his book, *Bernard Shaw* (1998): "Charlotte had an apprehension of sexual intercourse... Over the next eighteen months they seem to have found together a habit of careful sexual experience, reducing for her the risk of conception and preserving for him his subliminal illusions... Charlotte soon made herself almost indispensable to Shaw. She learnt to read his shorthand and to type, took dictation and helped him prepare his plays for the press."

Beatrice Webb recorded in her diary that Charlotte Payne-Townshend was clearly in love with George Bernard Shaw but she did not believe that he felt the same way: "I see no sign on his side of the growth of any genuine and steadfast affection." In July 1897 Charlotte proposed marriage. He rejected the idea because he was poor and she was rich and people might consider him a "fortune-hunter". He told Ellen Terry that the proposal was like an "earthquake" and "with shuddering horror and wildly asked the fare to Australia". Charlotte decided to leave Shaw and went to live in Italy.

In April 1898 Shaw had an accident. According to Shaw his left foot swelled up "to the size of a church bell". He wrote to Charlotte complaining that he was unable to walk. When she heard the news she travelled back to visit him at his home in Fitzroy Square. Soon after she arrived on 1st May she arranged for him to go into hospital. Shaw had an operation that scraped the necrosed bone clean.

Shaw's biographer, Stanley Weintraub, has pointed out: "In the conditions of non-care in which he lived at 29 Fitzroy Square with his mother (the Shaws had moved again on 5 March 1887), an unhealed foot injury required Shaw's hospitalization. On 1 June 1898, while on crutches and recuperating from surgery for necrosis of the bone, Shaw married his informal nurse, Charlotte Frances Payne-Townshend, at the office of the registrar at 15 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. He was nearly forty-two; the bride, a wealthy Irishwoman born at Londonderry on 20 January 1857, thus a half-year younger than her husband, resided in some style at 10 Adelphi Terrace, London, overlooking the Embankment." Shaw later told Wilfrid Scawen Blunt: "I thought I was dead, for it would not heal, and Charlotte had me at her mercy. I should never have married if I had thought I should get well."

On 27th February 1900 the Fabian Society joined with the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation and trade union leaders to form the Labour Representation Committee (LRC). The LRC put up fifteen candidates in the 1900 General Election and between them they won 62,698 votes. Two of the candidates, Keir Hardie and Richard Bell won seats in the House of Commons. The party did even better in the 1906 election with twenty nine successful candidates. Later that year the LRC decided to change its name to the Labour Party.

George Bernard Shaw wrote several plays with political themes during this period. These plays dealt with issues such as poverty and women's rights and implied that socialism could help solve the problems created by capitalism. Max Beerbohm was a great supporter of the work of Shaw. Although he did not share Shaw's socialist beliefs, but considered him a great playwright. He was especially complimentary about *Man and Superman* (1902), which he considered to be his "masterpiece so far". He described it as the "most complete expression of the most distinct personality in current literature".

Beerbohm also liked *John Bull's Other Island* (1904): "Mr Shaw, it is insisted, cannot draw life: he can only distort it. All his characters are but so many incarnations of himself. Above all, he cannot write plays. He has no dramatic instinct, no theatrical technique... That theory might have held water in the days before Mr Shaw's plays were acted. Indeed, I was in the habit of propounding it myself... When I saw John Bull's Other Island I found that as a piece of theatrical construction it was perfect... to deny that he is a dramatist merely because he

chooses for the most part, to get drama out of contrasted types of character and thought, without action, and without appeal to the emotions, seems to me both unjust and absurd. His technique is peculiar because his purpose is peculiar. But it is not the less technique."

Major Barbara was first performed on 28th November 1905. The play completely divided the critics. Desmond MacCarthy told his readers: "Mr Shaw has written the first play with religious passion for its theme and has made it real. That is a triumph no criticism can lessen." The Sunday Times said that Shaw was "the most original English dramatist of the day". However, The Morning Post described the play as a work of "deliberate perversity" without any "straightforward intelligible purpose". Whereas The Clarion claimed it was an "audacious propagandist drama".

In 1912 Shaw began work on his play Pygmalion. His biographer, Stanley Weintraub, points out: "Although Shaw claimed that he had written a didactic play about phonetics, and its anti-heroic protagonist, Henry Higgins, is indeed a speech professional, what playgoers saw was a high comedy about love and class, about a cockney flower-girl from Covent Garden educated to pass as a lady, and the repercussions of the experiment... The First World War began as Pygmalion was nearing its hundredth sell-out performance, and gave Shaw an excuse to wind down the production."

Like many socialists, George Bernard Shaw opposed Britain's involvement in the First World War. He created a great deal of controversy with his provocative pamphlet, Common Sense About the War, which appeared on 14th November 1914 as a supplement to the New Statesman. It sold more than 75,000 copies before the end of the year and as a result he became a well-known international figure. However, given the patriotic mood of the country, his pamphlet created a great deal of hostility. Some of his anti-war speeches were banned from the newspapers, and he was expelled from the Dramatists' Club.

Kingsley Martin was one of those who went to hear Shaw speak at an anti-war meeting: "He made an indelible impression on me at this first meeting. I cannot recall what he spoke about. It mattered little. It was George Bernard Shaw you remembered; his physical magnificence, splendid bearing, superb elocution, unexpected Irish brogue, and continuous wit were the chief memories of his speech. He would give his nose a thoughtful twitch between his thumb and finger while the audience laughed. He was one of the best speakers I ever heard."

Shaw's status as a playwright continued to grow after the war and plays such as Heartbreak House (1919), Back to Methuselah (1921), Saint Joan (1923), The Apple Cart (1929) and Too True to be Good (1932) were favourably received by the critics and in 1925 he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature. Cyril Joad was one of those who believed Shaw was a genius: "Shaw became for me a kind of god. I considered that he was not only the greatest English writer of his time (I still think that), but the greatest English writer of all time (and I am not sure that I don't still think that too). Performances of his plays put me almost beside myself with intellectual excitement."

Shaw continued to write books and pamphlets on political and social issues. This included The Crime of Imprisonment (1922) and Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism (1928). Charlotte's support of her husband was vitally important to his career. As Stanley Weintraub has pointed out: "Childless, they indulged in surrogate sons and daughters whose children often went to school on quiet Shavian largess. Granville Barker and Lillah McCarthy had their Royal Court and Savoy seasons underwritten by G.B.S., who lost, unconcernedly, all his investment."

In 1928 Frank Harris wrote to Shaw asking if he could write his biography. Shaw replied: "Abstain from such a desperate enterprise... I will not have you write my life on any terms." Harris was convinced that the royalties of the proposed book would solve his financial problems. In 1929 he wrote: "You are honoured and famous and rich - I lie here crippled and condemned and poor."

Eventually, Shaw agreed to cooperate with Harris in order to help him provide for his wife. Shaw told a friend that he had to agree because "Frank and Nellie... were in rather desperate circumstances." Shaw warned Harris: "The truth is I have a horror of biographers... If there is one expression in this book of yours that cannot be read at a confirmation class, you are lost for ever. "

Shaw sent Harris contradictory accounts of his life. He told Harris that he was "a born philanderer". On another occasion he attempted to explain why he had little experience of sexual relationships. In 1930 he wrote to Harris: "If you have any doubts as to my normal virility, dismiss them from your mind. I was not impotent; I was not sterile; I was not homosexual; and I was extremely susceptible, though not promiscuously."

Frank Harris died of heart failure on 26th August 1931. Shaw sent Nellie a cheque and she arranged to send him the galley-proofs. The book was then rewritten by Shaw: "I have had to fill in the prosaic facts in Frank's best style, and fit them to his comments as best I could; for I have most scrupulously preserved all his sallies at my expense.... You may, however, depend on it that the book is not any the worse for my doctoring." George Bernard Shaw was published in 1932.

During the Blitz, the Shaws, now in their middle eighties, moved out of London. Shaw was a strong opponent of Britain's involvement in the Second World War, which he described "fundamentally not merely maniacal but nonsensical". He wrote very little but he did find the energy to produce Everybody's Political What's What (1944).

Max Beerbohm did over forty caricatures of George Bernard Shaw during his lifetime. He did not find Shaw's appearance attractive. He mentioned his pallid pitted skin and red hair like seaweed. "The back of his neck was especially bleak; very long, untenanted, and dead white". He admitted that Shaw's political views did not help: "My admiration for his genius has during fifty years and more been marred for me by dissent from almost any view that he holds about anything."

Charlotte Payne-Townshend Shaw, who had suffered from osteitis deformans for many years, died aged eighty-six on 12th September 1943. Shaw continued to write and his last play, Why She Would Not, was completed on 23rd July, 1950, three days before Shaw's ninety-fourth birthday.

George Bernard Shaw had a fall on 10th September 1950, while pruning trees. He was taken to hospital where it was discovered that he had fractured his hip. Bedridden, he developed kidney failure and died on 2nd November.

Criticism

Shaw became a critic of the arts when, sponsored by William Archer, he joined the reviewing staff of the Pall Mall Gazette in 1885. There he wrote under the pseudonym "Corno di Bassetto" ("basset horn")—chosen because it sounded European and nobody knew what a *corno di bassetto* was. In a miscellany of other periodicals, including *Dramatic Review* (1885–86), *Our Corner* (1885–86), and the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1885–88) his byline was "GBS". From 1895 to 1898, Shaw was the drama critic for his friend Frank Harris's Saturday Review, in which position he campaigned brilliantly to displace the artificialities and hypocrisies of the Victorian stage with a theatre of actuality and thought. His earnings as a critic made him self-supporting as an author and his articles for the *Saturday Review* made his name well-known.

George Bernard Shaw was highly critical of productions of Shakespeare, and specifically denounced the dramatic practice of editing Shakespeare's plays, whose scenes tended to be cut in order to create "acting versions". He singled out 19th-century actor Sir Henry Irving for this practice, in one of his reviews:

In a true republic of art, Sir Henry Irving would ere this have expiated his acting versions on the scaffold. He does not merely cut plays; he disembowels them. In Cymbeline he has quite surpassed himself by extirpating the antiphonal third verse of the famous dirge. A man who would do that would do anything –cut the coda out of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, or shorten one of Velázquez's Philips into a kitcat to make it fit over his drawing room mantelpiece.

Shavian scholar John F. Matthews credits him with the disappearance of the two-hundred-year-old tradition of editing Shakespeare into "acting versions".

He had a very high regard for both Irish stage actor Barry Sullivan's and Johnston Forbes-Robertson's Hamlets, but despised John Barrymore's. Barrymore invited him to see a performance of his celebrated Hamlet, and Shaw graciously accepted, but wrote Barrymore a withering letter in which he all but tore the performance to shreds. Even worse, Shaw had seen the play in the company of Barrymore's then wife, but did not dare voice his true feelings about the performance aloud to her.

Much of Shaw's music criticism, ranging from short comments to the book-length essay The Perfect Wagnerite, extols the work of the German composer Richard Wagner. Wagner worked 25 years composing Der Ring des Nibelungen, a massive four-part musical dramatization drawn from the Teutonic mythology of gods, giants, dwarves and Rhine maidens; Shaw considered it a work of genius and reviewed it in detail. Beyond the music, he saw it as an allegory of social evolution where workers, driven by "the invisible whip of hunger", seek freedom from their wealthy masters. Wagner did have socialistic sympathies, as Shaw carefully points out, but made no such claim about his opus. Conversely, Shaw disparaged Brahms, deriding A German Requiem by saying "it could only have come from the establishment of a first-class undertaker". Although he found Brahms lacking in intellect, he praised his musicality, saying "... nobody can listen to Brahms' natural utterance of the richest absolute music, especially in his chamber compositions, without rejoicing in his natural gift". In the 1920s, he recanted, calling his earlier animosity towards Brahms "my only mistake". Shaw's writings about music gained great popularity because they were understandable to the average well-read audience member of the day, thus contrasting starkly with the dourly pretentious pedantry of most critiques in that era. All of his music critiques have been collected in *Shaw's Music*. As a drama critic for the *Saturday Review*, a post he held from 1895 to 1898, Shaw championed Henrik Ibsen whose realistic plays scandalized the Victorian public. His influential Quintessence of Ibsenism was written in 1891.

Novels

Shaw wrote five unsuccessful novels at the start of his career between 1879 and 1883. Eventually all were published.

The first to be printed was Cashel Byron's Profession (1886), which was written in 1882. Its eponymous character, Cashel, a rebellious schoolboy with an unsympathetic mother, runs away to Australia where he becomes a famed prizefighter. He returns to England for a boxing match, and falls in love with erudite and wealthy Lydia Carew. Lydia, drawn by sheer animal magnetism, eventually consents to marry despite the disparity of their social positions. This breach of propriety is nullified by the unpresaged discovery that Cashel is of noble lineage and heir to a fortune comparable to Lydia's. With those barriers to happiness removed, the couple settles down to prosaic family life with Lydia dominant; Cashel attains a seat in Parliament. In this novel Shaw first expresses his conviction that productive land and all other natural resources should belong to everyone in common, rather than being owned and exploited privately. The book was written in the year when Shaw first heard the lectures of Henry George who advocated such reforms.

Written in 1883, *An Unsocial Socialist* was published in 1887. The tale begins with a hilarious description of student antics at a girl's school then changes focus to a seemingly uncouth laborer who, it soon develops, is really a wealthy gentleman in hiding from his overly affectionate wife. He needs the freedom gained by

matrimonial truancy to promote the socialistic cause, to which he is an active convert. Once the subject of socialism emerges, it dominates the story, allowing only space enough in the final chapters to excoriate the idle upper class and allow the erstwhile schoolgirls, in their earliest maturity, to marry suitably.

Love Among the Artists was published in the United States in 1900 and in England in 1914, but it was written in 1881. In the ambiance of chit-chat and frivolity among members of Victorian polite society a youthful Shaw describes his views on the arts, romantic love and the practicalities of matrimony. Dilettantes, he thinks, can love and settle down to marriage, but artists with real genius are too consumed by their work to fit that pattern. The dominant figure in the novel is Owen Jack, a musical genius, somewhat mad and quite bereft of social graces. From an abysmal beginning he rises to great fame and is lionized by socialites despite his unremitting crudity.

The Irrational Knot was written in 1880 and published in 1905. Within a framework of leisure class preoccupations and frivolities Shaw, disdains hereditary status and proclaims the nobility of workers. Marriage, as the knot in question, is exemplified by the union of Marian Lind, a lady of the upper class, to Edward Conolly, always a workman but now a magnate, thanks to his invention of an electric motor that makes steam engines obsolete. The marriage soon deteriorates, primarily because Marian fails to rise above the preconceptions and limitations of her social class and is, therefore, unable to share her husband's interests. Eventually she runs away with a man who is her social peer, but he proves himself a scoundrel and abandons her in desperate circumstances. Her husband rescues her and offers to take her back, but she pridefully refuses, convinced she is unworthy and certain that she faces life as a pariah to her family and friends. The preface, written when Shaw was 49, expresses gratitude to his parents for their support during the lean years while he learned to write and includes details of his early life in London.

Shaw's first novel, *Immaturity*, was written in 1879 but was the last one to be printed in 1931. It relates tepid romances, minor misfortunes and subdued successes in the developing career of Robert Smith, an energetic young Londoner and outspoken agnostic. Condemnation of alcoholic behaviour is the prime message in the book, and derives from Shaw's familial memories. This is made clear in the book's preface, which was written by the mature Shaw at the time of its belated publication. The preface is a valuable resource because it provides autobiographical details not otherwise available.

Short Stories

A collection of Shaw's short stories, *The Black Girl in Search of God and Some Lesser Tales*, was published in 1934. *The Black Girl*, an enthusiastic convert to Christianity, goes searching for God. In the story, written as an allegory, somewhat reminiscent of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Shaw uses her adventures to expose flaws and fallacies in the religions of the world. At the story's happy ending, the Black Girl quits her searchings in favour of rearing a family with the aid of a red-haired Irishman who has no metaphysical inclination.

One of the Lesser Tales is *The Miraculous Revenge* (1885), which relates the misadventures of an alcoholic investigator while he probes the mystery of a graveyard—full of saintly corpses—that migrates across a stream to escape association with the body of a newly buried sinner.

Plays

Shaw began working on his first play destined for production, *Widowers' Houses*, in 1885 in collaboration with critic William Archer, who supplied the structure. Archer decided that Shaw could not write a play, so the project was abandoned. Years later, Shaw tried again and, in 1892, completed the play without collaboration. *Widowers' Houses*, a scathing attack on slum landlords, was first performed at London's Royalty Theatre on 9 December 1892. Shaw would later call it one of his worst works, but he had found his medium. His first

significant financial success as a playwright came from Richard Mansfield's American production of The Devil's Disciple (1897). He went on to write 63 plays, most of them full-length.

Often his plays succeeded in the United States and Germany before they did in London. Although major London productions of many of his earlier pieces were delayed for years, they are still being performed there. Examples include Mrs. Warren's Profession (1893), Arms and the Man (1894), Candida (1894) and You Never Can Tell (1897).

Shaw's plays, like those of Oscar Wilde, contained incisive humour, which was exceptional among playwrights of the Victorian era; both authors are remembered for their comedy. He played an important role in revolutionizing British drama. In the Victorian Era, the London stage had been regarded as a place for frothy, sentimental entertainment. Shaw made it a forum for considering moral, political and economic issues, possibly his most lasting and important contribution to dramatic art. In this, he considered himself indebted to Henrik Ibsen, who pioneered modern realistic drama, meaning drama designed to heighten awareness of some important social issue. Significantly, *Widowers' Houses* — an example of the realistic genre — was completed after William Archer, Shaw's friend, had translated some of Ibsen's plays to English and Shaw had written The Quintessence of Ibsenism.

As Shaw's experience and popularity increased, his plays and prefaces became more voluble about reforms he advocated, without diminishing their success as entertainments. Such works, including Caesar and Cleopatra (1898), Man and Superman (1903), Major Barbara (1905) and The Doctor's Dilemma (1906), display Shaw's matured views, for he was approaching 50 when he wrote them. From 1904 to 1907, several of his plays had their London premieres in productions at the Royal Court Theatre, managed by Harley Granville-Barker and J. E. Vedrenne. The first of his new plays to be performed at the Court Theatre, John Bull's Other Island (1904), while not especially popular today, made his reputation in London when King Edward VII laughed so hard during a command performance that he broke his chair.

By the 1910s, Shaw was a well-established playwright. New works such as Fanny's First Play (1911) and Pygmalion (1912), had long runs in front of large London audiences. Shaw had permitted a musical adaptation of Arms and the Man (1894) called The Chocolate Soldier (1908), but he had a low opinion of German operetta. He insisted that none of his dialogue be used, and that all the character names be changed, although the operetta actually follows Shaw's plot quite closely, in particular preserving its anti-war message. The work proved very popular and would have made Shaw rich had he not waived his royalties, but he detested it and for the rest of his life forbade musicalization of his work, including a proposed Franz Lehár operetta based on *Pygmalion*. Several of his plays formed the basis of musicals after his death—most famously the musical My Fair Lady—it is officially adapted from the screenplay of the film version of *Pygmalion* rather than the original stage play (keeping the film's ending), and librettist Alan Jay Lerner kept generous chunks of Shaw's dialogue, and the characters' names, unchanged.

Shaw's outlook was changed by World War I, which he uncompromisingly opposed despite incurring outrage from the public as well as from many friends. His first full-length piece, presented after the War, written mostly during it, was Heartbreak House (1919). A new Shaw had emerged—the wit remained, but his faith in humanity had dwindled. In the preface to *Heartbreak House* he said:

It is said that every people has the Government it deserves. It is more to the point that every Government has the electorate it deserves; for the orators of the front bench can edify or debauch an ignorant electorate at will. Thus our democracy moves in a vicious circle of reciprocal worthiness and unworthiness.

Shaw had previously supported gradual democratic change toward socialism, but now he saw more hope in government by benign strong men. This sometimes made him oblivious to the dangers of dictatorships. Near his life's end that hope failed him too. In the first act of *Buoyant Billions* (1946–48), his last full-length play, his protagonist asks:

Why appeal to the mob when ninetyfive per cent of them do not understand politics, and can do nothing but mischief without leaders? And what sort of leaders do they vote for? For Titus Oates and Lord George Gordon with their Popish plots, for Hitlers who call on them to exterminate Jews, for Mussolinis who rally them to nationalist dreams of glory and empire in which all foreigners are enemies to be subjugated.

In 1921, Shaw completed Back to Methuselah, his "Metabiological Pentateuch". The massive, five-play work starts in the Garden of Eden and ends thousands of years in the future; it showcases Shaw's postulate that a "Life Force" directs evolution toward ultimate perfection by trial and error. Shaw proclaimed the play a masterpiece, but many critics disagreed. The theme of a benign force directing evolution reappears in *Geneva* (1938), wherein Shaw maintains humans must develop longer lifespans in order to acquire the wisdom needed for self-government.

Methuselah was followed by Saint Joan (1923), which is generally considered to be one of his better works. Shaw had long considered writing about Joan of Arc, and her canonization in 1920 supplied a strong incentive. The play was an international success, and is believed to have led to his Nobel Prize in Literature.

He wrote plays for the rest of his life, but very few of them were as successful — or were as often revived — as his earlier work. The Apple Cart (1929) was probably his most popular work of this era. Later full-length plays like *Too True to Be Good* (1931), *On the Rocks* (1933), The Millionairess (1935), and *Geneva* (1938) have been seen as marking a decline. His last significant play, *In Good King Charles Golden Days* has, according to St. John Ervine, passages that are equal to Shaw's major works.

Shaw's published plays come with lengthy prefaces. These tend to be more about Shaw's opinions on the issues addressed by the plays than about the plays themselves. Often his prefaces are longer than the plays they introduce. For example, the Penguin Books edition of his one-act *The Shewing-up Of Blanco Posnet* (1909) has a 67-page preface for the 29-page playscript.

The texts of plays by Shaw mentioned in this section, with the dates when they were written and first performed, can be found in *Complete Plays and Prefaces*.

Shaw by Stanley Weintraub

a. First plays

When Shaw began writing for the English stage, its most prominent dramatists were Sir A.W. Pinero and H.A. Jones. Both men were trying to develop a modern realistic drama, but neither had the power to break away from the type of artificial plots and conventional character types expected by theatregoers. The poverty of this sort of drama had become apparent with the introduction of several of Henrik Ibsen's plays onto the London stage around 1890, when *A Doll's House* was played in London; his *Ghosts* followed in 1891, and the possibility of a new freedom and seriousness on the English stage was introduced. Shaw, who was about to publish *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891), rapidly refurbished an abortive comedy, Widowers' Houses, as a play recognizably "Ibsenite" in tone, making it turn on the notorious scandal of slum landlordism in London. The result (performed 1892) flouted the threadbare romantic conventions that were still being exploited even by the most daring new playwrights. In the play a well-intentioned young Englishman falls in love and then discovers that both his prospective father-in-law's fortune and his own private income derive from exploitation of the poor. Potentially this is a tragic situation, but Shaw seems to have been always determined to avoid tragedy. The unamiable lovers do not attract sympathy; it is the social evil and not the romantic predicament on which attention is concentrated, and the action is kept well within the key of ironic comedy.

The same dramatic predispositions control Mrs. Warren's Profession, written in 1893 but not performed until 1902 because the lord chamberlain, the censor of plays, refused it a license. Its subject is organized prostitution,

and its action turns on the discovery by a well-educated young woman that her mother has graduated through the “profession” to become a part proprietor of brothels throughout Europe. Again, the economic determinants of the situation are emphasized, and the subject is treated remorselessly and without the titillation of fashionable comedies about “fallen women.” As with many of Shaw’s works, the play is, within limits, a drama of ideas, but the vehicle by which these are presented is essentially one of high comedy.

Shaw called these first plays “unpleasant,” because “their dramatic power is used to force the spectator to face unpleasant facts.” He followed them with four “pleasant” plays in an effort to find the producers and audiences that his mordant comedies had offended. Both groups of plays were revised and published in *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898). The first of the second group, *Arms and the Man* (performed 1894), has a Balkan setting and makes lighthearted, though sometimes mordant, fun of romantic falsifications of both love and warfare. The second, *Candida* (performed 1897), was important for English theatrical history, for its successful production at the Royal Court Theatre in 1904 encouraged Harley Granville-Barker and J.E. Vedrenne to form a partnership that resulted in a series of brilliant productions there. The play represents its heroine as forced to choose between her clerical husband—a worthy but obtuse Christian socialist—and a young poet who has fallen wildly in love with her. She chooses her seemingly confident husband because she discerns that he is actually the weaker man. The poet is immature and hysterical but, as an artist, has a capacity to renounce personal happiness in the interest of some large creative purpose. This is a significant theme for Shaw; it leads on to that of the conflict between man as spiritual creator and woman as guardian of the biological continuity of the human race that is basic to a later play, *Man and Superman*. In *Candida* such speculative issues are only lightly touched on, and this is true also of *You Never Can Tell* (performed 1899), in which the hero and heroine, who believe themselves to be respectively an accomplished amorist and an utterly rational and emancipated woman, find themselves in the grip of a vital force that takes little account of these notions.

The strain of writing these plays, while his critical and political work went on unabated, so sapped Shaw’s strength that a minor illness became a major one. In 1898, during the process of recuperation, he married his unofficial nurse, Charlotte Payne-Townshend, an Irish heiress and friend of Beatrice and Sidney Webb. The apparently celibate marriage lasted all their lives, Shaw satisfying his emotional needs in paper-passion correspondences with Ellen Terry, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and others.

Shaw’s next collection of plays, *Three Plays for Puritans* (1901), continued what became the traditional Shavian preface—an introductory essay in an electric prose style dealing as much with the themes suggested by the plays as the plays themselves. *The Devil’s Disciple* (performed 1897) is a play set in New Hampshire during the American Revolution and is an inversion of traditional melodrama. *Caesar and Cleopatra* (performed 1901) is Shaw’s first great play. In the play Cleopatra is a spoiled and vicious 16-year-old child rather than the 38-year-old temptress of Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*. The play depicts Caesar as a lonely and austere man who is as much a philosopher as he is a soldier. The play’s outstanding success rests upon its treatment of Caesar as a credible study in magnanimity and “original morality” rather than as a superhuman hero on a stage pedestal. The third play, *Captain Brassbound’s Conversion* (performed 1900), is a sermon against various kinds of folly masquerading as duty and justice.

b. International importance

In *Man and Superman* (performed 1905) Shaw expounded his philosophy that humanity is the latest stage in a purposeful and eternal evolutionary movement of the “life force” toward ever-higher life forms. The play’s hero, Jack Tanner, is bent on pursuing his own spiritual development in accordance with this philosophy as he flees the determined marital pursuit of the heroine, Ann Whitefield. In the end Jack ruefully allows himself to be captured in marriage by Ann upon recognizing that she herself is a powerful instrument of the “life force,” since the continuation and thus the destiny of the human race lies ultimately in her and other women’s reproductive capacity. The play’s nonrealistic third act, the “Don Juan in Hell” dream scene, is spoken theatre at its most operatic and is often performed independently as a separate piece.

Shaw had already become established as a major playwright on the Continent by the performance of his plays there, but, curiously, his reputation lagged in England. It was only with the production of John Bull's Other Island (performed 1904) in London, with a special performance for Edward VII, that Shaw's stage reputation was belatedly made in England.

Shaw continued, through high comedy, to explore religious consciousness and to point out society's complicity in its own evils. In Major Barbara (performed 1905), Shaw has his heroine, a major in the Salvation Army, discover that her estranged father, a munitions manufacturer, may be a dealer in death but that his principles and practice, however unorthodox, are religious in the highest sense, while those of the Salvation Army require the hypocrisies of often-false public confession and the donations of the distillers and the armourers against which it inveighs. In The Doctor's Dilemma (performed 1906), Shaw produced a satire upon the medical profession (representing the self-protection of professions in general) and upon both the artistic temperament and the public's inability to separate it from the artist's achievement. In Androcles and the Lion (performed 1912), Shaw dealt with true and false religious exaltation in a philosophical play about early Christianity. Its central theme, examined through a group of early Christians condemned to the arena, is that one must have something worth dying for—an end outside oneself—in order to make life worth living.

Possibly Shaw's comedic masterpiece, and certainly his funniest and most popular play, is Pygmalion (performed 1913). It was claimed by Shaw to be a didactic drama about phonetics, and its antiheroic hero, Henry Higgins, is a phonetician, but the play is a humane comedy about love and the English class system. The play is about the training Higgins gives to a Cockney flower girl to enable her to pass as a lady and is also about the repercussions of the experiment's success. The scene in which Eliza Doolittle appears in high society when she has acquired a correct accent but no notion of polite conversation is one of the funniest in English drama. Pygmalion has been both filmed (1938), winning an Academy Award for Shaw for his screenplay, and adapted into an immensely popular musical, My Fair Lady (1956; motion-picture version, 1964).

c. Works after World War I

World War I was a watershed for Shaw. At first he ceased writing plays, publishing instead a controversial pamphlet, "Common Sense About the War," which called Great Britain and its allies equally culpable with the Germans and argued for negotiation and peace. His antiwar speeches made him notorious and the target of much criticism. In Heartbreak House (performed 1920), Shaw exposed, in a country-house setting on the eve of war, the spiritual bankruptcy of the generation responsible for the war's bloodshed. Attempting to keep from falling into "the bottomless pit of an utterly discouraging pessimism," Shaw wrote five linked plays under the collective title Back to Methuselah (1922). They expound his philosophy of creative evolution in an extended dramatic parable that progresses through time from the Garden of Eden to 31,920 ce.

The canonization of Joan of Arc in 1920 reawakened within Shaw ideas for a chronicle play about her. In the resulting masterpiece, Saint Joan (performed 1923), the Maid is treated not only as a Roman Catholic saint and martyr but as a combination of practical mystic, heretical saint, and inspired genius. Joan, as the superior being "crushed between those mighty forces, the Church and the Law," is the personification of the tragic heroine; her death embodies the paradox that humankind fears—and often kills—its saints and heroes and will go on doing so until the very higher moral qualities it fears become the general condition of man through a process of evolutionary change. Acclaim for Saint Joan led to the awarding of the 1925 Nobel Prize for Literature to Shaw (he refused the award).

In his later plays Shaw intensified his explorations into tragicomic and nonrealistic symbolism. For the next five years, he wrote nothing for the theatre but worked on his collected edition of 1930–38 and the encyclopaedic political tract "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism" (1928). Then he produced The Apple Cart (performed 1929), a futuristic high comedy that emphasizes Shaw's inner conflicts between his lifetime of radical politics and his essentially conservative mistrust of the common man's ability to govern himself. Shaw's later, minor plays include Too True to Be Good (performed 1932), On the Rocks (performed

1933), *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* (performed 1935), *Geneva* (performed 1938), and *In Good King Charles's Golden Days* (1939). After a wartime hiatus, Shaw, then in his 90s, produced several more plays, including *Farfetched Fables* (performed 1950), *Shakes Versus Shav* (performed 1949), and *Why She Would Not* (1956), which is a fantasy with only flashes of the earlier Shaw.

Impudent, irreverent, and always a showman, Shaw used his buoyant wit to keep himself in the public eye to the end of his 94 years; his wiry figure, bristling beard, and dandyish cane were as well known throughout the world as his plays. When his wife, Charlotte, died of a lingering illness in 1943, in the midst of World War II, Shaw, frail and feeling the effects of wartime privations, made permanent his retreat from his London apartment to his country home at Ayot St. Lawrence, a Hertfordshire village in which he had lived since 1906. He died there in 1950.

George Bernard Shaw was not merely the best comic dramatist of his time but also one of the most significant playwrights in the English language since the 17th century. Some of his greatest works for the stage—*Caesar and Cleopatra*, the “Don Juan in Hell” episode of *Man and Superman*, *Major Barbara*, *Heartbreak House*, and *Saint Joan*—have a high seriousness and prose beauty that were unmatched by his stage contemporaries. His development of a drama of moral passion and of intellectual conflict and debate, his revivifying of the comedy of manners, and his ventures into symbolic farce and into a theatre of disbelief helped shape the theatre of his time and after. A visionary and mystic whose philosophy of moral passion permeates his plays, Shaw was also the most trenchant pamphleteer since Swift, the most readable music critic in English, the best theatre critic of his generation, a prodigious lecturer and essayist on politics, economics, and sociological subjects, and one of the most prolific letter writers in literature. By bringing a bold critical intelligence to his many other areas of interest, he helped mold the political, economic, and sociological thought of three generations.

Polemics

In a letter to Henry James dated 17 January 1909, Shaw said,

I, as a Socialist, have had to preach, as much as anyone, the enormous power of the environment. We can change it; we must change it; there is absolutely no other sense in life than the task of changing it. What is the use of writing plays, what is the use of writing anything, if there is not a will which finally moulds chaos itself into a race of gods.

Thus he viewed writing as a way to further his humanitarian and political agenda. His works were very popular because of their comedic content, but the public tended to disregard his messages and enjoy his work as pure entertainment. He was acutely aware of that. His preface to *Heartbreak House* (1919) attributes its rejection to the need of post-World War I audiences for frivolities, after four long years of grim privation, more than to their inborn distaste of instruction. His crusading nature led him to adopt and tenaciously hold a variety of causes, which he furthered with fierce intensity, heedless of opposition and ridicule. For example, *Common Sense about the War* (1914) lays out Shaw's strong objections at the onset of World War I. His stance ran counter to public sentiment and cost him dearly at the box-office, but he never compromised.

Shaw joined in the public opposition to vaccination against smallpox, calling it "a peculiarly filthy piece of witchcraft", despite having nearly died from the disease in 1881. In the preface to *Doctor's Dilemma* he made it plain he regarded conventional medical treatment as dangerous quackery that should be replaced with sound public sanitation, good personal hygiene and diets devoid of meat. Shaw became a vegetarian when he was twenty-five, after hearing a lecture by H.F. Lester. In 1901, remembering the experience, he said "I was a cannibal for twenty-five years. For the rest I have been a vegetarian." As a staunch vegetarian, he was a firm anti-vivisectionist and antagonistic to cruel sports for the remainder of his life. The belief in the immorality of eating animals was one of the Fabian causes near his heart and is frequently a topic in his plays and prefaces. His position, succinctly stated, was "A man of my spiritual intensity does not eat corpses."

As well as plays and prefaces, Shaw wrote long political treatises, such as *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (1889), and *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1912), a 495-page book detailing all aspects of socialistic theory as Shaw interpreted it. Excerpts of the latter were republished in 1928 as *Socialism and Liberty*. Late in his life he wrote another guide to political issues, *Everybody's Political What's What* (1944).

Correspondence and Friends

Shaw corresponded with an array of people, many of them well known. His letters to and from Mrs. Patrick Campbell were adapted for the stage by Jerome Kilty as *Dear Liar: A Comedy of Letters*, as was his correspondence with the poet Lord Alfred 'Bosie' Douglas (the intimate friend of Oscar Wilde), into the drama *Bernard and Bosie: A Most Unlikely Friendship* by Anthony Wynn. His letters to the prominent actress, Ellen Terry, to the boxer Gene Tunney, and to H.G. Wells, have also been published. Eventually the volume of his correspondence became insupportable, as can be inferred from apologetic letters written by assistants. Shaw campaigned against the executions of the rebel leaders of the Easter Rising, and he became a personal friend of the Cork-born IRA leader Michael Collins, whom he invited to his home for dinner while Collins was negotiating the Anglo-Irish Treaty with Lloyd George in London. After Collins's assassination in 1922, Shaw sent a personal message of condolence to one of Collins's sisters. He much admired (and was admired by) G. K. Chesterton. When Chesterton died, Shaw mourned his death in a poignant letter to Chesterton's widow; he had always expected that he would predecease Chesterton, being the latter's senior by almost two decades.

Shaw also enjoyed a (somewhat stormy) friendship with T.E. Lawrence, the British Army officer renowned for his liaison role during the Sinai and Palestine Campaign, as well as the Arab Revolt, which Lawrence memorialized in his book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Lawrence even used the name "Shaw" as his nom de guerre when he joined the Royal Air Force as an aircraftman in the 1920s.

Another friend was the composer Edward Elgar, whose work Shaw revered. Though Elgar was a Conservative, they had interests, besides music, in common. For instance, both opposed vivisection. Elgar dedicated one of his late works, *The Severn Suite*, to Shaw; and Shaw exerted himself (eventually with success) to persuade the BBC to commission from Elgar a third symphony, though this piece remained incomplete at Elgar's death. Shaw's correspondence with the motion picture producer Gabriel Pascal, who was the first to bring Shaw's plays successfully to the screen and who later tried to put into motion a musical adaptation of *Pygmalion*, but died before he could realize it, is published in a book titled *Bernard Shaw and Gabriel Pascal*. A stage play by Hugh Whitmore, *The Best of Friends*, provides a window on the friendships of Dame Laurentia McLachlan, OSB (late Abbess of Stanbrook) with Sir Sydney Cockerell and Shaw through adaptations from their letters and writings. A television adaptation of the play, aired on PBS, starred John Gielgud as Cockerell, Wendy Hiller as Laurentia, and Patrick McGeehan as Shaw.

Perhaps Shaw's most personally revealing and definitely most voluminous letter correspondence, though, was with his fellow playwright and intimate childhood friend, Mathew Edward McNulty. The very, very small extant fragment of this correspondence is housed in the Rare Book Collection at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Photography

Shaw bought his first camera in 1898 and was an active amateur photographer until his death in 1950. Before 1898 Shaw had been an early supporter of photography as a serious art form. His non-fiction writing includes many reviews of photographic exhibitions such as those by his friend Alvin Langdon Coburn.

The photographs document a prolific literary and political life – Shaw's friends, travels, politics, plays, films and home life. It also records his experiments with photography over 50 years and for the photographic

historian provides a record of the development of the photographic and printing techniques available to the amateur photographer between 1898 and 1950.

The collection is currently the subject of a major project, *Man & Cameraman*, which will allow online access to thousands of photos taken by Shaw.

Awards

Shaw was awarded a Nobel Prize in Literature (1925) for his contributions to literature. The citation praised his work as "... marked by both idealism and humanity, its stimulating satire often being infused with a singular poetic beauty". Shaw wanted to refuse his Nobel Prize outright because he had no desire for public honours, but accepted it at his wife's behest: she considered it a tribute to Ireland. He did reject the monetary award, requesting it be used to finance translation of fellow playwright August Strindberg's works from Swedish to English.

At this time Prime Minister David Lloyd George was considering recommending to the King Shaw's admission to the Order of Merit, but the place was instead given to J. M. Barrie. Shaw rejected a knighthood. It was not until 1946 that the government of the day arranged for an informal offer of the Order of Merit to be made: Shaw declined, replying that "merit" in authorship could only be determined by the posthumous verdict of history.

In 1938, Shaw was awarded an Oscar for his work on the film Pygmalion (adaptation of his play of the same name). The Academy Award was jointly shared with Ian Dalrymple, Cecil Lewis and W.P. Lipscomb, who had also worked on adapting Shaw's script.

Political, Social, and Religious Views

Shaw asserted that each social class strove to serve its own ends, and that the upper and middle classes won in the struggle while the working class lost. He condemned the democratic system of his time, saying that workers, ruthlessly exploited by greedy employers, lived in abject poverty and were too ignorant and apathetic to vote intelligently. He believed this deficiency would ultimately be corrected by the emergence of long-lived supermen with experience and intelligence enough to govern properly. He called the developmental process *elective breeding* but it is sometimes referred to as *shavian eugenics*, largely because he thought it was driven by a "Life Force" that led women — subconsciously — to select the mates most likely to give them superior children. The outcome Shaw envisioned is dramatised in *Back to Methuselah*, a monumental play depicting human development from its beginning in the Garden of Eden until the distant future.

In 1882, influenced by Henry George's view that the rent value of land belongs to all, Shaw concluded that private ownership of land and its exploitation for personal profit was a form of theft, and advocated equitable distribution of land and natural resources and their control by governments intent on promoting the commonwealth. Shaw believed that income for individuals should come solely from the sale of their own labour and that poverty could be eliminated by giving equal pay to everyone. These concepts led Shaw to apply for membership of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), led by H. M. Hyndman who introduced him to the works of Karl Marx. Shaw never joined the SDF, which favoured forcible reforms. Instead, in 1884, he joined the newly formed Fabian Society, which accorded with his belief that reform should be gradual and induced by peaceful means rather than by outright revolution. Shaw was an active Fabian. He wrote many of their pamphlets, lectured tirelessly on behalf of their causes and provided money to set up The New Age, an independent socialist journal. As a Fabian, he participated in the formation of the Labour Party. The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism provides a clear statement of his socialistic views. As evinced in plays like *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion*, class struggle is a motif in much of Shaw's writing.

Oscar Wilde was the sole literary signator of Shaw's petition for a pardon of the anarchists arrested (and later executed) after the Haymarket massacre in Chicago in 1886.

Shaw opposed the execution of Sir Roger Casement in 1916. He wrote a letter "as an Irishman" to The Times, which they rejected, but it was subsequently printed by both the Manchester Guardian on 22 July 1916, and by the New York American on 13 August 1916.

Communism

After visiting the USSR in 1931 and meeting Joseph Stalin, Shaw became a supporter of the Stalinist USSR. On 11 October 1931 he broadcast a lecture on American national radio telling his audience that any 'skilled workman ... of suitable age and good character' would be welcomed and given work in the Soviet Union. Tim Tzouliadis asserts that several hundred Americans responded to his suggestion and left for the USSR.

Shaw continued this support for Stalin's system in the preface to his play *On the Rocks* (1933) writing:

But the most elaborate code of this sort would still have left unspecified a hundred ways in which wreckers of Communism could have sidetracked it without ever having to face the essential questions: are you pulling your weight in the social boat? are you giving more trouble than you are worth? have you earned the privilege of living in a civilized community? That is why the Russians were forced to set up an Inquisition or Star Chamber, called at first the Cheka and now the Gay Pay Oo (Ogpu), to go into these questions and "liquidate" persons who could not answer them satisfactorily.

Yet, Shaw defends "the sacredness of criticism":

Put shortly and undramatically the case is that a civilization cannot progress without criticism, and must therefore, to save itself from stagnation and putrefaction, declare impunity for criticism. This means impunity not only for propositions which, however novel, seem interesting, statesmanlike, and respectable, but for propositions that shock the uncritical as obscene, seditious, blasphemous, heretical, and revolutionary.

In an open letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in 1933, he dismissed stories—which were later determined to be largely substantiated—of a Soviet famine as slanderous, and contrasts them with the hardships then current in the West during the Great Depression:

We desire to record that we saw nowhere evidence of such economic slavery, privation, unemployment and cynical despair of betterment as are accepted as inevitable and ignored by the press as having "no news value" in our own countries".

In the preface to *On The Rocks* he wrote:

It sounds simple; but the process requires better planning than is always forthcoming (with local famines and revolts as the penalty); for while the grass grows the steed starves; and when education means not only schools and teachers, but giant collective farms equipped with the most advanced agricultural machinery, which means also gigantic engineering works for the production of the machinery, you may easily find that you have spent too much on these forms of capitalization and are running short of immediately consumable goods, presenting the spectacle of the nation with the highest level of general culture running short of boots and tightening its belt for lack of sufficient food.

I must not suggest that this has occurred all over Russia; for I saw no underfed people there; and the children were remarkably plump. And I cannot trust the reports; for I have no sooner read in *The Times* a letter from Mr

Kerensky assuring me that in the Ukraine the starving people are eating one another, than M. Herriot, the eminent French statesman, goes to Russia and insists on visiting the Ukraine so that he may have ocular proof of the alleged cannibalism, but can find no trace of it. Still, between satiety and starvation mitigated by cannibalism there are many degrees of shortage; and it is no secret that the struggle of the Russian Government to provide more collective farms and more giant factories to provide agricultural machinery for them has to be carried on against a constant clamor from the workers for new boots and clothes, and more varied food and more of it: in short, less sacrifice of the present to the future.

He wrote a defence of Lysenkoism in a letter to *Labour Monthly*, in which he asserted that an "acquired characteristic" could be heritable, writing of Lysenko: "Following up Michurin's agricultural experiments he found that it is possible to extend the area of soil cultivation by breeding strains of wheat that flourish in a sub-Arctic climate, and transmit this acquired characteristic to its seed." He added:

Lysenko is on the right side as a Vitalist; but the situation is confused by the purely verbal snag that Marx called his philosophy Dialectical Materialism. Now in Russia Marx is a Pontif; and all scientists who do not call themselves Materialists must be persecuted. Accordingly, Lysenko has to pretend that he is a Materialist when he is in fact a Vitalist; and thus muddles us ludicrously. Marxism seems to have gone as mad as Weismannism; and it is no longer surprising that Marx had to insist that he was not a Marxist.

Despite Shaw's scepticism about the creation of the Irish Free State, he was supportive of Éamon de Valera's stance on the Second World War, including his policy of refusing to fall in line with the Allies' demand for neutral countries to deny asylum to Axis war criminals during the war. According to Shaw "The voice of the Irish gentleman and Spanish grandee was a welcome relief from the chorus of retaliatory rancor and self-righteousness then deafening us".

Eugenics

Shaw delivered speeches on the theory of eugenics and he became a noted figure in the movement in England.

Shaw's play Man and Superman (1903) has been said to be "invested with eugenic doctrines" and "an ironic reworking" of Nietzsche's concept of Übermensch. The main character in the play, John Tanner, is the author of "The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion", which Shaw published along with his play. The Revolutionist's Handbook includes chapters on "Good Breeding" and "Property and Marriage". In the "Property and Marriage" section, Tanner writes:

To cut humanity up into small cliques, and effectively limit the selection of the individual to his own clique, is to postpone the Superman for eons, if not for ever. Not only should every person be nourished and trained as a possible parent, but there should be no possibility of such an obstacle to natural selection as the objection of a countess to a navvy or of a duke to a charwoman. Equality is essential to good breeding; and equality, as all economists know, is incompatible with property.

In this Shaw was managing to synthesize eugenics with socialism, his best-loved political doctrine. This was a popular concept at the time.

When, in 1910, Shaw wrote that natural attraction rather than wealth or social class should govern selection of marriage partners, the concept of eugenics did not have the negative connotations it later acquired after having been adopted by the Nazis of Germany. Shaw sometimes treated the topic in a light-hearted way, pointing out that if eugenics had been thought about some generations previously, he himself may not have been born, so depriving humanity of his great contributions. He seems to have maintained his opinion throughout his life.

As with many of the topics that Shaw addressed, but particularly so in his examination of the "social purity" movement, he used irony, misdirection and satire to make his point. At a meeting of the Eugenics Education Society of 3 March 1910 he suggested the need to use a "lethal chamber" to solve their problem. Shaw said: "We should find ourselves committed to killing a great many people whom we now leave living, and to leave living a great many people whom we at present kill. We should have to get rid of all ideas about capital punishment ..." Shaw also called for the development of a "deadly" but "humane" gas for the purpose of killing, many at a time, those unfit to live.

In a newsreel interview released on 5 March 1931, dealing with alternatives to the imprisonment of criminals, Shaw says

You must all know half a dozen people at least who are no use in this world, who are more trouble than they are worth. Just put them there and say Sir, or Madam, now will you be kind enough to justify your existence? If you can't justify your existence, if you're not pulling your weight in the social boat, if you're not producing as much as you consume or perhaps a little more, then, clearly, we cannot use the organizations of our society for the purpose of keeping you alive, because your life does not benefit us and it can't be of very much use to yourself.

Shaw often used satiric irony to mock those who took eugenics to inhumane extremes and commentators have sometimes failed to take this into account. Some noticed that this was an example of Shaw satirically employing the reductio ad absurdum argument against the eugenicists' wilder aspirations: The Globe and The Evening News recognised it as a skit on the dreams of the eugenicists, though many others in the press took his words out of their satirical context. Dan Stone of Liverpool University writes: "Either the press believed Shaw to be serious, and vilified him, or recognised the tongue-in-cheek nature of his lecture".

Religion

In his will, Shaw stated that his "religious convictions and scientific views cannot at present be more specifically defined than as those of a believer in Creative Evolution." He requested that no one should imply that he accepted the beliefs of any specific religious organization, and that no memorial to him should "take the form of a cross or any other instrument of torture or symbol of blood sacrifice."

From: Gary Sloan, "The religion of George Bernard Shaw: when is an Atheist?", published in American Atheist Magazine, Autumn 2004:

Until he was thirty or so, Shaw called himself an Atheist. He became one, he later quipped, before he could think. He adjudged the doctrines of the Church of Ireland, which he attended as a child, unintelligible or absurd. Since the first of its Thirty-nine Articles describes god as "without body, parts, or passions," he waggishly theorized that the church was atheistic. An incomprehensible god, he opined, was tantamount to no god. In 1875, he blazoned his Atheism abroad. In a letter to Public Opinion, a Dublin newspaper, he "announced with inflexible materialistic logic, and to the extreme horror of my respectable connections, that I was an atheist." In Immaturity, the first of five novels he wrote in his twenties, the young protagonist, obviously Shaw's alter ego, walks pensively in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey: "His hushed step, impressive bearing, and reflective calm, marked him as a confirmed freethinker." In "The New Theology," he prepped his audience: "When you are asked, 'Where is God? Who is God?' stand up and say, 'I am God and here is God, not as yet completed, but still advancing towards completion, just in so much as I am working for the purpose of the universe, working for the good of the whole society and the whole world, instead of merely looking after my personal ends.'" God "would provide himself with a perfectly fashioned and trustworthy instrument. And such an instrument would be nothing less than God himself."

Sloan concludes his lengthy essay about the religion of George Bernard Shaw (only excerpts from which appear here) by opining:

So if, as theologians and philosophers have traditionally maintained, existence is a necessary attribute of God, Shaw qualifies as an Atheist, albeit an involuntary one.

Legacy

In his old age, Shaw was a household name in English-speaking countries, and was famed throughout the world. His ironic wit endowed English with the adjective "Shavian", used to characterize observations such as: "My way of joking is to tell the truth. It's the funniest joke in the world." Concerned about the vagaries of English spelling, Shaw willed a portion of his wealth (probated at £367,233 13s) to fund the creation of a new phonemic alphabet for the English language. However, the money available was insufficient to support the project, so it was neglected for a time. This changed when his estate began earning significant royalties from the rights to *Pygmalion* after *My Fair Lady*—the musical adapted from *Pygmalion* by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe—became a hit. However, the Public Trustee found the intended trust to be invalid because its intent was to serve a private interest instead of a charitable purpose, and as a non-charitable purpose trust, it could not be enforced because it failed to satisfy the beneficiary principle. In the end an out-of-court settlement granted only £8600 for promoting the new alphabet, which is now called the Shavian alphabet. The National Gallery of Ireland, RADA and the British Museum all received substantial bequests.

Shaw's home, now called Shaw's Corner, in the small village of Ayot St Lawrence, Hertfordshire, is a National Trust property, open to the public. The Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London, opened in 1971, was named in his honour. Near its entrance, opposite the new British Library, a contemporary statue of *Saint Joan* commemorates Shaw as author of that play.

The Shaw Festival, an annual theatre festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada, began as an eight-week run of Don Juan in Hell (as the long third act dream sequence of *Man And Superman* is called when staged alone) and Candida in 1962, and has grown into an annual festival with over 800 performances a year, dedicated to producing the works of Shaw and his contemporaries. The portrait of Shaw located at Niagara-on-the-Lake was commissioned by hotelier Si Wai Lai and sculpted by Dr. Elizabeth Bradford Holbrook, CM (1913–2009).

He is also remembered as one of the pivotal founders of the London School of Economics, whose library is now called the British Library of Political and Economic Science. The Fabian Window, designed by Shaw, hangs in the Shaw Library in the main building of the LSE.

About Bernard Shaw

Irish dramatist, literary critic, a socialist spokesman, and a leading figure in the 20th century theater. Bernard Shaw was a freethinker, defender of women's rights, and advocate of equality of income. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925. Shaw accepted the honour but refused the money.

"Just as the historian can teach no real history until he has cured his readers of the romantic delusion that the greatness of a queen consists in her being a pretty woman and having her head cut off, so the playwright of the first order can do nothing with his audience until he has cured them of looking at the stage through the keyhole, and sniffing round the theatre as prurient people sniff round the divorce court." (from G.B. Shaw's preface in *Three Plays by Brieux*, 1911)

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, where he grew up in something close to genteel poverty. "I am a typical Irishman; my family came from Yorkshire," Shaw once said. His father, George Carr Shaw, was in the wholesale grain trade. Lucinda Elisabeth (Gurly) Shaw, his mother, was the daughter of an impoverished landowner. She was 16-years younger than her husband. George Carr was a drunkard – his example prompted his son to become a teetotaler. When he died in 1885, his children and wife did not attend his funeral. Young

Shaw and his two sisters were brought up mostly by servants. Shaw's mother eventually left the family home to teach music, singing, in London. When she died in 1913, Shaw confessed to Mrs. Patrick Campbell: "I must write to you about it, because there is no one else who didn't hate her mother, and even who doesn't hate her children."

In 1866 the family moved to a better neighborhood. Shaw went to the Wesleyan Connexional School, then moved to a private school near Dalkey, and from there to Dublin's Central Model School. Shaw finished his formal education at the Dublin English Scientific and Commercial Day School. At the age of 15, he started to work as a junior clerk. In 1876 he went to London, joining his sister and mother. Shaw did not return to Ireland for nearly thirty years.

Most of the next two years Shaw educated himself at the British Museum. He began his literary career by writing music and drama criticism, and novels, including the semi-autobiographical *Immaturity*, without much success. A vegetarian, who eschewed alcohol and tobacco, Shaw joined in 1884 the Fabian Society, served on its executive committee from 1885 to 1911. The middle-class socialist group attracted also H.G. Wells – the both writers send each other copies of their new books as they appeared. "You are, now that Wilde is dead, the one living playwright in my esteem," wrote Wells after receiving Shaw's *Three Plays for Puritans* (1901).

A man of many causes, Shaw supported abolition of private property, radical change in the voting system, campaigned for the simplification of spelling, and the reform of the English alphabet. As a public speaker, Shaw gained the status of one of the most sought-after orators in England. In 1895 Shaw became a drama critic for the *Saturday Review*. Articles written for the paper were later collected in *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (1932). Music, art, and drama criticism Shaw wrote for *Dramatic Review* (1885-86), *Our Corner* (1885-86), *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1885-88), *The World* (1886-94), and *The Star* (1888-90) as 'Corno bi Basetto'. His music criticism were collected in *Shaw's Music* (1981). After lacing a shoe too tightly, an operation was performed on his foot for necrosis; Shaw was unable to put his foot on the ground for eighteen months. During this period he wrote *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901) and *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898). "...I have no reason to believe that they would have been a bit better if they had been written on two legs instead of one," he said in a letter to the playwright St John Ervine. His friend had his leg amputated during WWI after being hit by a shell splinters.

In 1898 Shaw married the wealthy Charlotte Payne-Townshend. They settled in 1906 in the Hertfordshire village of Ayot St. Lawrence. Shaw remained with Charlotte until her death, although he was occasionally linked with other women. He carried on a passionate correspondence over the years with Mrs. Patrick Campbell, a widow and actress, who got the starring role in *Pymalion*. All the other actresses refused to say the taboo word 'bloody' that the playwright had put in the mouth of Eliza. When she wanted to publish his love letters to her, Shaw answered: "I will not, dear Stella, at my time of life, play the horse to your Lady Godiva."

The Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen had a great influence on Shaw's thinking. For a summer meeting of the Fabian Society in 1890, he wrote *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891), in which he considered Ibsen a pioneer, "who declares that it is right to do something hitherto regarded as infamous." Shaw's early plays, *Widower's Houses* (1892), which criticized slum landlords, as well as several subsequent ones, were not well received. His 'unpleasant plays', ideological attacks on the evils of capitalism and explorations of moral and social problems, were followed with more entertaining but as principled productions. "To a professional critic (I have been one myself) theatre-going is the curse of Adam. The play is the evil he is paid to endure in the sweat of his brow; and the sooner it is over, the better." (from 'Preface' to *Saint Joan*) . *Candida* was a comedy about the wife of a clergyman, and what happens when a weak, young poet wants to rescue her from her dull family life. But it was not until *John Bull's Other Island* (1904) that Shaw gained in England a wider popularity with his own plays. In the Unites States and Germany Shaw's name was already well-known. Between 1904 and 1907 The Royal Court Theatre staged several of his plays, including *Candida*.

MORELL: Man can climb to the highest summits; but he cannot dwell there.

MARCHBACKS (springing up): It's false: there can he dwell for ever, and there only. It's in the other moment that he can find no rest, no sense of the silent glory of life. Where would you have spend my moments, if not on the summits?

MORELL: In the scullery, slicing onions and filling lamps.

(from *Candida*)

Major Barbara was about an officer of the Salvation Army, who learns from her father, a manufacturer of armaments, that money and power can be better weapons against evil than love. Ironically the producer of the film version of the play, Gabriel Pascal, was eager to do business with Sir Basil Zaharoff, an arms dealer.

PICKERING: Have you no morals, man?

DOOLITTLE: Can't afford them, Governor.

(from *Pygmalion*)

Pygmalion was originally written for the actress Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Later the play became the basis for two films and a musical. (Shaw's correspondence with the actresses Ellen Terry and Stella Campbell are available in book form.) Shaw's popularity declined after his essay 'Common Sense About the War' (1914), which was considered unpatriotic. With *Saint Joan* (1924), his masterpiece, Shaw was again accepted by the post-war public. Now he was regarded as 'a second Shakespeare', who had revolutionized the British theatre. Shaw did not portrait Joan of Arc, his protagonist, as a heroine or martyr, but as a stubborn young woman. And as in classic tragedies, her flaw is fatal and brings about her downfall. Uncommonly Shaw showed some sympathy to her judges. The play was written four years after Joan was declared a saint.

In 1893 Shaw collaborated with Keir Hardie in writing the party program for the new Independent Labour party. Many of his plays also were philosophical addresses on the subject of individual responsibility or freedom of spirit against the conformist demands of society. Shaw was cofounder with the Webbs of the London School of Economics, and launched the petition against the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde. In 1897 he entered local government.

In his plays Shaw combined contemporary moral problems with ironic tone and paradoxes, "Shavian" wit, which have produced such phrases as "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches", "England and America are two countries divided by a common language", "Christianity might be a good thing if anyone ever tried it", and "I never resist temptation because I have found that things are bad for me do not tempt me." Discussion and intellectual acrobatics are the basis of his drama, and before the emergence of the sound film, his plays were nearly impossible to adapt into screen. During his long career, Shaw wrote over 50 plays. He continued to write them even in his 90s. George Bernard Shaw died at Ayot St. Lawrence, Hertfordshire, on November 2, 1950. He was cremated and it was his wish that his ashes be mixed with those of his wife, Charlotte – she had died seven years before, "an old woman bowed and crippled, furrowed and wrinkled," as Shaw depicted her in a letter to H.G. Wells.

Works

Novels

- *Immaturity*
- Cashel Byron's Profession
- *An Unsocial Socialist*
- *The Irrational Knot*
- *Love Among the Artists*

Short Stories

- The Black Girl in Search of God (1932)
- *The Miraculous Revenge*

Drama

Plays Unpleasant (published 1898)
Widowers' Houses (1892)
The Philanderer (1893)
Mrs Warren's Profession (1893)
Plays Pleasant (published 1898):
Arms and the Man (1894)
Candida (1894)
The Man of Destiny (1895)
You Never Can Tell (1897)
Three Plays for Puritans (published 1901)
The Devil's Disciple (1897)
Caesar and Cleopatra (1898)
Captain Brassbound's Conversion (1899)
The Admirable Bashville (1901)
Man and Superman (1902–03)
John Bull's Other Island (1904)
How He Lied to Her Husband (1904)
Major Barbara (1905)
The Doctor's Dilemma (1906)
Getting Married (1908)
The Glimpse of Reality (1909)
The Fascinating Foundling (1909)
Press Cuttings (1909)
Misalliance (1910)
Annajanska, the Bolshevik Empress (1917)
The Dark Lady of the Sonnets (1910)

Fanny's First Play (1911)
Overruled (1912)
Androcles and the Lion (1912)
Pygmalion (1912–13)
Great Catherine (1913)
The Inca of Perusalem (1915)
O'Flaherty VC (1915)
Augustus Does His Bit (1916)
Heartbreak House (1919)
Back to Methuselah (1921)
In the Beginning
The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas
The Thing Happens
Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman
As Far as Thought Can Reach
Saint Joan (1923)
The Apple Cart (1929)
Too True To Be Good (1931)
On the Rocks (1933)
The Six of Calais (1934)
The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles (1934)
The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet (1909)
The Millionairess (1936)
Geneva (1938)
In Good King Charles's Golden Days (1939)
Buoyant Billions (1947)
Shakes versus Shav (1949)

Essays

- A Manifesto (1884)
- To provident landlords and capitalists : a suggestion and a warning (1885)
- The true radical programme (1887)
- What socialism is (1890)
- Quintessence of Ibsenism (1891)
- The Fabian election manifesto (1892)
- The Fabian Society : what it has done & and how it has done it (1892)
- Vote! Vote!! Vote!!! (1892)
- A plan of campaign for labor (1894)
- *The Impossibilities of Anarchism* (1895)
- The Perfect Wagnerite, Commentary on the Ring (1898)
- Women as councillors (1900)
- Socialism for millionaires (1901)
- *Maxims for Revolutionists* (1903)

- Fabianism and the fiscal question : an alternative policy (1904)
- *Preface to Major Barbara* (1905)
- *On Going to Church* (1905)
- *How to Write a Popular Play* (1909)
- The Fabian Society : its early history (1909)
- *Treatise on Parents and Children* (1910)
- *Common Sense about the War* (1914)
- Socialism and superior brains : a reply to Mr. Mallock (1926)
- The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism (1928)
- The League of Nations (1929)
- *Major Critical Essays* (1930). Quintessence of Ibsenism (1891), The Perfect Wagnerite (1898) and *The Sanity of Art* in one volume.
- Socialism : principles and outlook ... and Fabianism (1930)
- *Essays in Fabian Socialism* (1931). Revised and reprinted in the Standard Edition, 1932.
- *Pen Portraits and Reviews* (1931). Revised and reprinted in the Standard Edition, 1932.
- *Doctors' Delusions, Crude Criminology, Sham Education* (1931). Revised and reprinted in the Standard Edition, 1932.
- *Short Stories, Scraps and Shavings* (1932). Revised and reprinted in the Standard Edition, 1934.
- *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (1932). Collected drama criticism.
- *Dictators – Let Us Have More of Them* (1938)
- *Everybody's Political What's What?* (1944)
- *Sixteen Self Sketches* (1949)
- *The Selected Prose of Bernard Shaw* (1952). Selected and with Introduction by Diarmuid Russell. One thousand pages of essays, criticism, extracts from novels, etc. Contains *The Perfect Wagnerite* and *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* complete, including prefaces. Also contains Shaw's biographical prefaces to *Immaturity* and *London Music in 1888–1889*. Thematically organised and finely introduced. Excellent introduction to the scope of Shaw's prose.
- *Shaw on Shakespeare: An Anthology of Bernard Shaw's Writings* (1961)
- *Shaw: An Autobiography* (1970). Selected and edited by Stanley Weintraub. 2 vols.
- *What Shaw Really Wrote about the War* (2006). Edited by J. L. Wisenthal and Daniel O'Leary.

Musical Criticism

- *Music in London 1890–94. Criticism Contributed Week by Week to the World*. 3 vols, 1932.
- *London Music in 1888–89 as Heard by Corno di Bassetto (later known as Bernard Shaw) with Some Further Autobiographical Particulars*, 1937. Contains important, some 30 pages long, preface by Shaw.
- *Collected Music Criticism*. New York: Vienna House, 1973. 4 vols. Reprints the two titles above.
- *How to Become a Musical Critic*. Rupert Hart-Davis, 1960. Edited and with Introduction by Dan H. Laurence. Previously uncollected pieces on music written between 1883 and 1950.
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- *Do We Agree*, a debate between G. B. Shaw and G. K. Chesterton with Hilaire Belloc as chairman (1928)

Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948) was the preeminent leader of Indian independence movement in British-ruled India. Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. The honorific Mahatma (Sanskrit: "high-souled", "venerable")—applied to him first in 1914 in South Africa,—is now used worldwide. He is also called **Bapu** (Gujarati: endearment for "father", "papa") in India.

Born and raised in a Hindu merchant caste family in coastal Gujarat, western India, and trained in law at the Inner Temple, London, Gandhi first employed nonviolent civil disobedience as an expatriate lawyer in South Africa, in the resident Indian community's struggle for civil rights. After his return to India in 1915, he set about organising peasants, farmers, and urban labourers to protest against excessive land-tax and discrimination. Assuming leadership of the Indian National Congress in 1921, Gandhi led nationwide campaigns for easing poverty, expanding women's rights, building religious and ethnic amity, ending untouchability, but above all for achieving Swaraj or self-rule.

Gandhi famously led Indians in challenging the British-imposed salt tax with the 400 km (250 mi) Dandi Salt March in 1930, and later in calling for the British to Quit India in 1942. He was imprisoned for many years, upon many occasions, in both South Africa and India. Gandhi attempted to practise nonviolence and truth in all situations, and advocated that others do the same. He lived modestly in a self-sufficient residential community and wore the traditional Indian dhoti and shawl, woven with yarn hand spun on a charkha. He ate simple vegetarian food, and also undertook long fasts as the means to both self-purification and social protest.

Gandhi's vision of a free India based on religious pluralism, however, was challenged in the early 1940s by a new Muslim nationalism which was demanding a separate Muslim homeland carved out of India. Eventually, in August 1947, Britain granted independence, but the British Indian Empire was partitioned into two dominions, a Hindu-majority India and Muslim Pakistan. As many displaced Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs made their way to their new lands, religious violence broke out, especially in the Punjab and Bengal. Eschewing the official celebration of independence in Delhi, Gandhi visited the affected areas, attempting to provide solace. In the months following, he undertook several fasts unto death to promote religious harmony. The last of these, undertaken on 12 January 1948 at age 78, also had the indirect goal of pressuring India to pay out some cash assets owed to Pakistan. Some Indians thought Gandhi was too accommodating. Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist, assassinated Gandhi on 30 January 1948 by firing three bullets into his chest at point-blank range.

Indians widely describe Gandhi as the father of the nation. His birthday, 2 October, is commemorated as Gandhi Jayanti, a national holiday, and world-wide as the International Day of Nonviolence. He was the mentor of Indira Gandhi.

Life

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in the town of Porbander in the state of what is now Gujarat on 2 October 1869. He had his schooling in nearby Rajkot, where his father served as the adviser or prime minister to the local ruler. Though India was then under British rule, over 500 kingdoms, principalities, and states were allowed autonomy in domestic and internal affairs: these were the so-called 'native states'. Rajkot was one such state.

Gandhi later recorded the early years of his life in his extraordinary autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. His father died before Gandhi could finish his schooling, and at thirteen he was married to Kasturba [or Kasturbai], who was of the same age as Mohandas himself. In 1888 Gandhi set sail for England, where he had decided to pursue a degree in law. Though his elders objected, Gandhi could not be prevented from leaving; and it is said that his mother, a devout woman, made him promise that he would keep away from wine, women, and meat during his stay abroad. Gandhi left behind his son Harilal, then a few months old.

In London, Gandhi encountered theosophists, vegetarians, and others who were disenchanted not only with industrialism, but with the legacy of Enlightenment thought. They themselves represented the fringe elements of English society. Gandhi was powerfully attracted to them, as he was to the texts of the major religious traditions; and ironically it is in London that he was introduced to the Bhagavad Gita. Here, too, Gandhi showed determination and single-minded pursuit of his purpose, and accomplished his objective of finishing his degree from the Inner Temple. He was called to the bar in 1891, and even enrolled in the High Court of London; but later that year he left for India.

After one year of a none too successful law practice, Gandhi decided to accept an offer from an Indian businessman in South Africa, Dada Abdulla, to join him as a legal adviser. Unbeknown to him, this was to become an exceedingly lengthy stay, and altogether Gandhi was to stay in South Africa for over twenty years. The Indians who had been living in South Africa were without political rights, and were generally known by the derogatory name of 'coolies'. Gandhi himself came to an awareness of the frightening force and fury of European racism, and how far Indians were from being considered full human beings, when he was thrown out of a first-class railway compartment car, though he held a first-class ticket, at Pietermaritzburg. From this political awakening Gandhi was to emerge as the leader of the Indian community, and it is in South Africa that he first coined the term *satyagraha* to signify his theory and practice of non-violent resistance. Gandhi was to describe himself preeminently as a votary or seeker of *satya* (truth), which could not be attained other than through *ahimsa* (non-violence, love) and *brahmacharya* (celibacy, striving towards God). Gandhi conceived of his own life as a series of experiments to forge the use of satyagraha in such a manner as to make the oppressor and the oppressed alike recognize their common bonding and humanity: as he recognized, freedom is only freedom when it is indivisible. In his book *Satyagraha in South Africa* he was to detail the struggles of the Indians to claim their rights, and their resistance to oppressive legislation and executive measures, such as the imposition of a poll tax on them, or the declaration by the government that all non-Christian marriages were to be construed as invalid. In 1909, on a trip back to India, Gandhi authored a short treatise entitled *Hind Swaraj* or Indian Home Rule, where he all but initiated the critique, not only of industrial civilization, but of modernity in all its aspects.

Gandhi returned to India in early 1915, and was never to leave the country again except for a short trip that took him to Europe in 1931. Though he was not completely unknown in India, Gandhi followed the advice of his political mentor, Gokhale, and took it upon himself to acquire a familiarity with Indian conditions. He traveled

widely for one year. Over the next few years, he was to become involved in numerous local struggles, such as at Champaran in Bihar, where workers on indigo plantations complained of oppressive working conditions, and at Ahmedabad, where a dispute had broken out between management and workers at textile mills. His interventions earned Gandhi a considerable reputation, and his rapid ascendancy to the helm of nationalist politics is signified by his leadership of the opposition to repressive legislation (known as the "Rowlatt Acts") in 1919. His saintliness was not uncommon, except in someone like him who immersed himself in politics, and by this time he had earned from no less a person than Rabindranath Tagore, India's most well-known writer, the title of *Mahatma*, or 'Great Soul'. When 'disturbances' broke out in the Punjab, leading to the massacre of a large crowd of unarmed Indians at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar and other atrocities, Gandhi wrote the report of the Punjab Congress Inquiry Committee. Over the next two years, Gandhi initiated the non-cooperation movement, which called upon Indians to withdraw from British institutions, to return honors conferred by the British, and to learn the art of self-reliance; though the British administration was at places paralyzed, the movement was suspended in February 1922 when a score of Indian policemen were brutally killed by a large crowd at Chauri Chaura, a small market town in the United Provinces. Gandhi himself was arrested shortly thereafter, tried on charges of sedition, and sentenced to imprisonment for six years. At The Great Trial, as it is known to his biographers, Gandhi delivered a masterful indictment of British rule.

Owing to his poor health, Gandhi was released from prison in 1925. Over the following years, he worked hard to preserve Hindu-Muslim relations, and in 1924 he observed, from his prison cell, a 21-day fast when Hindu-Muslim riots broke out at Kohat, a military barracks on the Northwest Frontier. This was to be of his many major public fasts, and in 1932 he was to commence the so-called Epic Fast unto death, since he thought of "separate electorates" for the oppressed class of what were then called *untouchables* (or Harijans in Gandhi's vocabulary, and dalits in today's language) as a retrograde measure meant to produce permanent divisions within Hindu society. Gandhi earned the hostility of Ambedkar, the leader of the *untouchables*, but few doubted that Gandhi was genuinely interested in removing the serious disabilities from which they suffered, just as no one doubt that Gandhi never accepted the argument that Hindus and Muslims constituted two separate elements in Indian society. These were some of the concerns most prominent in Gandhi's mind, but he was also to initiate a constructive programme for social reform. Gandhi had ideas -- mostly sound -- on every subject, from hygiene and nutrition to education and labor, and he relentlessly pursued his ideas in one of the many newspapers which he founded. Indeed, were Gandhi known for nothing else in India, he would still be remembered as one of the principal figures in the history of Indian journalism.

In early 1930, as the nationalist movement was revived, the Indian National Congress, the preeminent body of nationalist opinion, declared that it would now be satisfied with nothing short of complete independence (*purna swaraj*). Once the clarion call had been issued, it was perforce necessary to launch a movement of resistance against British rule. On March 2, Gandhi addressed a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, informing him that unless Indian demands were met, he would be compelled to break the "salt laws". Predictably, his letter was received with bewildered amusement, and accordingly Gandhi set off, on the early morning of March 12, with a small group of followers towards Dandi on the sea. They arrived there on April 5th: Gandhi picked up a small lump of natural salt, and so gave the signal to hundreds of thousands of people to similarly defy the law, since the British exercised a monopoly on the production and sale of salt. This was the beginning of the civil disobedience movement: Gandhi himself was arrested, and thousands of others were also hauled into jail. It is to break this deadlock that Irwin agreed to hold talks with Gandhi, and subsequently the British agreed to hold a Round Table Conference in London to negotiate the possible terms of Indian independence. Gandhi went to London in 1931 and met some of his admirers in Europe, but the negotiations proved inconclusive. On his return to India, he was once again arrested.

For the next few years, Gandhi would be engaged mainly in the constructive reform of Indian society. He had vowed upon undertaking the salt march that he would not return to Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, where he had made his home, if India did not attain its independence, and in the mid-1930s he established himself in a remote village, in the dead center of India, by the name of Segaoon [known as Sevagram]. It is to this obscure village, which was without electricity or running water, that India's political leaders made their way to engage in

discussions with Gandhi about the future of the independence movement, and it is here that he received visitors such as Margaret Sanger, the well-known American proponent of birth-control. Gandhi also continued to travel throughout the country, taking him wherever his services were required.

One such visit was to the Northwest Frontier, where he had in the imposing Pathan, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (known by the endearing term of "Frontier Gandhi", and at other times as *Badshah* [King] *Khan*), a fervent disciple. At the outset of World War II, Gandhi and the Congress leadership assumed a position of neutrality: while clearly critical of fascism, they could not find it in themselves to support British imperialism. Gandhi was opposed by Subhas Chandra Bose, who had served as President of the Congress, and who took to the view that Britain's moment of weakness was India's moment of opportunity. When Bose ran for President of the Congress against Gandhi's wishes and triumphed against Gandhi's own candidate, he found that Gandhi still exercised influence over the Congress Working Committee, and that it was near impossible to run the Congress if the cooperation of Gandhi and his followers could not be procured. Bose tendered his resignation, and shortly thereafter was to make a dramatic escape from India to find support among the Japanese and the Nazis for his plans to liberate India.

In 1942, Gandhi issued the last call for independence from British rule. On the grounds of what is now known as *August Kranti Maidan*, he delivered a stirring speech, asking every Indian to lay down their life, if necessary, in the cause of freedom. He gave them this mantra: "Do or Die"; at the same time, he asked the British to 'Quit India'. The response of the British government was to place Gandhi under arrest, and virtually the entire Congress leadership was to find itself behind bars, not to be released until after the conclusion of the war.

A few months after Gandhi and Kasturba had been placed in confinement in the Aga Khan's Palace in Pune, Kasturba passed away: this was a terrible blow to Gandhi, following closely on the heels of the death of his private secretary of many years, the gifted Mahadev Desai. In the period from 1942 to 1945, the Muslim League, which represented the interest of certain Muslims and by now advocated the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims, increasingly gained the attention of the British, and supported them in their war effort. The new government that came to power in Britain under Clement Atlee was committed to the independence of India, and negotiations for India's future began in earnest. Sensing that the political leaders were now craving for power, Gandhi largely distanced himself from the negotiations. He declared his opposition to the vivisection of India. It is generally conceded, even by his detractors, that the last years of his life were in some respects his finest. He walked from village to village in riot-torn Noakhali, where Hindus were being killed in retaliation for the killing of Muslims in Bihar, and nursed the wounded and consoled the widowed; and in Calcutta he came to constitute, in the famous words of the last viceroy, Mountbatten, a "one-man boundary force" between Hindus and Muslims. The ferocious fighting in Calcutta came to a halt, almost entirely on account of Gandhi's efforts, and even his critics were wont to speak of the Gandhi's 'miracle of Calcutta'. When the moment of freedom came, on 15 August 1947, Gandhi was nowhere to be seen in the capital, though Nehru and the entire Constituent Assembly were to salute him as the architect of Indian independence, as the 'father of the nation'.

The last few months of Gandhi's life were to be spent mainly in the capital city of Delhi. There he divided his time between the 'Bhangi colony', where the sweepers and the lowest of the low stayed, and Birla House, the residence of one of the wealthiest men in India and one of the benefactors of Gandhi's ashrams. Hindu and Sikh refugees had streamed into the capital from what had become Pakistan, and there was much resentment, which easily translated into violence, against Muslims. It was partly in an attempt to put an end to the killings in Delhi, and more generally to the bloodshed following the partition, which may have taken the lives of as many as 1 million people, besides causing the dislocation of no fewer than 11 million, that Gandhi was to commence the last fast unto death of his life. The fast was terminated when representatives of all the communities signed a statement that they were prepared to live in "perfect amity", and that the lives, property, and faith of the Muslims would be safeguarded. A few days later, a bomb exploded in Birla House where Gandhi was holding his evening prayers, but it caused no injuries. However, his assassin, a Marathi Chitpavan Brahmin by the name of Nathuram Godse, was not so easily deterred. Gandhi, quite characteristically, refused additional security, and no one could defy his wish to be allowed to move around unhindered. In the early evening hours of 30 January

1948, Gandhi met with India's Deputy Prime Minister and his close associate in the freedom struggle, Vallabhai Patel, and then proceeded to his prayers.

That evening, as Gandhi's time-piece, which hung from one of the folds of his *dhoti* [loin-cloth], was to reveal to him, he was uncharacteristically late to his prayers, and he fretted about his inability to be punctual. At 10 minutes past 5 o'clock, with one hand each on the shoulders of Abha and Manu, who were known as his 'walking sticks', Gandhi commenced his walk towards the garden where the prayer meeting was held. As he was about to mount the steps of the podium, Gandhi folded his hands and greeted his audience with a namaskar; at that moment, a young man came up to him and roughly pushed aside Manu. Nathuram Godse bent down in the gesture of an obeisance, took a revolver out of his pocket, and shot Gandhi three times in his chest. Bloodstains appeared over Gandhi's white woolen shawl; his hands still folded in a greeting, Gandhi blessed his assassin: *He Ram! He Ram!*

As Gandhi fell, his faithful time-piece struck the ground, and the hands of the watch came to a standstill. They showed, as they had done before, the precise time: 5:12 P.M.

Gandhi as Folk Hero

Congress in the 1920s appealed to peasants by portraying Gandhi as a sort of messiah, a strategy that succeeded in incorporating radical forces within the peasantry into the nonviolent resistance movement. In thousands of villages plays were performed that presented Gandhi as the reincarnation of earlier Indian nationalist leaders, or even as a demigod. The plays built support among illiterate peasants steeped in traditional Hindu culture. Similar messianic imagery appeared in popular songs and poems, and in Congress-sponsored religious pageants and celebrations. The result was that Gandhi became not only a folk hero but the Congress was widely seen in the villages as his sacred instrument.

Principles, Practices and Beliefs

Gandhism designates the ideas and principles Gandhi promoted. Of central importance is nonviolent resistance. A Gandhian can mean either an individual who follows, or a specific philosophy which is attributed to, Gandhism. M. M. Sankhdher argues that Gandhism is not a systematic position in metaphysics or in political philosophy. Rather, it is a political creed, an economic doctrine, a religious outlook, a moral precept, and especially, a humanitarian world view. It is an effort not to systematise wisdom but to transform society and is based on an undying faith in the goodness of human nature. However Gandhi himself did not approve of the notion of "Gandhism", as he explained in 1936:

There is no such thing as "Gandhism", and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems...The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not final. I may change them tomorrow. I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills.

Influences

Historian R.B. Cribb argues that Gandhi's thought evolved over time, with his early ideas becoming the core or scaffolding for his mature philosophy. In London he committed himself to truthfulness, temperance, chastity, and vegetarianism. His return to India to work as a lawyer was a failure, so he went to South Africa for a quarter century, where he absorbed ideas from many sources, most of them non-Indian. Gandhi grew up in an eclectic religious atmosphere and throughout his life searched for insights from many religious traditions. He was exposed to Jain ideas through his mother who was in contact with Jain monks. Themes from Jainism that Gandhi absorbed included asceticism; compassion for all forms of life; the importance of vows for self-discipline; vegetarianism; fasting for self-purification; mutual tolerance among people of different creeds; and

"syadvad", the idea that all views of truth are partial, a doctrine that lies at the root of Satyagraha. He received much of his influence from Jainism particularly during his younger years.

Gandhi's London experience provided a solid philosophical base focused on truthfulness, temperance, chastity, and vegetarianism. When he returned to India in 1891, his outlook was parochial and he could not make a living as a lawyer. This challenged his belief that practicality and morality necessarily coincided. By moving in 1893 to South Africa he found a solution to this problem and developed the central concepts of his mature philosophy. N. A. Tothi felt that Gandhi was influenced by the reforms and teachings of Swaminarayan, stating "Close parallels do exist in programs of social reform based on nonviolence, truth-telling, cleanliness, temperance and upliftment of the masses." Vallabhbhai Patel, who grew up in a Swaminarayan household was attracted to Gandhi due to this aspect of Gandhi's doctrine.

Gandhi's ethical thinking was heavily influenced by a handful of books, which he repeatedly meditated upon. They included especially Plato's Apology and John Ruskin's Unto this Last (1862) (both of which he translated into his native Gujarati); William Salter's Ethical Religion (1889); Henry David Thoreau's On the Duty of Civil Disobedience (1849); and Leo Tolstoy's The Kingdom of God Is Within You (1894). Ruskin inspired his decision to live an austere life on a commune, at first on the Phoenix Farm in Natal and then on the Tolstoy Farm just outside Johannesburg, South Africa.

Balkrishna Gokhale argues that Gandhi took his philosophy of history from Hinduism and Jainism, supplemented by selected Christian traditions and ideas of Tolstoy and Ruskin. Hinduism provided central concepts of God's role in history, of man as the battleground of forces of virtue and sin, and of the potential of love as an historical force. From Jainism, Gandhi took the idea of applying nonviolence to human situations and the theory that Absolute Reality can be comprehended only relatively in human affairs.

Historian Howard Spodek argues for the importance of the culture of Gujarat in shaping Gandhi's methods. Spodek finds that some of Gandhi's most effective methods such as fasting, noncooperation and appeals to the justice and compassion of the rulers were learned as a youth in Gujarat. Later on, the financial, cultural, organizational and geographical support needed to bring his campaigns to a national audience were drawn from Ahmedabad and Gujarat, his Indian residence 1915–1930.

Tolstoy

Along with the book mentioned above, in 1908 Leo Tolstoy wrote A Letter to a Hindu, which said that only by using love as a weapon through passive resistance could the Indian people overthrow colonial rule. In 1909, Gandhi wrote to Tolstoy seeking advice and permission to republish A Letter to a Hindu in Gujarati. Tolstoy responded and the two continued a correspondence until Tolstoy's death in 1910 (Tolstoy's last letter was to Gandhi). The letters concern practical and theological applications of nonviolence. Gandhi saw himself a disciple of Tolstoy, for they agreed regarding opposition to state authority and colonialism; both hated violence and preached non-resistance. However, they differed sharply on political strategy. Gandhi called for political involvement; he was a nationalist and was prepared to use nonviolent force. He was also willing to compromise. It was at Tolstoy Farm where Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach systematically trained their disciples in the philosophy of nonviolence.

Truth and Satyagraha

Gandhi dedicated his life to the wider purpose of discovering truth, or Satya. He tried to achieve this by learning from his own mistakes and conducting experiments on himself. He called his autobiography The Story of My Experiments with Truth.

Bruce Watson argues that Gandhi based Satyagraha on the Vedantic ideal of self-realization, and notes it also contains Jain and Buddhist notions of nonviolence, vegetarianism, the avoidance of killing, and 'agape' (universal love). Gandhi also borrowed Christian-Islamic ideas of equality, the brotherhood of man, and the concept of turning the other cheek.

Gandhi stated that the most important battle to fight was overcoming his own demons, fears, and insecurities. Gandhi summarised his beliefs first when he said "God is Truth". He would later change this statement to "Truth is God". Thus, *satya* (truth) in Gandhi's philosophy is "God".

The essence of Satyagraha (a name Gandhi invented meaning "adherence to truth") is that it seeks to eliminate antagonisms without harming the antagonists themselves and seeks to transform or "purify" it to a higher level. A euphemism sometimes used for Satyagraha is that it is a "silent force" or a "soul force" (a term also used by Martin Luther King Jr. during his famous "I Have a Dream" speech). It arms the individual with moral power rather than physical power. Satyagraha is also termed a "universal force", as it essentially "makes no distinction between kinsmen and strangers, young and old, man and woman, friend and foe."

Gandhi wrote: "There must be no impatience, no barbarity, no insolence, no undue pressure. If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause." Civil disobedience and noncooperation as practised under Satyagraha are based on the "law of suffering", a doctrine that *the endurance of suffering is a means to an end*. This end usually implies a moral upliftment or progress of an individual or society. Therefore, noncooperation in Satyagraha is in fact a means to secure the cooperation of the opponent consistently with truth and justice.

Nonviolence

Although Gandhi was not the originator of the principle of nonviolence, he was the first to apply it in the political field on a large scale. The concept of nonviolence (ahimsa) and nonresistance has a long history in Indian religious thought. Gandhi explains his philosophy and way of life in his autobiography The Story of My Experiments with Truth. Gandhi realised later that this level of nonviolence required incredible faith and courage, which he believed everyone did not possess. He therefore advised that everyone need not keep to nonviolence, especially if it were used as a cover for cowardice, saying, "where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence."

Gandhi thus came under some political fire for his criticism of those who attempted to achieve independence through more violent means. His refusal to protest against the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Udham Singh and Rajguru were sources of condemnation among some parties.

Of this criticism, Gandhi stated, "There was a time when people listened to me because I showed them how to give fight to the British without arms when they had no arms ... but today I am told that my nonviolence can be of no avail against the [Hindu–Moslem riots] and, therefore, people should arm themselves for self-defense."

Gandhi's views came under heavy criticism in Britain when it was under attack from Nazi Germany, and later when the Holocaust was revealed. He told the British people in 1940, "I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions... If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourselves, man, woman, and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them." George Orwell remarked that Gandhi's methods confronted 'an old-fashioned and rather shaky despotism which treated him in a fairly chivalrous way', not a totalitarian Power, 'where political opponents simply disappear.' In a post-war interview in 1946, he said, "Hitler killed five million Jews. It is the greatest crime of our time. But the Jews should have offered themselves to the butcher's knife. They should have thrown themselves into the sea from cliffs... It would have aroused the

world and the people of Germany... As it is they succumbed anyway in their millions." Gandhi believed this act of "collective suicide", in response to the Holocaust, "would have been heroism".

Muslims

One of the Gandhi's major strategies, first in South Africa and then in India, was uniting Muslims and Hindus to work together in opposition to British imperialism. In 1919–22 he won strong Muslim support for his leadership in the Khilafat Movement to support the historic Ottoman Caliphate. By 1924, that Muslim support had largely evaporated.

Jews

In 1931, he suggested that while he could understand the desire of European Jews to emigrate to Palestine, he opposed any movement that supported British colonialism or violence. Muslims throughout India and the Middle East strongly opposed the Zionist plan for a Jewish state in Palestine, and Gandhi (and Congress) supported the Muslims in this regard. By the 1930s all major political groups in India opposed a Jewish state in Palestine.

This led to discussions concerning the persecution of the Jews in Germany and the emigration of Jews from Europe to Palestine, which Gandhi framed through the lens of Satyagraha. In 1937, Gandhi discussed Zionism with his close Jewish friend Hermann Kallenbach. He said Zionism was not the right answer to the Jewish problem and instead recommended Satyagraha. Gandhi thought the Zionists in Palestine represented European imperialism and used violence to achieve their goals; he argued that "the Jews should disclaim any intention of realizing their aspiration under the protection of arms and should rely wholly on the goodwill of Arabs. No exception can possibly be taken to the natural desire of the Jews to found a home in Palestine. But they must wait for its fulfillment till Arab opinion is ripe for it." In 1938, Gandhi stated that his "sympathies are all with the Jews. I have known them intimately in South Africa. Some of them became life-long companions." Philosopher Martin Buber was highly critical of Gandhi's approach and in 1939 wrote an open letter to him on the subject. Gandhi reiterated his stance on the use of Satyagraha in Palestine in 1947.

The Religious Quest

Gandhi's religious quest dated back to his childhood, the influence of his mother and of his home at Porbandar and Rajkot, but it received a great impetus after his arrival in South Africa. His Quaker friends in Pretoria failed to convert him to Christianity, but they quickened his appetite for religious studies. He was fascinated by Tolstoy's writings on Christianity, read the Qu'ran in translation, and delved into Hindu scriptures and philosophy. The study of comparative religion, talks with scholars, and his own reading of theological works brought him to the conclusion that all religions were true and yet every one of them was imperfect because they were "interpreted with poor intellects, sometimes with poor hearts, and more often misinterpreted."

Rajchandra, a brilliant young philosopher who became Gandhi's spiritual mentor, convinced him of "the subtlety and profundity" of Hinduism, the religion of his birth. And it was the *Bhagavadgita*, which Gandhi had first read in London, that became his "spiritual dictionary" and exercised probably the greatest single influence on his life. Two Sanskrit words in the *Gita* particularly fascinated him. One was *aparigraha* (nonpossession), which implied that man had to jettison the material goods that cramped the life of the spirit and to shake off the bonds of money and property. The other was *samabhava* (equability), which enjoined him to remain unruffled by pain or pleasure, victory or defeat, and to work without hope of success or fear of failure.

These were not merely counsels of perfection. In the civil case that had brought him to South Africa in 1893, he had persuaded the antagonists to settle their differences out of court. The true function of a lawyer seemed to him "to unite parties riven asunder." He soon regarded his clients not as purchasers of his services but as

friends; they consulted him not only on legal issues but on such matters as the best way of weaning a baby or balancing the family budget. When an associate protested that clients came even on Sundays, Gandhi replied: "A man in distress cannot have Sunday rest."

Gandhi's legal earnings reached a peak figure of £5,000 a year, but he had little interest in moneymaking, and his savings were often sunk in his public activities. In Durban and later in Johannesburg, he kept an open table; his house was a virtual hostel for younger colleagues and political coworkers. This was something of an ordeal for his wife, without whose extraordinary patience, endurance, and self-effacement Gandhi could hardly have devoted himself to public causes. As he broke through the conventional bonds of family and property, their life tended to shade into a community life.

Gandhi felt an irresistible attraction to a life of simplicity, manual labour, and austerity. In 1904, after reading John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, a critique of capitalism, he set up a farm at Phoenix near Durban where he and his friends could literally live by the sweat of their brow. Six years later another colony grew up under Gandhi's fostering care near Johannesburg; it was named Tolstoy Farm after the Russian writer and moralist, whom Gandhi admired and corresponded with. Those two settlements were the precursors of the more famous ashrams (*ashramas*) in India, at Sabarmati near Ahmedabad (Ahmadabad) and at Sevagram near Wardha.

South Africa had not only prompted Gandhi to evolve a novel technique for political action but also transformed him into a leader of men by freeing him from bonds that make cowards of most men. "Persons in power," Gilbert Murray prophetically wrote about Gandhi in the *Hibbert Journal* in 1918, "should be very careful how they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise, or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy, because his body which you can always conquer gives you so little purchase upon his soul."

Vegetarianism and Food

Stephen Hay argues that Gandhi in London looked into numerous religious and intellectual currents. He especially appreciated how the theosophical movement encouraged a religious eclecticism and an antipathy to atheism. Hay says the vegetarian movement had the greatest impact for it was Gandhi's point of entry into other reformist agendas of the time. The idea of vegetarianism is deeply ingrained in Hindu and Jain traditions in India, especially in his native Gujarat. Gandhi was close to the chairman of the London Vegetarian Society, Dr. Josiah Oldfield, and corresponded with Henry Stephens Salt, a vegetarian campaigner. Gandhi became a strict vegetarian. He wrote the book *The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism* and wrote for the London Vegetarian Society's publication. Gandhi was somewhat of a food faddist taking his own goat to travels so he could always have fresh milk.

Gandhi noted in *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, that vegetarianism was the beginning of his deep commitment to Brahmacharya; without total control of the palate, his success in following Brahmacharya would likely falter. "You wish to know what the marks of a man are who wants to realise Truth which is God", he wrote. "He must reduce himself to zero and have perfect control over all his senses-beginning with the palate or tongue." Gandhi also stated that he followed a fruitarian diet for five years but discontinued it due to pleurisy and pressure from his doctor. He thereafter resumed a vegetarian diet.

Fasting

Gandhi used fasting as a political device, often threatening suicide unless demands were met. Congress publicised the fasts as a political action that generated widespread sympathy. In response the government tried to manipulate news coverage to minimise his challenge to the Raj. He fasted in 1932 to protest the voting scheme for separate political representation for Dalits; Gandhi did not want them segregated. The government

stopped the London press from showing photographs of his emaciated body, because it would elicit sympathy. Gandhi's 1943 hunger strike took place during a two-year prison term for the anticolonial Quit India movement. The government called on nutritional experts to demystify his action, and again no photos were allowed. However, his final fast in 1948, after India was independent, was lauded by the British press and this time did include full-length photos.

Alter argues that Gandhi's fixation on diet and celibacy were much deeper than exercises in self-discipline. Rather, his beliefs regarding health offered a critique of both the traditional Hindu system of ayurvedic medicine and Western concepts. This challenge was integral to his deeper challenge to tradition and modernity, as health and nonviolence became part of the same ethics.

Brahmacharya, Celibacy

In 1906 Gandhi, although married and a father, vowed to abstain from sexual relations. In the 1940s, in his mid-seventies, he brought his grandniece Manubehn to sleep naked in his bed as part of a spiritual experiment in which Gandhi could test himself as a "brahmachari." Several other young women and girls also sometimes shared his bed as part of his experiments. Gandhi's behaviour was widely discussed and criticised by family members and leading politicians, including Nehru. Some members of his staff resigned, including two editors of his newspaper who left after refusing to print parts of Gandhi's sermons dealing with his sleeping arrangements. But Gandhi said that if he wouldn't let Manu sleep with him, it would be a sign of weakness.

Gandhi discussed his experiment with friends and relations; most disagreed and the experiment ceased in 1947. Religious studies scholar Veena Howard argues that Gandhi made "creative use" of his celibacy and his authority as a *mahatma* "to reinterpret religious norms and confront unjust social and religious conventions relegating women to lower status." According to Howard, Gandhi "developed his discourse as a religious renouncer within India's traditions to confront repressive social and religious customs regarding women and to bring them into the public sphere, during a time when the discourse on celibacy was typically imbued with masculine rhetoric and misogynist inferences.... his writings show a consistent evolution of his thought toward creating an equal playing field for members of both sexes and even elevating women to a higher plane—all through his discourse and unorthodox practice of brahmacharya."

Nai Talim, Basic Education

Gandhi's educational policies reflected *Nai Talim* ('Basic Education for all'), a spiritual principle which states that knowledge and work are not separate. It was a reaction against the British educational system and colonialism in general, which had the negative effect of making Indian children alienated and career-based; it promoted disdain for manual work, the development of a new elite class, and the increasing problems of industrialisation and urbanisation. The three pillars of Gandhi's pedagogy were its focus on the *lifelong character* of education, its *social character* and its form as a *holistic process*. For Gandhi, education is 'the moral development of the person', a process that is by definition 'lifelong'.

Nai Talim evolved out of the spiritually oriented education program at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, and Gandhi's work at the ashram at Sevagram after 1937. After 1947 the Nehru government's vision of an industrialised, centrally planned economy had scant place for Gandhi's village-oriented approach.

Swaraj, Self-Rule

Rudolph argues that after a false start in trying to emulate the English in an attempt to overcome his timidity, Gandhi discovered the inner courage he was seeking by helping his countrymen in South Africa. The new courage consisted of observing the traditional Bengali way of "self-suffering" and, in finding his own courage, he was enabled also to point out the way of 'Satyagraha' and 'ahimsa' to the whole of India. Gandhi's writings

expressed four meanings of freedom: as India's national independence; as individual political freedom; as group freedom from poverty; and as the capacity for personal self-rule.

Gandhi was a self-described philosophical anarchist, and his vision of India meant an India without an underlying government. He once said that "the ideally nonviolent state would be an ordered anarchy." While political systems are largely hierarchical, with each layer of authority from the individual to the central government have increasing levels of authority over the layer below, Gandhi believed that society should be the exact opposite, where nothing is done without the consent of anyone, down to the individual. His idea was that true self-rule in a country means that every person rules his or herself and that there is no state which enforces laws upon the people.

This would be achieved over time with nonviolent conflict mediation, as power is divested from layers of hierarchical authorities, ultimately to the individual, which would come to embody the ethic of nonviolence. Rather than a system where rights are enforced by a higher authority, people are self-governed by mutual responsibilities. On returning from South Africa, when Gandhi received a letter asking for his participation in writing a world charter for human rights, he responded saying, "in my experience, it is far more important to have a charter for human duties."

A free India did not mean merely transferring the established British administrative structure into Indian hands. He warned, "you would make India English. And when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englishtan. This is not the Swaraj I want." Tewari argues that Gandhi saw democracy as more than a system of government; it meant promoting both individuality and the self-discipline of the community. Democracy was a moral system that distributed power and assisted the development of every social class, especially the lowest. It meant settling disputes in a nonviolent manner; it required freedom of thought and expression. For Gandhi, democracy was a way of life.

Gandhian Economics

A free India for Gandhi meant the flourishing of thousands of self-sufficient small communities who rule themselves without hindering others. Gandhian economics focused on the need for economic self-sufficiency at the village level. His policy of "sarvodaya" called for ending poverty through improved agriculture and small-scale cottage industries in every village. Gandhi challenged Nehru and the modernizers in the late 1930s who called for rapid industrialisation on the Soviet model; Gandhi denounced that as dehumanising and contrary to the needs of the villages where the great majority of the people lived. After Gandhi's death Nehru led India to large-scale planning that emphasised modernisation and heavy industry, while modernising agriculture through irrigation. Historian Kuruvilla Pandikattu says "it was Nehru's vision, not Gandhi's, that was eventually preferred by the Indian State." After Gandhi's death activists inspired by his vision promoted their opposition to industrialisation through the teachings of Gandhian economics. According to Gandhi, "Poverty is the worst form of violence."

Literary Works

Gandhi was a prolific writer. One of Gandhi's earliest publications, *Hind Swaraj*, published in Gujarati in 1909, is recognised as the intellectual blueprint of India's independence movement. The book was translated into English the next year, with a copyright legend that read "No Rights Reserved". For decades he edited several newspapers including Harijan in Gujarati, in Hindi and in the English language; Indian Opinion while in South Africa and, Young India, in English, and Navajivan, a Gujarati monthly, on his return to India. Later, Navajivan was also published in Hindi. In addition, he wrote letters almost every day to individuals and newspapers.

Gandhi also wrote several books including his autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth (*Gujarātī "સત્યના પ્રયોગો અથવા આત્મકથા"*), of which he bought the entire first edition to make sure it was reprinted. His other autobiographies included: *Satyagraha in South Africa* about his struggle there, Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule, a political pamphlet, and a paraphrase in Gujarati of John Ruskin's Unto This Last. This last essay can be considered his programme on economics. He also wrote extensively on vegetarianism, diet and health, religion, social reforms, etc. Gandhi usually wrote in Gujarati, though he also revised the Hindi and English translations of his books.

Gandhi's complete works were published by the Indian government under the name The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi in the 1960s. The writings comprise about 50,000 pages published in about a hundred volumes. In 2000, a revised edition of the complete works sparked a controversy, as it contained a large number of errors and omissions. The Indian government later withdrew the revised edition.

Legacy and Depictions in Popular Culture

Gandhi influenced important leaders and political movements. Leaders of the civil rights movement in the United States, including Martin Luther King, James Lawson, and James Bevel, drew from the writings of Gandhi in the development of their own theories about nonviolence. King said "Christ gave us the goals and Mahatma Gandhi the tactics." King sometimes referred to Gandhi as "the little brown saint." Anti-apartheid activist and former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, was inspired by Gandhi. Others include Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Steve Biko, and Aung San Suu Kyi.

In his early years, the former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela was a follower of the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Gandhi. Bhana and Vahed commented on these events as "Gandhi inspired succeeding generations of South African activists seeking to end White rule. This legacy connects him to Nelson Mandela...in a sense Mandela completed what Gandhi started."

Gandhi's life and teachings inspired many who specifically referred to Gandhi as their mentor or who dedicated their lives to spreading Gandhi's ideas. In Europe, Romain Rolland was the first to discuss Gandhi in his 1924 book *Mahatma Gandhi*, and Brazilian anarchist and feminist Maria Lacerda de Moura wrote about Gandhi in her work on pacifism. In 1931, notable European physicist Albert Einstein exchanged written letters with Gandhi, and called him "a role model for the generations to come" in a letter writing about him. Einstein said of Gandhi:

Mahatma Gandhi's life achievement stands unique in political history. He has invented a completely new and humane means for the liberation war of an oppressed country, and practised it with greatest energy and devotion. The moral influence he had on the consciously thinking human being of the entire civilized world will probably be much more lasting than it seems in our time with its overestimation of brutal violent forces. Because lasting will only be the work of such statesmen who wake up and strengthen the moral power of their people through their example and educational works. We may all be happy and grateful that destiny gifted us with such an enlightened contemporary, a role model for the generations to come.

Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this walked the earth in flesh and blood.

Lanza del Vasto went to India in 1936 intending to live with Gandhi; he later returned to Europe to spread Gandhi's philosophy and founded the Community of the Ark in 1948 (modelled after Gandhi's ashrams). Madeleine Slade (known as "Mirabehn") was the daughter of a British admiral who spent much of her adult life in India as a devotee of Gandhi.

In addition, the British musician John Lennon referred to Gandhi when discussing his views on nonviolence. At the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival in 2007, former US Vice-President and environmentalist Al Gore spoke of Gandhi's influence on him.

U.S. President Barack Obama in a 2010 address to the Parliament of India said that:

I am mindful that I might not be standing before you today, as President of the United States, had it not been for Gandhi and the message he shared with America and the world.

Obama in September 2009 said that his biggest inspiration came from Mahatma Gandhi. His reply was in response to the question 'Who was the one person, dead or live, that you would choose to dine with?'. He continued that "He's somebody I find a lot of inspiration in. He inspired Dr. King with his message of nonviolence. He ended up doing so much and changed the world just by the power of his ethics".

Time Magazine named The 14th Dalai Lama, Lech Wałęsa, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, Aung San Suu Kyi, Benigno Aquino, Jr., Desmond Tutu, and Nelson Mandela as *Children of Gandhi* and his spiritual heirs to nonviolence. The Mahatma Gandhi District in Houston, Texas, United States, an ethnic Indian enclave, is officially named after Gandhi.

Awards

Time magazine named Gandhi the Man of the Year in 1930. Gandhi was also the runner-up to Albert Einstein as "Person of the Century" at the end of 1999. The Government of India awards the annual Gandhi Peace Prize to distinguished social workers, world leaders and citizens. Nelson Mandela, the leader of South Africa's struggle to eradicate racial discrimination and segregation, was a prominent non-Indian recipient. In 2011, *Time* magazine named Gandhi as one of the top 25 political icons of all time.

Gandhi did not receive the Nobel Peace Prize, although he was nominated five times between 1937 and 1948, including the first-ever nomination by the American Friends Service Committee, though he made the short list only twice, in 1937 and 1947. Decades later, the Nobel Committee publicly declared its regret for the omission, and admitted to deeply divided nationalistic opinion denying the award. Gandhi was nominated in 1948 but was assassinated before nominations closed. That year, the committee chose not to award the peace prize stating that "there was no suitable living candidate" and later research shows that the possibility of awarding the prize posthumously to Gandhi was discussed and that the reference to no suitable living candidate was to Gandhi. When the 14th Dalai Lama was awarded the Prize in 1989, the chairman of the committee said that this was "in part a tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi".

Current Impact within India

India, with its rapid economic modernisation and urbanisation, has rejected Gandhi's economics but accepted much of his politics and continues to revere his memory. Reporter Jim Yardley notes that, "modern India is hardly a Gandhian nation, if it ever was one. His vision of a village-dominated economy was shunted aside during his lifetime as rural romanticism, and his call for a national ethos of personal austerity and nonviolence has proved antithetical to the goals of an aspiring economic and military power." By contrast Gandhi is "given full credit for India's political identity as a tolerant, secular democracy."

Gandhi's birthday, 2 October, is a national holiday in India, Gandhi Jayanti. Gandhi's image also appears on paper currency of all denominations issued by Reserve Bank of India, except for the one rupee note. Gandhi's date of death, 30 January, is commemorated as a Martyrs' Day in India.

There are two temples in India dedicated to Gandhi. One is located at Sambalpur in Orissa and the other at Nidaghatta village near Kadur in Chikmagalur district of Karnataka. The Gandhi Memorial in Kanyakumari resembles central Indian Hindu temples and the Tamukkam or Summer Palace in Madurai now houses the Mahatma Gandhi Museum.

About Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, more commonly known as ‘Mahatma’ (meaning ‘Great Soul’) was born in Porbandar, Gujarat, in North West India, on 2nd October 1869, into a Hindu Modh family. His father was the Chief Minister of Porbandar, and his mother’s religious devotion meant that his upbringing was infused with the Jain pacifist teachings of mutual tolerance, non-injury to living beings and vegetarianism.

Born into a privileged caste, Gandhi was fortunate to receive a comprehensive education, but proved a mediocre student. In May 1883, aged 13, Gandhi was married to Kasturba Makhanji, a girl also aged 13, through the arrangement of their respective parents, as is customary in India. Following his entry into Samaldas College, at the University of Bombay, she bore him the first of four sons, in 1888. Gandhi was unhappy at college, following his parent’s wishes to take the bar, and when he was offered the opportunity of furthering his studies overseas, at University College London, aged 18, he accepted with alacrity, starting there in September 1888.

Determined to adhere to Hindu principles, which included vegetarianism as well as alcohol and sexual abstinence, he found London restrictive initially, but once he had found kindred spirits he flourished, and pursued the philosophical study of religions, including Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism and others, having professed no particular interest in religion up until then. Following admission to the English Bar, and his return to India, he found work difficult to come by and, in 1893, accepted a year’s contract to work for an Indian firm in Natal, South Africa.

Although not yet enshrined in law, the system of ‘apartheid’ was very much in evidence in South Africa at the turn of the 20th century. Despite arriving on a year’s contract, Gandhi spent the next 21 years living in South Africa, and railed against the injustice of racial segregation. On one occasion he was thrown from a first class train carriage, despite being in possession of a valid ticket. Witnessing the racial bias experienced by his countrymen served as a catalyst for his later activism, and he attempted to fight segregation at all levels. He founded a political movement, known as the Natal Indian Congress, and developed his theoretical belief in non-violent civil protest into a tangible political stance, when he opposed the introduction of registration for all Indians, within South Africa, via non-cooperation with the relevant civic authorities.

On his return to India in 1916, Gandhi developed his practice of non-violent civic disobedience still further, raising awareness of oppressive practices in Bihar, in 1918, which saw the local populace oppressed by their largely British masters. He also encouraged oppressed villagers to improve their own circumstances, leading peaceful strikes and protests. His fame spread, and he became widely referred to as ‘Mahatma’ or ‘Great Soul’.

As his fame spread, so his political influence increased: by 1921 he was leading the Indian National Congress, and reorganising the party’s constitution around the principle of ‘Swaraj’, or complete political independence from the British. He also instigated a boycott of British goods and institutions, and his encouragement of mass civil disobedience led to his arrest, on 10th March 1922, and trial on sedition charges, for which he served 2 years, of a 6-year prison sentence.

The Indian National Congress began to splinter during his incarceration, and he remained largely out of the public eye following his release from prison in February 1924, returning four years later, in 1928, to campaign for the granting of ‘dominion status’ to India by the British. When the British introduced a tax on salt in 1930, he famously led a 250-mile march to the sea to collect his own salt. Recognising his political influence nationally, the British authorities were forced to negotiate various settlements with Gandhi over the following

years, which resulted in the alleviation of poverty, granted status to the 'untouchables', enshrined rights for women, and led inexorably to Gandhi's goal of 'Swaraj': political independence from Britain.

Gandhi suffered six known assassination attempts during the course of his life. The first attempt came on 25th June 1934, when he was in Pune delivering a speech, together with his wife, Kasturba. Travelling in a motorcade of two cars, they were in the second car, which was delayed by the appearance of a train at a railway level crossing, causing the two vehicles to separate. When the first vehicle arrived at the speech venue, a bomb was thrown at the car, which exploded and injured several people. No investigations were carried out at the time, and no arrests were made, although many attribute the attack to Nathuram Godse, a Hindu fundamentalist implacably opposed to Gandhi's non-violent acceptance and tolerance of all religions, which he felt compromised the supremacy of the Hindu religion. Godse was the person responsible for the eventual assassination of Gandhi in January 1948, 14 years later.

During the first years of the Second World War, Gandhi's mission to achieve independence from Britain reached its zenith: he saw no reason why Indians should fight for British sovereignty, in other parts of the world, when they were subjugated at home, which led to the worst instances of civil uprising under his direction, through his 'Quit India' movement. As a result, he was arrested on 9th August 1942, and held for two years at the Aga Khan Palace in Pune. In February 1944, 3 months before his release, his wife Kasturbai died in the same prison.

May 1944, the time of his release from prison, saw the second attempt made on his life, this time certainly led by Nathuram Godse, although the attempt was fairly half-hearted. When word reached Godse that Gandhi was staying in a hill station near Pune, recovering from his prison ordeal, he organised a group of like-minded individuals who descended on the area, and mounted a vocal anti-Gandhi protest. When invited to speak to Gandhi, Godse declined, but he attended a prayer meeting later that day, where he rushed towards Gandhi, brandishing a dagger and shouting anti-Gandhi slogans. He was overpowered swiftly by fellow worshippers, and came nowhere near achieving his goal. Godse was not prosecuted at the time.

Four months later, in September 1944, Godse led a group of Hindu activist demonstrators who accosted Gandhi at a train station, on his return from political talks. Godse was again found to be in possession of a dagger that, although not drawn, was assumed to be the means by which he would again seek to assassinate Gandhi. It was officially regarded as the third assassination attempt, by the commission set up to investigate Gandhi's death in 1948.

The British plan to partition what had been British-ruled India, into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India, was vehemently opposed by Gandhi, who foresaw the problems that would result from the split. Nevertheless, the Congress Party ignored his concerns, and accepted the partition proposals put forward by the British.

The fourth attempt on Gandhi's life took the form of a planned train derailment. On 29th June 1946, a train called the 'Gandhi Special', carrying him and his entourage, was derailed near Bombay, by means of boulders, which had been piled up on the tracks. Since the train was the only one scheduled at that time, it seems likely that the intended target of derailment was Gandhi himself. He was not injured in the accident. At a prayer meeting after the event Gandhi is quoted as saying:

"I have not hurt anybody nor do I consider anybody to be my enemy, I can't understand why there are so many attempts on my life. Yesterday's attempt on my life has failed. I will not die just yet; I aim to live till the age of 125."

Sadly, he had only eighteen months to live.

Placed under increasing pressure, by his political contemporaries, to accept Partition as the only way to avoid civil war in India, Gandhi reluctantly concurred with its political necessity, and India celebrated its

Independence Day on 15th August 1947. Keenly recognising the need for political unity, Gandhi spent the next few months working tirelessly for Hindu-Muslim peace, fearing the build-up of animosity between the two fledgling states, showing remarkable prescience, given the turbulence of their relationship over the following half-century.

Unfortunately, his efforts to unite the opposing forces proved his undoing. He championed the paying of restitution to Pakistan for lost territories, as outlined in the Partition agreement, which parties in India, fearing that Pakistan would use the payment as a means to build a war arsenal, had opposed. He began a fast in support of the payment, which Hindu radicals, Nathuram Godse among them, viewed as traitorous. When the political effect of his fast secured the payment to Pakistan, it secured with it the fifth attempt on his life.

On 20th January a gang of seven Hindu radicals, which included Nathuram Godse, gained access to Birla House, in Delhi, a venue at which Gandhi was due to give an address. One of the men, Madanla Pahwa, managed to gain access to the speaker's podium, and planted a bomb, encased in a cotton ball, on the wall behind the podium. The plan was to explode the bomb during the speech, causing pandemonium, which would give two other gang members, Digambar Bagde and Shankar Kishtaiyya, an opportunity to shoot Gandhi, and escape in the ensuing chaos. The bomb exploded prematurely, before the conference was underway, and Madanla Pahwa was captured, while the others, including Godse, managed to escape.

Pahwa admitted the plot under interrogation, but Delhi police were unable to confirm the participation and whereabouts of Godse, although they did try to ascertain his whereabouts through the Bombay police.

After the failed attempt at Birla House, Nathuram Godse and another of the seven, Narayan Apte, returned to Pune, via Bombay, where they purchased a Beretta automatic pistol, before returning once more to Delhi.

On 30th January 1948, whilst Gandhi was on his way to a prayer meeting at Birla House in Delhi, Nathuram Godse managed to get close enough to him in the crowd to be able to shoot him three times in the chest, at point-blank range. Gandhi's dying words were claimed to be "Hé Rām", which translates as "Oh God", although some witnesses claim he spoke no words at all.

When news of Gandhi's death reached the various strongholds of Hindu radicalism, in Pune and other areas throughout India, there was reputedly celebration in the streets. Sweets were distributed publicly, as at a festival. The rest of the world was horrified by the death of a man nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Godse, who had made no attempt to flee following the assassination, and his co-conspirator, Narayan Apte, were both imprisoned until their trial on 8th November 1949. They were convicted of Gandhi's killing, and both were executed, a week later, at Ambala Jail, on 15th November 1949. The supposed architect of the plot, a Hindu extremist named Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, was acquitted due to lack of evidence.

Gandhi was cremated as per Hindu custom, and his ashes are interred at the Aga Khan's palace in Pune, the site of his incarceration in 1942, and the place his wife had also died.

Gandhi's memorial bears the epigraph "Hé Rām" ("Oh God") although there is no conclusive proof that he uttered these words before death.

Although Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times, he never received it. In the year of his death, 1948, the Prize was not awarded, the stated reason being that "there was no suitable living candidate" that year.

Gandhi's life and teachings have inspired many liberationists of the 20th Century, including Dr. Martin Luther King in the United States, Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko in South Africa, and Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar.

His birthday, 2nd October, is celebrated as a National Holiday in India every year.

Gandhi by B.R. Nanda

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, byname Mahatma (“Great-Souled”) Gandhi (born October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India—died January 30, 1948, Delhi), leader of the Indian nationalist movement against British rule, considered to be the father of his country. He is internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest to achieve political and social progress.

Gandhi was the youngest child of his father’s fourth wife. His father, Karamchand Gandhi, who was the *dewan* (chief minister) of Porbandar, the capital of a small principality in Gujarat in western India under British suzerainty, did not have much in the way of a formal education. He was, however, an able administrator who knew how to steer his way between the capricious princes, their long-suffering subjects, and the headstrong British political officers in power.

Gandhi’s mother, Putlibai, was completely absorbed in religion, did not care much for finery and jewelry, divided her time between her home and the temple, fasted frequently, and wore herself out in days and nights of nursing whenever there was sickness in the family. Mohandas grew up in a home steeped in Vaishnavism—worship of the Hindu god Vishnu—with a strong tinge of Jainism, a morally rigorous Indian religion, whose chief tenets are nonviolence and the belief that everything in the universe is eternal. Thus, he took for granted ahimsa (noninjury to all living beings), vegetarianism, fasting for self-purification, and mutual tolerance between adherents of various creeds and sects.

Youth

The educational facilities at Porbandar were rudimentary; in the primary school that Mohandas attended, the children wrote the alphabet in the dust with their fingers. Luckily for him, his father became *dewan* of Rajkot, another princely state. Though he occasionally won prizes and scholarships at the local schools, his record was on the whole mediocre. One of the terminal reports rated him as “good at English, fair in Arithmetic and weak in Geography; conduct very good, bad handwriting.” A diffident child, he was married at the age of 13 and thus lost a year at school. He shone neither in the classroom nor on the playing field. He loved to go out on long solitary walks when he was not nursing his by now ailing father or helping his mother with her household chores.

He had learned, in his words, “to carry out the orders of the elders, not to scan them.” With such extreme passivity, it is not surprising that he should have gone through a phase of adolescent rebellion, marked by secret atheism, petty thefts, furtive smoking, and—most shocking of all for a boy born in a Vaishnava family—meat eating. His adolescence was probably no stormier than that of most children of his age and class. What was extraordinary was the way his youthful transgressions ended.

“Never again” was his promise to himself after each escapade. And he kept his promise. Beneath an unprepossessing exterior, he concealed a burning passion for self-improvement that led him to take even the heroes of Hindu mythology, such as Prahlada and Harishcandra—legendary embodiments of truthfulness and sacrifice—as living models.

In 1887 Mohandas scraped through the matriculation examination of the University of Bombay and joined Samaldas College in Bhavnagar (Bhaunagar). As he had suddenly to switch from his native language—Gujarati—to English, he found it rather difficult to follow the lectures.

Meanwhile, his family was debating his future. Left to himself, he would have liked to be a doctor. But, besides the Vaishnava prejudice against vivisection, it was clear that, if he was to keep up the family tradition of holding high office in one of the states in Gujarat, he would have to qualify as a barrister. This meant a visit to England, and Mohandas, who was not too happy at Samaldas College, jumped at the proposal. His youthful imagination conceived England as “a land of philosophers and poets, the very centre of civilization.” But there were several hurdles to be crossed before the visit to England could be realized. His father had left little property; moreover, his mother was reluctant to expose her youngest child to unknown temptations and dangers in a distant land. But Mohandas was determined to visit England. One of his brothers raised the necessary money, and his mother’s doubts were allayed when he took a vow that, while away from home, he would not touch wine, women, or meat. Mohandas disregarded the last obstacle—the decree of the leaders of the Modh Bania subcaste (Vaishya caste), to which the Gandhis belonged, who forbade his trip to England as a violation of the Hindu religion—and sailed in September 1888. Ten days after his arrival, he joined the Inner Temple, one of the four London law colleges.

England

Gandhi took his studies seriously and tried to brush up on his English and Latin by taking the London University matriculation examination. But, during the three years he spent in England, his main preoccupation was with personal and moral issues rather than with academic ambitions. The transition from the half-rural atmosphere of Rajkot to the cosmopolitan life of London was not easy for him. As he struggled painfully to adapt himself to Western food, dress, and etiquette, he felt awkward. His vegetarianism became a continual source of embarrassment to him; his friends warned him that it would wreck his studies as well as his health. Fortunately for him he came across a vegetarian restaurant as well as a book providing a reasoned defense of vegetarianism, which henceforth became a matter of conviction for him, not merely a legacy of his Vaishnava background. The missionary zeal he developed for vegetarianism helped to draw the pitifully shy youth out of his shell and gave him a new poise. He became a member of the executive committee of the London Vegetarian Society, attending its conferences and contributing articles to its journal.

In the vegetarian restaurants and boarding houses of England, Gandhi met not only food faddists but some earnest men and women to whom he owed his introduction to the Bible and the Bhagavadgita, the most popular expression of Hinduism in the form of a philosophical poem, which he read for the first time in its English translation by Sir Edwin Arnold. The English vegetarians were a motley crowd. They included socialists and humanitarians like Edward Carpenter, “the British Thoreau”; Fabians like George Bernard Shaw; and Theosophists like Annie Besant. Most of them were idealists; quite a few were rebels who rejected the prevailing values of the late Victorian Establishment, denounced the evils of the capitalist and industrial society, preached the cult of the simple life, and stressed the superiority of moral over material values and of cooperation over conflict. These ideas were to contribute substantially to the shaping of Gandhi’s personality and, eventually, to his politics.

Painful surprises were in store for Gandhi when he returned to India in July 1891. His mother had died in his absence, and he discovered to his dismay that the barrister’s degree was not a guarantee of a lucrative career. The legal profession was already beginning to be overcrowded, and Gandhi was much too diffident to elbow his way into it. In the very first brief he argued in a Bombay court, he cut a sorry figure. Turned down even for the part-time job of a teacher in a Bombay high school, he returned to Rajkot to make a modest living by drafting petitions for litigants. Even this employment was closed to him when he incurred the displeasure of a local British officer. It was, therefore, with some relief that he accepted the none-too-attractive offer of a year’s contract from an Indian firm in Natal, South Africa.

South Africa

Africa was to present to Gandhi challenges and opportunities that he could hardly have conceived. In a Durban court, he was asked by the European magistrate to take off his turban; he refused and left the courtroom. A few days later, while travelling to Pretoria, he was unceremoniously thrown out of a first-class railway compartment and left shivering and brooding at Pietermaritzburg Station; in the further course of the journey he was beaten up by the white driver of a stagecoach because he would not travel on the footboard to make room for a European passenger; and finally he was barred from hotels reserved “for Europeans only.” These humiliations were the daily lot of Indian traders and labourers in Natal who had learned to pocket them with the same resignation with which they pocketed their meagre earnings. What was new was not Gandhi’s experience but his reaction. He had so far not been conspicuous for self-assertion or aggressiveness. But something happened to him as he smarted under the insults heaped upon him. In retrospect the journey from Durban to Pretoria struck him as one of the most creative experiences of his life; it was his moment of truth. Henceforth he would not accept injustice as part of the natural or unnatural order in South Africa; he would defend his dignity as an Indian and as a man.

While in Pretoria, Gandhi studied the conditions in which his countrymen lived and tried to educate them on their rights and duties, but he had no intention of staying on in South Africa. Indeed, in June 1894, as his year’s contract drew to a close, he was back in Durban, ready to sail for India. At a farewell party given in his honour he happened to glance through the *Natal Mercury* and learned that the Natal Legislative Assembly was considering a bill to deprive Indians of the right to vote. “This is the first nail in our coffin,” Gandhi told his hosts. They professed their inability to oppose the bill, and indeed their ignorance of the politics of the colony, and begged him to take up the fight on their behalf.

Until the age of 18, Gandhi had hardly ever read a newspaper. Neither as a student in England nor as a budding barrister in India had he evinced much interest in politics. Indeed, he was overcome by a terrifying stage fright whenever he stood up to read a speech at a social gathering or to defend a client in court. Nevertheless, in July 1894, when he was barely 25, he blossomed almost overnight into a proficient political campaigner. He drafted petitions to the Natal legislature and the British government and had them signed by hundreds of his compatriots. He could not prevent the passage of the bill but succeeded in drawing the attention of the public and the press in Natal, India, and England to the Natal Indians’ grievances. He was persuaded to settle down in Durban to practice law and to organize the Indian community. In 1894, he founded the Natal Indian Congress of which he himself became the indefatigable secretary. Through this common political organization, he infused a spirit of solidarity in the heterogeneous Indian community. He flooded the government, the legislature, and the press with closely reasoned statements of Indian grievances. Finally, he exposed to the view of the outside world the skeleton in the imperial cupboard, the discrimination practiced against the Indian subjects of Queen Victoria in one of her own colonies in Africa. It was a measure of his success as a publicist that such important newspapers as *The Times* of London and the *Statesman* and *Englishman* of Calcutta editorially commented on the Natal Indians’ grievances.

In 1896 Gandhi went to India to fetch his wife Kasturbai and their children and to canvass support for the Indians overseas. He met prominent leaders and persuaded them to address public meetings in the country’s principal cities. Unfortunately for him, garbled versions of his activities and utterances reached Natal and inflamed its European population. On landing at Durban in January 1897, he was assaulted and nearly lynched by a white mob. Joseph Chamberlain, the colonial secretary in the British Cabinet, cabled the government of Natal to bring the guilty men to book, but Gandhi refused to prosecute his assailants. It was, he said, a principle with him not to seek redress of a personal wrong in a court of law.

Resistance and Results

Gandhi was not the man to nurse a grudge. On the outbreak of the South African (Boer) War in 1899, he argued that the Indians, who claimed the full rights of citizenship in the British crown colony of Natal, were in duty

bound to defend it. He raised an ambulance corps of 1,100 volunteers, out of whom 300 were free Indians and the rest indentured labourers. It was a motley crowd: barristers and accountants, artisans and labourers. It was Gandhi's task to instill in them a spirit of service to those whom they regarded as their oppressors. The editor of the *Pretoria News* offered an insightful portrait of Gandhi in the battle zone:

After a night's work which had shattered men with much bigger frames, I came across Gandhi in the early morning sitting by the roadside eating a regulation army biscuit. Every man in (General) Buller's force was dull and depressed, and damnation was heartily invoked on everything. But Gandhi was stoical in his bearing, cheerful and confident in his conversation and had a kindly eye.

The British victory in the war brought little relief to the Indians in South Africa. The new regime in South Africa was to blossom into a partnership, but only between Boers and Britons. Gandhi saw that, with the exception of a few Christian missionaries and youthful idealists, he had been unable to make a perceptible impression upon the South African Europeans. In 1906 the Transvaal government published a particularly humiliating ordinance for the registration of its Indian population. The Indians held a mass protest meeting at Johannesburg in September 1906 and, under Gandhi's leadership, took a pledge to defy the ordinance if it became law in the teeth of their opposition, and to suffer all the penalties resulting from their defiance. Thus was born satyagraha ("devotion to truth"), a new technique for redressing wrongs through inviting, rather than inflicting, suffering, for resisting the adversary without rancour and fighting him without violence.

The struggle in South Africa lasted for more than seven years. It had its ups and downs, but under Gandhi's leadership, the small Indian minority kept up its resistance against heavy odds. Hundreds of Indians chose to sacrifice their livelihood and liberty rather than submit to laws repugnant to their conscience and self-respect. In the final phase of the movement in 1913, hundreds of Indians, including women, went to jail, and thousands of Indian workers who had struck work in the mines bravely faced imprisonment, flogging, and even shooting. It was a terrible ordeal for the Indians, but it was also the worst possible advertisement for the South African government, which, under pressure from the governments of Britain and India, accepted a compromise negotiated by Gandhi on the one hand and the South African statesman General Jan Christian Smuts on the other.

"The saint has left our shores," Smuts wrote to a friend on Gandhi's departure from South Africa for India, in July 1914, "I hope for ever." Twenty-five years later, he wrote that it had been his "fate to be the antagonist of a man for whom even then I had the highest respect." Once, during his not infrequent stays in jail, Gandhi had prepared a pair of sandals for Smuts, who recalled that there was no hatred and personal ill-feeling between them, and when the fight was over "there was the atmosphere in which a decent peace could be concluded."

As later events were to show, Gandhi's work did not provide an enduring solution for the Indian problem in South Africa. What he did to South Africa was indeed less important than what South Africa did to him. It had not treated him kindly, but, by drawing him into the vortex of its racial problem, it had provided him with the ideal setting in which his peculiar talents could unfold themselves.

Emergence as Leader of Nationalist India

From 1915 to 1918, Gandhi seemed to hover uncertainly on the periphery of Indian politics, declining to join any political agitation, supporting the British war effort in World War I, and even recruiting soldiers for the British Indian Army. At the same time, he did not flinch from criticizing the British officials for any acts of high-handedness or from taking up the grievances of the long-suffering peasantry in Bihar and Gujarat. Not until February 1919, provoked by the British insistence on pushing through the Rowlatt Bills, which empowered the authorities to imprison without trial those suspected of sedition, in the teeth of Indian opposition, did Gandhi reveal a sense of estrangement from the British Raj. He announced a satyagraha struggle. The result was a virtual political earthquake that shook the subcontinent in the spring of 1919. The violent outbreaks that followed—leading, among other incidents, to the killing by British-led soldiers of nearly

400 Indians attending a meeting at Amritsar in the Punjab and the enactment of martial law—prompted him to stay his hand. But within a year he was again in a militant mood, having in the meantime been irrevocably alienated by British insensitiveness to Indian feeling on the Punjab tragedy and Muslim resentment on the peace terms offered to Turkey following World War I.

By the autumn of 1920, Gandhi was the dominant figure on the political stage, commanding an influence never attained by any political leader in India or perhaps in any other country. He refashioned the 35-year-old Indian National Congress into an effective political instrument of Indian nationalism: from a three-day Christmas-week picnic of the upper middle class in one of the principal cities of India, it became a mass organization with its roots in small towns and villages. Gandhi's message was simple; it was not British guns but imperfections of Indians themselves that kept their country in bondage. His program of nonviolent noncooperation with the British government included boycott not only of British manufactures but of institutions operated or aided by the British in India: legislatures, courts, offices, schools. This program electrified the country, broke the spell of fear of foreign rule, and led to arrests of thousands of *satyagrahis*, who defied laws and cheerfully lined up for prison. In February 1922 the movement seemed to be on the crest of a rising wave, but, alarmed by a violent outbreak in Chauri Chaura, a remote village in eastern India, Gandhi decided to call off mass civil disobedience. This was a blow to many of his followers, who feared that his self-imposed restraints and scruples would reduce the nationalist struggle to pious futility. Gandhi himself was arrested on March 10, 1922, tried for sedition, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. He was released in February 1924, after an operation for appendicitis. The political landscape had changed in his absence. The Congress Party had split into two factions, one under Chitta Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru (the father of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister) favouring the entry of the party into legislatures and the other under C. Rajagopalachari and Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel opposing it. Worst of all, the unity between Hindus and Muslims of the heyday of the noncooperation movement of 1920–22 had dissolved. Gandhi tried to draw the warring communities out of their suspicion and fanaticism by reasoning and persuasion. And finally, after a serious communal outbreak, he undertook a three-week fast in the autumn of 1924 to arouse the people into following the path of nonviolence.

During the mid-1920s Gandhi took little interest in active politics and was considered a spent force. But in 1927 the British government appointed a constitutional reform commission under Sir John Simon, a prominent English lawyer and politician, that did not contain a single Indian. When the Congress and other parties boycotted the commission, the political tempo rose. After the Calcutta Congress in December 1928, where Gandhi moved the crucial resolution demanding dominion status from the British government within a year under threat of a nationwide nonviolent campaign for complete independence, Gandhi was back at the helm of the Congress Party. In March 1930 he launched the satyagraha against the tax on salt, which affected the poorest section of the community. One of the most spectacular and successful campaigns in Gandhi's nonviolent war against the British Raj, it resulted in the imprisonment of more than 60,000 persons. A year later, after talks with Lord Irwin, Gandhi accepted a truce, called off civil disobedience, and agreed to attend the Round Table Conference in London as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress.

The conference, which concentrated on the problem of the Indian minorities rather than on the transfer of power from the British, was a great disappointment to the Indian nationalists. Moreover, when Gandhi returned to India in December 1931 he found his party facing an all-out offensive from Lord Irwin's successor, Lord Willingdon, who unleashed the sternest repression in the history of the nationalist movement. Gandhi was once more imprisoned, and the government tried to insulate him from the outside world and to destroy his influence. This was not an easy task. Gandhi soon regained the initiative. In September 1932, while still a prisoner, he embarked on a fast to protest against the British government's decision to segregate the so-called "untouchables" (the depressed classes) by allotting them separate electorates in the new constitution. The fast produced an emotional upheaval in the country, and an alternative electoral arrangement was jointly and speedily devised by the leaders of the Hindu community and the untouchables and endorsed by the British government. The fast became the starting point of a vigorous campaign for the removal of the disabilities of the untouchables, whom Gandhi referred to as Harijans, or "children of God." (That term has fallen out of favour, replaced by Dalit; Scheduled Castes is the official designation.)

In 1934 Gandhi resigned not only as the leader but also as a member of the Congress Party. He had come to believe that its leading members had adopted nonviolence as a political expedient and not as the fundamental creed it was for him. In place of political activity he now concentrated on his “constructive programme” of building the nation “from the bottom up”—educating rural India, which accounted for 85 percent of the population; continuing his fight against untouchability; promoting handspinning, weaving, and other cottage industries to supplement the earnings of the underemployed peasantry; and evolving a system of education best suited to the needs of the people. Gandhi himself went to live at Sevagram, a village in central India, which became the centre of his program of social and economic uplift.

The Last Phase

With the outbreak of World War II, the nationalist struggle in India entered its last crucial phase. Gandhi hated fascism and all it stood for, but he also hated war. The Indian National Congress, on the other hand, was not committed to pacifism and was prepared to support the British war effort if Indian self-government was assured. Once more Gandhi became politically active. The failure of the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps, a British cabinet minister, who came to India in March 1942 with an offer that Gandhi found unacceptable, the British equivocation on the transfer of power to Indian hands, and the encouragement given by high British officials to conservative and communal forces promoting discord between Muslims and Hindus impelled him to demand in the summer of 1942 an immediate British withdrawal from India. The war against the Axis, particularly Japan, was in a critical phase; the British reacted sharply by imprisoning the entire Congress leadership and set out to crush the party once and for all. There were violent outbreaks that were sternly suppressed; the gulf between Britain and India became wider than ever.

A new chapter in Indo-British relations opened with the victory of the Labour Party in 1945. During the next two years, there were prolonged triangular negotiations between leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League under M.A. Jinnah and the British government culminating in the Mountbatten Plan of June 3, 1947, and the formation of the two new dominions of India and Pakistan in mid-August 1947.

It was one of the greatest disappointments of Gandhi’s life that Indian freedom was realized without Indian unity. Muslim separatism had received a great boost while Gandhi and his colleagues were in jail, and in 1946–47, as the final constitutional arrangements were being negotiated, the outbreak of communal riots between Hindus and Muslims unhappily created a climate in which Gandhi’s appeals to reason and justice, tolerance and trust had little chance. When partition of the subcontinent was accepted—against his advice—he threw himself heart and soul into the task of healing the scars of the communal conflict, toured the riot-torn areas in Bengal and Bihar, admonished the bigots, consoled the victims, and tried to rehabilitate the refugees. In the atmosphere of that period, surcharged with suspicion and hatred, this was a difficult and heartbreaking task. Gandhi was blamed by partisans of both the communities. When persuasion failed, he went on a fast. He won at least two spectacular triumphs; in September 1947 his fasting stopped the rioting in Calcutta, and in January 1948, he shamed the city of Delhi into a communal truce. A few days later, on January 30, while he was on his way to his evening prayer meeting in Delhi, he was shot down by Nathuram Godse, a young Hindu fanatic. (See ‘Funeral procession for Mahatma Gandhi.’)

Place in History

The British attitude to Gandhi was one of mingled admiration, amusement, bewilderment, suspicion, and resentment. Except for a tiny minority of Christian missionaries and radical socialists, the British tended to see in him at best a utopian visionary, at worst a cunning hypocrite whose professions of friendship for the British race were a mask for subversion of the British Raj. Gandhi was conscious of the existence of this wall of prejudice, and it was part of the strategy of satyagraha to penetrate it.

His three major campaigns in 1920–22, 1930–34, and 1940–42 were well designed to engender that process of self-doubt and questioning that was to undermine the moral defences of his adversaries and to contribute,

together with the objective realities of the postwar world, to producing the grant of dominion status in 1947. The British abdication in India was the first step in the liquidation of the British Empire on the continents of Asia and Africa. Gandhi's image as an archrebel died hard, but, as it had done to the memory of George Washington, Britain, in 1969, the centenary year of Gandhi's birth, erected a statue to his memory.

Gandhi had critics in his own country, and indeed in his own party. The liberal leaders protested that he was going too fast; the young radicals complained that he was not going fast enough; left-wing politicians alleged that he was not serious about evicting the British or liquidating such vested Indian interests as princes and landlords; the leaders of the untouchables doubted his good faith as a social reformer; and Muslim leaders accused him of partiality to his own community.

Recent research has established Gandhi's role as a great mediator and reconciler. His talents in this direction were applied to conflicts between the older moderate politicians and the young radicals, the political terrorists and the parliamentarians, the urban intelligentsia and the rural masses, the traditionalists and the modernists, the caste Hindus and the untouchables, the Hindus and the Muslims, and the Indians and the British.

It was inevitable that Gandhi's role as a political leader should loom larger in public imagination, but the mainspring of his life lay in religion, not in politics. And religion for him did not mean formalism, dogma, ritual, or sectarianism. "What I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years," he wrote in his autobiography, "is to see God face to face." His deepest strivings were spiritual, but unlike many of his countrymen with such aspirations, he did not retire to a cave in the Himalayas to meditate on the Absolute; he carried his cave, as he once said, within him. For him truth was not something to be discovered in the privacy of one's personal life; it had to be upheld in the challenging contexts of social and political life.

In the eyes of millions of his countrymen, he was the Mahatma (the great soul). The unthinking adoration of the huge crowds that gathered to see him all along his route made his tours a severe ordeal; he could hardly work during the day or rest at night. "The woes of the Mahatmas," he wrote, "are known only to the Mahatmas."

Gandhi won the affection and loyalty of gifted men and women, old and young, with vastly dissimilar talents and temperaments; of Europeans of every religious persuasion; and of Indians of almost every political line. Few of his political colleagues went all the way with him and accepted nonviolence as a creed; fewer still shared his food fads, his interest in mudpacks and nature cure, or his prescription of brahmacharya, complete renunciation of the pleasures of the flesh.

Gandhi's ideas on sex may sound quaint and unscientific. His marriage at the age of 13 seems to have complicated his attitude to sex and charged it with feelings of guilt, but it is important to remember that total sublimation, according to the best tradition of Hindu thought, is indispensable for those who seek self-realization, and brahmacharya was for Gandhi part of a larger discipline in food, sleep, thought, prayer, and daily activity designed to equip himself for service of the causes to which he was totally committed. What he failed to see was that his own unique experience was no guide for the common man.

It is probably too early to judge Gandhi's place in history. He was the catalyst if not the initiator of three of the major revolutions of the 20th century: the revolutions against colonialism, racism, and violence. He wrote copiously; the collected edition of his writings runs to more than 80 volumes.

Much of what he wrote was in response to the needs of his co-workers and disciples and the exigencies of the political situation, but on fundamentals, he maintained a remarkable consistency, as is evident from the *Hind Swaraj* ("Indian Home Rule") published in South Africa in 1909. The strictures on Western materialism and colonialism, the reservations about industrialism and urbanization, the distrust of the modern state, and the total rejection of violence that was expressed in this book seemed romantic, if not reactionary, to the pre-World War I generation in India and the West, which had not known the shocks of two global wars, experienced the phenomenon of Hitler, and the trauma of the atom bomb. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's objective of

promoting a just and egalitarian order at home, and nonalignment with military blocs abroad doubtless owed much to Gandhi, but neither he nor his colleagues in the Indian nationalist movement wholly accepted the Gandhian models in politics and economics.

In recent years Gandhi's name has been invoked by the organizers of numerous demonstrations and movements, but with a few outstanding exceptions—such as those of his disciple the land reformer Vinoba Bhave in India and the black civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., in the United States—these movements have been a travesty of the ideas of Gandhi.

Yet Gandhi will probably never lack champions. Erik H. Erikson, a distinguished American psychoanalyst, in his study of Gandhi senses “an affinity between Gandhi's truth and the insights of modern psychology.” One of the greatest admirers of Gandhi was Albert Einstein, who saw in Gandhi's nonviolence a possible antidote to the massive violence unleashed by the fission of the atom. And Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish economist, after his survey of the socioeconomic problems of the underdeveloped world, pronounced Gandhi “in practically all fields an enlightened liberal.” In a time of deepening crisis in the underdeveloped world, of social malaise in the affluent societies, of the shadow of unbridled technology and the precarious peace of nuclear terror, it seems likely that Gandhi's ideas and techniques will become increasingly relevant.

Works

Non-violent Resistance (Satyagraha): This volume focuses on Gandhi's vision of Satyagraha, whereby one appeals to reason and conscience and puts an end to evil by converting the evil-doer. The book begins with an explanation of Satyagraha and proceeds with detailed discussions of the self-training and courage necessary for Satyagraha

Gandhi on Non-violence: Contains selected texts from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi in which he expressed his philosophy of non-violence and non-violent action, and includes an introductory essay by editor Thomas Merton

All Men are Brothers; Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi: Famous for his successful leadership of non-violent Nationalist resistance to British Imperial rule in India, Mohandas K. Gandhi is one of the most iconic figures of the twentieth century. All Men Are Brothers brings together some of his most important writings in a single volume. As well as Gandhi's inspiring articulation of his philosophy of non-violent resistance and his thoughts on religion and theology, the book also includes reflections on topics ranging from politics, education, women's rights and technology as well as meditations on his own life.

Hind Swaraj and Other Writings: Hind Swaraj is a key to understanding not only Gandhi's life and thought but also the politics of South Asia in the first half of the 20th century. In the introduction Parel sets the work in its historical and political contexts

Satyagraha in South Africa: The Satyagraha struggle of the Indians in South Africa lasted eight years. The term "Satyagraha" was invented and employed in connection therewith. I had long entertained a desire to write a history of that struggle myself. Some things only I could write...And as this was the first attempt to apply the principle of Satyagraha to politics on a large scale, it is necessary any that the public should have an idea of its development. --M. K. Gandhi

An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth: Translated by Mahadev Desai The first edition of Gandhiji's Autobiography was published in two volumes, Vol. I in 1927 and Vol. II in 1929. The original in Gujarati which was priced at Re. 1/- has run through five editions, nearly 50,000 copies having been sold. The price of the English translation (only issued in library edition) was prohibitive for the Indian reader, and a cheap edition has long been needed.-- Excerpted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Young India 1919-1922

Gandhi on Christianity

Non-violence in Peace and War

Hind Swaraj, or, Indian Home Rule

Unit III

T. S. Eliot

Life and Career by Ronald Bush

Eliot, T. S. (26 Sept. 1888-4 Jan. 1965), poet, critic, and editor, was born Thomas Stearns Eliot in St. Louis, Missouri, the son of Henry Ware Eliot, president of the Hydraulic-Press Brick Company, and Charlotte Champe Stearns, a former teacher, an energetic social work volunteer at the Humanity Club of St. Louis, and an amateur poet with a taste for Emerson. Eliot was the youngest of seven children, born when his parents were prosperous and secure in their mid-forties (his father had recovered from an earlier business failure) and his siblings were half grown. Afflicted with a congenital double hernia, he was in the constant eye of his mother and five older sisters. His paternal grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, had been a protégé of William Ellery Channing, the dean of American Unitarianism. William Eliot graduated from Harvard Divinity School, then moved toward the frontier. He founded the Unitarian church in St. Louis and soon became a pillar of the then southwestern city's religious and civic life. Because of William's ties to St. Louis, the Eliot family chose to remain in their urban Locust Street home long after the area had run down and their peers had moved to the suburbs. Left in the care of his Irish nurse, Annie Dunne, who sometimes took him to Catholic Mass, Eliot knew both the city's muddy streets and its exclusive drawing rooms. He attended Smith Academy in St. Louis until he was sixteen. During his last year at Smith he visited the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and was so taken with the fair's native villages that he wrote short stories about primitive life for the Smith Academy *Record*. In 1905 he departed for a year at Milton Academy outside of Boston, preparatory to following his older brother Henry to Harvard.

Eliot's attending Harvard seems to have been a foregone conclusion. His father and mother, jealously guarding their connection to Boston's Unitarian establishment, brought the family back to the north shore every summer, and in 1896 built a substantial house at Eastern Point, in Gloucester, Massachusetts. As a boy, Eliot foraged for crabs and became an accomplished sailor, trading the Mississippi River in the warm months for the rocky shoals of Cape Ann. Later he said that he gave up a sense of belonging to either region, that he always felt like a New Englander in the Southwest, and a Southwesterner in New England (preface to Edgar Ansel Mowrer, *This American World* [1928]).

Despite his feelings of alienation from both of the regions he called home, Eliot impressed many classmates with his social ease when he began his studies at Harvard in the fall of 1906. Like his brother Henry before him, Eliot lived his freshman year in a fashionable private dormitory in a posh neighborhood around Mt. Auburn Street known as the "Gold Coast." He joined a number of clubs, including the literary Signet. And he began a romantic attachment to Emily Hale, a refined Bostonian who once played Mrs. Elton opposite his Mr. Woodhouse in an amateur production of *Emma*. Among his teachers, Eliot was drawn to the forceful moralizing of Irving Babbitt and the stylish skepticism of George Santayana, both of whom reinforced his distaste for the reform-minded, progressive university shaped by Eliot's cousin, Charles William Eliot. His attitudes, however, did not prevent him from taking advantage of the elective system that President Eliot had introduced. As a freshman, his courses were so eclectic that he soon wound up on academic probation. He recovered and persisted, attaining a B.A. in an elective program best described as comparative literature in three years, and an M.A. in English literature in the fourth.

In December 1908 a book Eliot found in the Harvard Union library changed his life: Arthur Symonds's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1895) introduced him to the poetry of Jules Laforgue, and Laforgue's combination of ironic elegance and psychological nuance gave his juvenile literary efforts a voice. By 1909-1910 his poetic vocation had been confirmed: he joined the board and was briefly secretary of Harvard's literary magazine, the *Advocate*, and he could recommend to his classmate William Tinkom-Fernandez the last word in French sophistication--the Vers Libre of Paul Fort and Francis Jammes. (Tinkom-Fernandez returned the favor by introducing Eliot to Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" and John Davidson's "Thirty Bob a Week," poems Eliot took to heart, and to the verse of Ezra Pound, which Eliot had no time for.) On the *Advocate*, Eliot started a lifelong friendship with Conrad Aiken.

In May 1910 a suspected case of scarlet fever almost prevented Eliot's graduation. By fall, though, he was well enough to undertake a postgraduate year in Paris. He lived at 151 bis rue St. Jacques, close to the Sorbonne, and struck up a warm friendship with a fellow lodger, Jean Verdenal, a medical student who later died in the battle of the Dardenelles and to whom Eliot dedicated "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." With Verdenal, he entered the intellectual life of France then swirling, Eliot later recalled, around the figures of Émile Durkheim, Paul Janet, Rémy de Gourmont, Pablo Picasso, and Henri Bergson. Eliot attended Bergson's lectures at the College de France and was temporarily converted to Bergson's philosophical interest in the progressive evolution of consciousness. In a manner characteristic of a lifetime of conflicting attitudes, though, Eliot also gravitated toward the politically conservative (indeed monarchistic), neoclassical, and Catholic writing of Charles Maurras. Warring opposites, these enthusiasms worked together to foster a professional interest in philosophy and propelled Eliot back to a doctoral program at Harvard the next year.

In 1910 and 1911 Eliot copied into a leather notebook the poems that would establish his reputation: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "Portrait of a Lady," "La Figlia Che Piange," "Preludes," and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night." Combining some of the robustness of Robert Browning's monologues with the incantatory elegance of symbolist verse, and compacting Laforgue's poetry of alienation with the moral earnestness of what Eliot once called "Boston doubt," these poems explore the subtleties of the unconscious with a caustic wit. Their effect was both unique and compelling, and their assurance staggered his contemporaries who were privileged to read them in manuscript. Aiken, for example, marveled at "how sharp and complete and sui generis the whole thing was, from the outset. The *wholeness* is there, from the very beginning."

In the fall of 1911, though, Eliot was as preoccupied with ideas as with literature. A student in what has been called the golden age of Harvard philosophy, he worked amid a group that included Santayana, William James, the visiting Bertrand Russell, and Josiah Royce. Under Royce's direction, Eliot wrote a dissertation on Bergson's neoidealist critic F. H. Bradley and produced a searching philosophical critique of the psychology of consciousness. He also deepened his reading in anthropology and religion, and took almost as many courses in Sanskrit and Hindu thought as he did in philosophy. By 1914, when he left on a traveling fellowship to Europe, he had persuaded a number of Harvard's philosophers to regard him as a potential colleague.

Eliot spent the early summer of 1914 at a seminar in Marburg, Germany, with plans to study in the fall at Merton College, Oxford, with Harold Joachim, Bradley's colleague and successor. The impending war quickened his departure. In August he was in London with Aiken and by September Aiken had shown Eliot's manuscript poems to Pound, who, not easily impressed, was won over. Pound called on Eliot in late September and wrote to Harriet Monroe at *Poetry* magazine that Eliot had "actually trained himself and modernized himself *on his own*." The two initiated a collaboration that would change Anglo-American poetry, but not before Eliot put down deep English roots.

In early spring 1915 Eliot's old Milton Academy and Harvard friend Scofield Thayer, later editor of the *Dial* and then also at Oxford, introduced Eliot to Vivien Haigh-Wood, a dancer and a friend of Thayer's sister. Eliot was drawn instantly to Vivien's exceptional frankness and charmed by her family's Hampstead polish. Abandoning his habitual tentativeness with women, in June 1915 he married Vivien on impulse at the Hampstead Registry Office. His parents were shocked, and then, when they learned of Vivien's history of

emotional and physical problems, profoundly disturbed. The marriage nearly caused a family break, but it also indelibly marked the beginning of Eliot's English life. Vivien refused to cross the Atlantic in wartime, and Eliot took his place in literary London. They were to have no children.

Eliot and his wife at first turned to Bertrand Russell, who shared with them both his London flat and his considerable social resources. Russell and Vivien, however, became briefly involved, and the arrangement soured. Meanwhile Eliot tried desperately to support himself by teaching school, supplemented by a heavy load of reviewing and extension lecturing. To placate his worried parents, he labored on with his Ph.D. thesis, "Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley." (Eliot finished it in April 1916, but did not receive his degree because he was reluctant to undertake the trip to Massachusetts required for his dissertation defense.) As yet one more stimulating but taxing activity, he became assistant editor of the avant-garde magazine the *Egoist*. Then in spring 1917 he found steady employment; his knowledge of languages qualified him for a job in the foreign section of Lloyds Bank, where he evaluated a broad range of continental documents.

The job gave him the security he needed to turn back to poetry, and in 1917 he received an enormous boost from the publication of his first book, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, printed by the *Egoist* with the silent financial support of Ezra and Dorothy Pound.

For a struggling young American, Eliot had acquired extraordinary access to the British intellectual set. With Russell's help he was invited to country-house weekends where visitors ranged from political figures like Herbert Henry Asquith to a constellation of Bloomsbury writers, artists, and philosophers. At the same time Pound facilitated his entry into the international avant-garde, where Eliot mixed with a group including the aging Irish poet William Butler Yeats, the English painter and novelist Wyndham Lewis, and the Italian Futurist writer Tamaso Marinetti. More accomplished than Pound in the manners of the drawing room, Eliot gained a reputation in the world of belles-lettres as an observer who could shrewdly judge both accepted and experimental art from a platform of apparently enormous learning. It did not hurt that he calculated his interventions carefully, publishing only what was of first quality and creating around himself an aura of mystery. In 1920 he collected a second slim volume of verse, *Poems*, and a volume of criticism, *The Sacred Wood*. Both displayed a winning combination of erudition and jazzy bravura, and both built upon the understated discipline of a decade of philosophical seriousness. Eliot was meanwhile proofreading the *Egoist's* serial publication of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and, with Pound's urging, starting to think of himself as part of an experimental movement in modern art and literature.

Yet the years of Eliot's literary maturation were accompanied by increasing family worries. Eliot's father died in January 1919, producing a paroxysm of guilt in the son who had hoped he would have time to heal the bad feelings caused by his marriage and emigration. At the same time Vivien's emotional and physical health deteriorated, and the financial and emotional strain of her condition took its toll. After an extended visit in the summer of 1921 from his mother and sister Marion, Eliot suffered a nervous collapse and, on his physician's advice, took a three month's rest cure, first on the coast at Margate and then at a sanitarium Russell's friend Lady Ottoline Morell recommended at Lausanne, Switzerland.

Whether because of the breakdown or the long needed rest it imposed, Eliot broke through a severe writer's block and completed a long poem he had been working on since 1919. Assembled out of dramatic vignettes based on Eliot's London life, *The Waste Land's* extraordinary intensity stems from a sudden fusing of diverse materials into a rhythmic whole of great skill and daring. Though it would be forced into the mold of an academic set piece on the order of Milton's "Lycidas," *The Waste Land* was at first correctly perceived as a work of jazzlike syncopation--and, like 1920s jazz, essentially iconoclastic. A poem suffused with Eliot's horror of life, it was taken over by the postwar generation as a rallying cry for its sense of disillusionment. Pound, who helped pare and sharpen the poem when Eliot stopped in Paris on his way to and from Lausanne, praised it with a godparent's fervor. As important, Eliot's old friend Thayer, by then publisher of the *Dial*, decided even before he had seen the finished poem to make it the centerpiece of the magazine's attempt to establish American letters

in the vanguard of modern culture. To secure *The Waste Land* for the *Dial*, Thayer arranged in 1922 to award Eliot the magazine's annual prize of two thousand dollars and to trumpet *The Waste Land's* importance with an essay commissioned from the *Dial's* already influential Edmund Wilson. It did not hurt that 1922 also saw the long-heralded publication of *Ulysses*, or that in 1923 Eliot linked himself and Joyce with Einstein in the public mind in an essay entitled "*Ulysses, Order and Myth*." Meteorically, Eliot, Joyce, and, to a lesser extent, Pound were joined in a single glow--each nearly as notorious as Picasso.

The masterstroke of Eliot's career was to parlay the success of *The Waste Land* by means of an equally ambitious effort of a more traditional literary kind. With Jacques Riviere's *La Nouvelle Revue Française* in mind, in 1922 Eliot jumped at an offer from Lady Rothermere, wife of the publisher of the *Daily Mail*, to edit a high-profile literary journal. The first number of the *Criterion* appeared in October 1922. Like *The Waste Land*, it took the whole of European culture in its sights. The *Criterion's* editorial voice placed Eliot at the center of London writing.

Eliot, however, was too consumed by domestic anxiety to appreciate his success. In 1923 Vivien nearly died, and Eliot, in despair, came close to a second breakdown. The next two years were almost as bad, until a lucky chance allowed him to escape from the demands of his job at the bank. Geoffrey Faber, of the new publishing firm of Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber), saw the advantages of Eliot's dual expertise in business and letters and recruited him as literary editor. At about the same time, Eliot reached out for religious support. Having long found his family's Unitarianism unsatisfying, he turned to the Anglican church. The seeds of his future faith can be found in *The Hollow Men*, though the poem was read as a sequel to *The Waste Land's* philosophical despair when it appeared in *Poems 1909-1925* (1925). In June 1927 few followers were prepared for Eliot's baptism into the Church of England. And so, within five years of his avant-garde success, Eliot provoked a second storm. The furor grew in November 1927 when Eliot took British citizenship, and again in 1928 when he collected a group of politically conservative essays under the title of *For Lancelot Andrewes*, prefacing them with a declaration that he considered himself a "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion." Eliot's poetry now addressed explicitly religious situations. In the late 1920s he published a series of shorter poems in Faber's Ariel series--short pieces issued in pamphlet form within striking modern covers. These included "Journey of the Magi" (1927), "A Song for Simeon" (1928), "Animula" (1929), "Marina" (1930), and "Triumphal March" (1931). Steeped in Eliot's contemporary study of Dante and the late Shakespeare, all of them meditate on spiritual growth and anticipate the longer and more celebrated *Ash-Wednesday* (1930). "Journey of the Magi" and "A Song for Simeon" are also exercises in Browningsque dramatic monologues, and speak to Eliot's desire, pronounced since 1922, to exchange the symbolist fluidity of the psychological lyric for a more traditional dramatic form.

Eliot spent much of the last half of his career writing one kind of drama or another, and attempting to reach (and bring together) a larger and more varied audience. As early as 1923 he had written parts of an experimental and striking jazz play, *Sweeney Agonistes* (never finished, it was published in fragments in 1932 and performed by actors in masks by London's Group Theatre in 1934). In early 1934 he composed a church pageant with accompanying choruses entitled *The Rock*, performed in May and June 1934 at Sadler's Wells. Almost immediately following these performances, Bishop Bell commissioned a church drama having to do with Canterbury Cathedral, which, as *Murder in the Cathedral*, was performed in the Chapter House at Canterbury in June 1935 and was moved to the Mercury Theatre at Notting Hill Gate in November and eventually to the Old Vic. In the late 1930s, Eliot attempted to conflate a drama of spiritual crisis with a Noël Coward-inspired contemporary theater of social manners. Though Eliot based *The Family Reunion* on the plot of Aeschylus's *Eumenides*, he designed it to tell a story of Christian redemption. The play opened in the West End in March 1939 and closed to mixed reviews five weeks later. Eliot was disheartened, but after the war fashioned more popular (though less powerful) combinations of the same elements to much greater success. *The Cocktail Party*, modernizing Euripides's *Alceste* with some of the insouciance of Noël Coward, with a cast that included Alec Guinness, opened to a warm critical reception at the Edinburgh Festival in August 1949 and enjoyed popular success starting on Broadway in January 1950. Eliot's last two plays were more labored and fared less well. *The Confidential Clerk* had a respectable run at the Lyric Theatre in London in September 1953, and *The Elder*

Statesman premiered at the Edinburgh Festival in August 1958 and closed after a lukewarm run in London in the fall.

Eliot's reputation as a poet and man of letters, increasing incrementally from the mid-1920s, advanced and far outstripped his theatrical success. As early as 1926 he delivered the prestigious Clark Lectures at Cambridge University, followed in 1932-1933 by the Norton Lectures at Harvard, and just about every other honor the academy or the literary world had to offer. In 1948 Eliot received the Nobel Prize for literature during a fellowship stay at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study. By 1950 his authority had reached a level that seemed comparable in English writing to that of figures like Samuel Johnson or Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Ironically, after 1925 Eliot's marriage steadily deteriorated, turning his public success hollow. During the tenure of his Norton year at Harvard he separated from Vivien, but would not consider divorce because of his Anglican beliefs. For most of the 1930s he secluded himself from Vivien's often histrionic attempts to embarrass him into a reconciliation, and made an anguished attempt to order his life around his editorial duties at Faber's and the *Criterion* and around work at his Kensington church. He also reestablished communication with Emily Hale, especially after 1934, when she began summering with relatives in the Cotswolds. Out of his thinking of "what might have been," associated with their visit to an abandoned great house, Eliot composed "Burnt Norton," published as the last poem in his *Collected Poems 1909-1935* (1936). With its combination of symbolist indirection and meditative gravity, "Burnt Norton" gave Eliot the model for another decade of major verse.

In 1938 Vivien was committed to Northumberland House, a mental hospital north of London. In 1939, with the war impending, the *Criterion*, which had occupied itself with the deepening political crisis of Europe, ceased publication. During the Blitz, Eliot served as an air-raid warden, but spent long weekends as a guest with friends near Guildford in the country. In these circumstances, he wrote three more poems, each more somber than the last, patterned on the voice and five-part structure of "Burnt Norton." "East Coker" was published at Easter 1940 and took its title from the village that Eliot's ancestor Andrew Eliot had departed from for America in the seventeenth century. (Eliot had visited East Coker in 1937.) "The Dry Salvages," published in 1941, reverted to Eliot's experience as a boy on the Mississippi and sailing on the Massachusetts coast. Its title refers to a set of dangerously hidden rocks near Cape Ann. "Little Gidding" was published in 1942 and had a less private subject, suitable to its larger ambitions. Little Gidding, near Cambridge, had been the site of an Anglican religious community that maintained a perilous existence for the first part of the English civil war. Paired with Eliot's experience walking the blazing streets of London during World War II, the community of Little Gidding inspired an extended meditation on the subject of the individual's duties in a world of human suffering. Its centerpiece was a sustained homage to Dante written in a form of terza rima, dramatizing Eliot's meeting with a "familiar compound ghost" he associates with Yeats and Swift.

Four Quartets (1943), as the suite of four poems was entitled, for a period displaced *The Waste Land* as Eliot's most celebrated work. The British public especially responded to the topical references in the wartime poems and to the tone of Eliot's public meditation on a common disaster. Eliot's longtime readers, however, were more reticent. Some, notably F. R. Leavis, praised the philosophical suppleness of Eliot syntax, but distrusted Eliot's swerve from the authenticity of a rigorously individual voice. And, as Eliot's conservative religious and political convictions began to seem less congenial in the postwar world, other readers reacted with suspicion to his assertions of authority, obvious in *Four Quartets* and implicit in the earlier poetry. The result, fueled by intermittent rediscovery of Eliot's occasional anti-Semitic rhetoric, has been a progressive downward revision of his once towering reputation.

After the war, Eliot wrote no more major poetry, turning entirely to his plays and to literary essays, the most important of which revisited the French symbolists and the development of language in twentieth-century poetry. After Vivien died in January 1947, Eliot led a protected life as a flatmate of the critic John Hayward. In January 1957 he married Valerie Fletcher and attained a degree of contentedness that had eluded him all his life. He died in London and, according to his own instructions, his ashes were interred in the church of St. Michael's

in East Coker. A commemorative plaque on the church wall bears his chosen epitaph--lines chosen from *Four Quartets*: "In my beginning is my end. In my end is my beginning."

In the decades after his death Eliot's reputation slipped further. Sometimes regarded as too academic (William Carlos Williams's view), Eliot was also frequently criticized (as he himself--perhaps just as unfairly--had criticized Milton) for a deadening neoclassicism. However, the multivarious tributes from practicing poets of many schools published during his centenary in 1988 was a strong indication of the intimidating continued presence of his poetic voice. In a period less engaged with politics and ideology than the 1980s and early 1990s, the lasting strengths of his poetic technique will likely reassert themselves. Already the strong affinities of Eliot's postsymbolist style with currently more influential poets like Wallace Stevens (Eliot's contemporary at Harvard and a fellow student of Santayana) have been reassessed, as has the tough philosophical skepticism of his prose. A master of poetic syntax, a poet who shuddered to repeat himself, a dramatist of the terrors of the inner life (and of the evasions of conscience), Eliot remains one of the twentieth century's major poets.

The most important collections of Eliot's manuscripts can be found at the Houghton Library, Harvard University; the New York Public Library; and the libraries of King's and Magdalene colleges, Cambridge University. Aside from the volumes already noted, among Eliot's numerous publications should be mentioned his extended appreciation, *Dante* (1929); his free rendition of *Anabasis: A Poem by St. -J. Perse* (1930); the collection of his *Selected Essays 1917-1932* (1932; rev. ed., 1950); his Norton lectures, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933); his pugnacious and never reprinted Page-Barbour lectures, *After Strange Gods* (1934); *Essays Ancient and Modern* (1936); his metrical jeux d'esprit, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), popularized in the musical *Cats*; his studies in Christian culture, *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) and *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, (1948); and the late collections of essays *On Poetry and Poets* (1957) and *To Criticize the Critic* (1965). Eliot's *Poems Written in Early Youth* were collected and printed in 1950, his Harvard Ph.D. dissertation was published in 1964 as *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, and the first volume of his *Letters* appeared in 1988.

Although no authorized biography of Eliot has yet appeared, Peter Ackroyd, *T. S. Eliot* (1984), and Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's New Life* (1988), are extremely useful, supplemented by smaller specialized studies such as John Soldo, *The Tempering of T. S. Eliot* (1983), and by studies in biographical criticism such as Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years* (1977), and Ronald Bush, *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style* (1984). The indispensable bibliography of Eliot's work is Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography* (1947; rev. ed., 1969). Standard critical studies begin with an early group including F. O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* (1935; rev. ed., 1947); Helen Gardner, *The Art of T. S. Eliot* (1949); Grover Smith, *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays* (1950); and Hugh Kenner, *T. S. Eliot: The Invisible Poet* (1959). F. R. Leavis's early and important appreciation in *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932) was expanded and qualified in essays collected in *The Living Principle* (1975). Essential studies of the composition of *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* can be found in A. Walton Litz, ed., *Eliot in His Time* (1973), and in Helen Gardner, *The Composition of "Four Quartets"* (1978).

About T. S. Eliot

When T. S. Eliot died, wrote Robert Giroux, "the world became a lesser place." Certainly the most imposing poet of his time, Eliot was revered by Igor Stravinsky "not only as a great sorcerer of words but as the very key keeper of the language." For Alfred Kazin he was "the *mana* known as 'T. S. Eliot,' the model poet of our time, the most cited poet and incarnation of literary correctness in the English-speaking world." Northrop Frye simply states: "A thorough knowledge of Eliot is compulsory for anyone interested in contemporary literature. Whether he is liked or disliked is of no importance, but he must be read."

In 1945 Eliot wrote: "A poet must take as his material his own language as it is actually spoken around him." Correlatively, the duty of the poet, as Eliot emphasized in a 1943 lecture, "is only indirectly to the people: his

direct duty is to his language, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve." Thus he dismisses the so-called "social function" of poetry. The only "method," Eliot once wrote, is "to be very intelligent." As a result, his poetry "has all the advantages of a highly critical habit of mind," writes A. Alvarez; "there is a coolness in the midst of involvement; he uses texts exactly for his own purpose; he is not carried away. Hence the completeness and inviolability of the poems. What he does in them can be taken no further.... [One gets] the impression that anything he turned his attention to he would perform with equal distinction." Alvarez believes that "the strength of Eliot's intelligence lies in its training; it is the product of a perfectly orthodox academic education." But Jacques Maritain once told Marshall McLuhan that "Eliot knows so much philosophy and theology that I do not see how he can write poetry at all." Eliot, however, never recognized a conflict between academic and creative pursuits.

Of his early work, Eliot has said: "The form in which I began to write, in 1908 or 1909, was directly drawn from the study of Laforgue together with the later Elizabethan drama; and I do not know anyone who started from exactly that point." Elsewhere he said: "The kind of poetry that I needed, to teach me the use of my own voice, did not exist in English at all; it was only found in French," and Leonard Unger concludes that, "insofar as Eliot started from an *exact point*, it was exclusively and emphatically the poetry of Laforgue." To a lesser extent, he was influenced by other Symbolists, by the metaphysical poets, by Donne, Dryden, and Dante. "His appreciation of Shakespeare," writes Sir Herbert Read, "was subject to his moral or religious scruples." With Samuel Johnson, whom, according to Sir Herbert, Eliot "honoured above all other English writers," he shared "a faith in God and the fear of death."

In *After Strange Gods* Eliot wrote: "I should say that in one's prose reflections one may be legitimately occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can deal only with actuality." From this Cleanth Brooks elaborates: "Poetry is the medium *par excellence* for rendering a total situation—for letting us know what it feels like to take a particular action or hold a particular belief or simply to look at something with imaginative sympathy." Brook's explains that it is Eliot's notion that the poet is thus "committed 'to turn the unpoetical into poetry' [and to fuse] 'the matter-of-fact and the fantastic.'" But the meaning of "reality," for Eliot, is especial, existing always "at the edge of nothingness," where, as B. Rajan writes, "the birth of meaning ... takes place in a manner both creative and ancient. Poetry cannot report the event; it must *be* the event, lived through in a form that can speak about itself while remaining wholly itself. This is a feat at least as difficult as it sounds, and if the poem succeeds in it, it is because, however much it remembers previous deaths by drowning, it creates its own life against its own thrust of questioning."

"In effect," writes Herbert Howarth, "Eliot demonstrated that a poet's business is not just reporting feeling, but extending feeling, and creating a shape to convey it." Eliot's poetry, then, is a process of "living by thought," says Rajan, "of seeking to find peace 'through a satisfaction of the whole being.' It is singular in its realization of passion through intelligence. It is driven by a scepticism which resolutely asks the question but refuses to stop short at it, by a sensibility sharply aware of 'the disorder, the futility, the meaninglessness, the mystery of life and suffering.' If it attains a world of belief or a conviction of order, that conviction is won against the attacking strength of doubt and remains always subject to its corrosive power. Not all of us share Eliot's faith. But all of us can accept the poetry because nearly every line of it was written while looking into the eyes of the demon."

In 1921 Conrad Aiken, although a life-long friend and admirer of Eliot, not only could not share Eliot's faith, but further questioned the validity of the poetry as poetry. "His sense of the definite is intermittent," Aiken wrote; "it abandons him often at the most critical moment, and in consequence Mr. Eliot himself is forever abandoning *us* on the very doorstep of the illuminating. One has again and again the feeling that he is working, as it were, too close to the object.... He passes quickly from one detail of analysis to another; he is aggressively aware that he is 'thinking,' his brow is knit; but he appears to believe that mere fineness of detail will constitute, in the sequence of his comments, a direction. What happens is that he achieves a kind of filigree without pattern."

But Alvarez, who calls Eliot "a supreme interpreter of meditated experience," provides perhaps the most lucid analysis of Eliot's "method." "The moments of greatest intensity have, as Eliot presents them, a certain

obliqueness, an allusiveness, a controlling detachment," writes Alvarez. "It is a poetry apart.... He is, in some ways, a meditative poet. But this does not mean a poet who deals in abstractions; Eliot's meditations are meditations on experience, in which the abstractions belong as much as the images; they are all a part of his particular cast of mind, the meaning he gives to past experience. But Eliot is, I think, a relatively indifferent, or uninterested, observer of the phenomenal world.... His direct affirmations are always summings-up of this style, concentrations for which the rest of his verse appears as so many hints."

Aiken's "filigree without pattern" may then be seen as Unger's "magic lantern," which throws "the nerves in patterns on a screen." Citing "*Prufrock*," Unger compares Eliot's poetry to a series of slides. "Each slide is an isolated, fragmentary image, producing its own effect, including suggestions of some larger action or situation of which it is but an arrested moment." Richard Poirier explains that these "procedural hesitations," as a characteristic of form, "have the total effect of enormous stamina; [Eliot's] reluctance of self-assertion, by acknowledging all the possibilities open to it, emerges as an ever dangerously controlled strength." Poirier continues: "In Eliot the form is shaped by creative and de-creative movements: each movement is in itself usually very tentative, and yet each achieves by cumulative interaction a firmness that supports the other. The result is an extraordinary fusion of diffidence and dogmatism." And it is by this fusion that "the poet's experiences," says Frye, "are shaped into a unity which takes its place in a literary tradition." By being assimilated into a tradition (of which Eliot was always sharply aware), then, genuine poetry does contribute, as G. Wilson Knight notes, "to the health of a culture," in that it "tells us the truth about ourselves in our present situation ... is capable of dealing with the present world, [and] does not have to leave out the boredom and the horror of our world in order to discern its true glory." And it is just here, by creating such a poetry, that Eliot made his greatest gift to poetry. "No poet has been so deeply honest," says Knight, and A. R. Scott-James adds: "He excels by introducing us to our own generation." McLuhan summarizes: "To purify the 'dialect of the tribe' and to open the doors of perception by discovering a host of new poetic themes and rhythms was the especial achievement of T. S. Eliot. He gave us back our language enlivened and refreshed by new contacts with many other tongues."

Certainly one of the most important ways in which Eliot fulfilled his self-imposed duty to his own voice was by using the materials of the city for building his poetry. Potter Woodberry writes that "the modern poet, as Eliot himself on occasions has pointed out, finds himself faced with the task of revitalizing a language that has gone dead, of seeking out genuine but novel avenues of expression so that a sharpness of impact can once again be felt in English poetry.... The fresh vitality that the materials of the city give to these modern metaphors and similes makes them unusually arresting with the result that one finds himself drawn into a fuller and closer examination of their poetic meaning rather than gliding over them as is the tendency in the case of the more traditional 'poetic' figures." The city, for Eliot, further serves as "the one great artifact of secularized Enlightenment man"; it stands as a "monument to humanity and testifies to the absence of God in the modern world." But, as Woodberry quickly adds, "because the city presents itself throughout his poetry in a consistently dark light, one should not infer on Eliot's part a naive primitivistic longing for a restoration of the non-urban modes of life characteristic of the preindustrial world. Eliot's indictment of the present age is spiritual rather than sociological." Similarly Eliot believes that the primary value of religion, for mankind, lies "in the quality of its worldliness," in the context of a social institution (although Stephen Spender reports that Eliot once told him that religion "is a less effective escape than that used by thousands who 'escape by reading novels, looking at films, or best of all, by driving very fast on land or in air, which makes even dreams unnecessary.'") Religion is most effective as a device, then, but cannot even work as well as other devices.

Frye writes: "The particular continuum into which an individual is born, Eliot calls his culture or tradition. By culture Eliot means 'that which makes life worth living': one's total way of life, including art and education, but also cooking and sports. By tradition, also, Eliot means both a conscious and an unconscious life in a social continuum.... He speaks of culture metaphorically as the 'incarnation' of a religion, the human manifestation of a superhuman reality. A culture's religion 'should mean for the individual and for the group something toward which they strive, not merely something which they possess.'" (It is tangentially interesting to apply Eliot's definition of culture as a continuum—in which the upper class possesses not more culture, but a more conscious

culture—to his own readership. His popular reputation, Frye writes, "was that of an erudite highbrow. But such a reputation would be contradictory to Eliot's view of the 'elite' as responsible for articulating the unconscious culture of their societies. Eliot would like, he says, an audience that could neither read nor write." As Geoffrey Dearmer adds sympathetically, "poor Eliot has become a subject for university schools and a burden on those in pursuit of degrees when all that he asked of readers was to be read with enjoyment.") "All views of life that Eliot would call serious or mature," Frye concludes, "distinguish between two selves in man: the selfish and the self-respecting. These are not only distinguishable but opposed, and in Christianity the opposition is total, as for it the selfish self is to be annihilated, and the other is the immortal soul one is trying to save. Theories of conduct exalting the freedom of the personality or character without making this distinction are disastrous."

Like Emerson, then, Eliot recognized the duality of man's soul "struggling," as Kazin writes, "for its own salvation"—and the world, "meaning everything outside the soul's anxious efforts," so that this duality is more "real" than society. Just as Eliot never accepted the statement that *The Waste Land* represented "the disillusionment of a generation," Braybrooke submits, he would never admit that his use of broken images "meant a separation from belief, since for him doubts and certainties represented varieties of belief." As Knight astutely points out, the "wonderful lyric in *East Coker* [beginning] 'The wounded surgeon plies the steel' [is] surely the grimmest statement on the Christian world-view ever penned by a devotee [and] offers a universe so riddled with negations and agonies that we must go to the anti-Christian polemics of Nietzsche—which its cutting phraseology recalls—for an analogy." But as always, Eliot is applying to the city and to the institutions of men his own peculiar vision in order to make a poetry which he in turn uses to test the validity of poetry. There is no deceit; from the outset he tells us that he will take us through half-deserted streets "that follow like a tedious argument / Of insidious intent / To lead you to an overwhelming question." Eliot presents us with a pattern which, as Frank Kermode writes in his discussion of *The Waste Land*, "suggests a commitment, a religion; and the poet retreats to it. But the poem is a great poem because it will not force us to follow him. It makes us wiser without committing us.... It joins the mix of our own minds but it does not tell us what to believe.... The poem resists an imposed order; it is a part of its greatness that it can do so."

Scott-James, in his analysis of the poetry, is able to tell us what is not to be found in Eliot. "There is no joy, no exultation, not even pleasure except the pleasure which is shown as spurious. There is no portrayal of common emotions, except when they are depraved, or silly. All the things which common men think of as practical and desirable vanish into insignificance under his vision." And Wallace Fowlie tells us what can be discovered there: "More fervently than any other poet of the twentieth century, Eliot has sung of the permanence of time, the experience of one time which is all time. He sings of it when he speaks of the flower that fades, of the sea that seems eternal, of the rock in the sea, and of the prayer of the Annunciation.... In such [passages] the poet reveals his true mission, that of transmuting his intimate emotions, his personal anguish, into a strange and impersonal work. In this way, the poet becomes aware of his presence in the world, where his major victory is the imposing of his presence as a man by means of his lucidity and his creative power."

Eliot told Donald Hall in 1959 that he considered *The Four Quartets* to be his best work; "and," he added, "I'd like to feel that they get better as they go on. The second is better than the first, the third is better than the second, and the fourth is the best of all. At any rate, that's the way I flatter myself." Neville Braybrooke writes: "It is ... generally agreed ... that in his *Four Quartets* [Eliot] attempted ... to achieve a poetry so transparent that in concentrating on it attention would not fall so much on the words, but on the words pointed to. And in his rigorous stripping away of the poetic, such a pure poetry is sustained." Further, Eliot shaped the *Quartets* into a gyre, and, by imposing such a form, directed us to see the work as a totality in which each part contributes to and is enhanced by the process of synthesis.

Although many critics have commented on the cyclical nature of the *Four Quartets*, Frye has actually diagrammed these poems. "Draw a horizontal line on a page," he says, "then a vertical line of the same length cutting it in two and forming a cross, then a circle of which these lines are diameters, then a smaller circle inside with the same centre. The horizontal line is clock time, the Heraclitean flux, the river into which no one steps twice. The vertical line is the presence of God descending into time, and crossing it at the Incarnation, forming

the 'still point of the turning world.' The top and bottom of the vertical line represent the goals of the way up and the way down, though we cannot show that they are the same point in two dimensions. The top and bottom halves of the larger circle are the visions of plenitude and of vacancy respectively; the top and bottom halves of the smaller circle are the world of the rose-garden and (not unnaturally for an inner circle) of the subway, innocence and experience.... What lies below experience is asceticism or dark night. There is thus no hell in *Four Quartets*, which belong entirely to the purgatorial vision." "The archetype of this cycle is the Bible," he continues, "which begins with the story of man in a garden." So in Eliot we begin and end at the same point, "with the Word as the circumference of reality, containing within itself time, space, and poetry viewed in the light of the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written." All this to say, as Alvarez writes, that "the triumphant achievement of the *Four Quartets* is in the peculiar wholeness and isolation of their poetic world.... Eliot has always worked obliquely, by suggestion and by his penetrating personal rhythms. His power is in his sureness and mastery of subject and expression. And this sense of inviolable purpose seems to remove his verse from the ordinary realm of human interchange. He has created a world of formal perfection. It lacks the dimension of human error."

Carol H. Smith writes: "Just as a religious interpretation of existence was needed to order the world of nature and of man, so art, [Eliot] felt, required a form which could impose order and meaning on experience. The form which Eliot came to see as the most perfectly ordered and most complete as a microcosmic creation of experience was drama." In the *Aims of Poetic Drama* Eliot wrote: "What I should like to do is this: that the people on the stage should seem to the audience so like themselves that they would find themselves thinking: 'I could talk in poetry too!' Then they are not transported into an unaccustomed, artificial world; but their ordinary, sordid world is suddenly illuminated and transfigured. And if poetry cannot do that for people, it is merely superfluous decoration." But for many, accustomed to the conventions of modern theater, Eliot was not a successful dramatist. As Miss Smith writes: "The plays of T. S. Eliot are more likely to baffle than to inspire. Not only do Eliot's plays refuse to conform to today's dramatic modes but each play is theatrically different from the others." And John Gross explains that, "having arrived in the *Quartets* at a state of mind so specialised as to be barely communicable, Eliot went on to devote what remained of his energy to the most unashamedly public of poetic activities, writing for the theater. Was it a mistake? In all probability, yes. Certainly at his death Eliot's standing as a poet was secure, while his reputation as a dramatist was in the trough of the wave." But, says Knight, "how much more illuminating is Eliot's failure than the successes of lesser poets!"

That Eliot's intentions as a playwright were serious can hardly be questioned. Miss Smith writes: "Eliot's interest in drama dates back to the beginnings of his career. His critical essays on Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists, his use of the dramatic monologue in some of his best-known early poems ... and the dramatic contrasts of episodes in *The Waste Land* all testify to what Edmund Wilson called 'the dramatic character of his imagination.'" Eliot himself told Donald Hall that, in writing *The Confidential Clerk*, he "wanted to get to learn the technique of the theater so well that I could then forget about it. I always feel it's not wise to violate rules until you know how to observe them." As a result of his conscientiousness, he said, the play "was so well constructed in some ways that people thought it was just meant to be a farce." He told Lawrence Durrell: "If I am writing a play I think I am better concerned with becoming conscious of how to do it rather than in becoming conscious of what I am trying to do." But Eliot later told Hall: "In 1939, if there hadn't been a war, I would probably have tried to write another play. And I think it's a very good thing I didn't have the opportunity. From my personal point of view, the one good thing the war did was to prevent me from writing another play too soon."

"Eliot's desire," writes Miss Smith, "was for a dramatic form which would make drama conform to the criterion of all art: the harmonious relationship of the parts to the whole." And, she continues, "Eliot's ideal of dramatic form was a work which would re-create in its theme, its form and its language the harmony which explained the untidy surface of life. The dramatist's mission was thus both artistic and religious, and it was envisioned as a process of transformation." In 1949, Eliot wrote in a letter to Lawrence Durrell: "We have got to make plays in which the mental movements cannot find physical equivalents. But when one comes to the big moment (and if we can't get it we can't do drama) there must be some simple fundamental emotion (expressed, of course, in

deathless verse) which *everybody* can understand."

Eliot chose *poetic* drama, as McLuhan explains, because it is within this kind of play that "the participation of the audience in the action is achieved both poetically and liturgically. It was Eliot's discovery that prose drama isolates the audience from the action of the play. Poetic drama that makes a skillful use of contemporary idiom can be a means of involving the audience centrally in the action once more." He labored to "maintain the supremacy of reason" in the plays, and succeeded, Howarth writes, in that "his audience feels the constant presence of an ordering intelligence." It is, however, the very erudition governing the writing that is frequently cited as the major dramatic flaw in the plays. For centuries drama has depended upon the Dionysian properties which Eliot's dramatic theories reject in favor of "reason." Frederick Lumley writes: "Eliot was a conservative, too consciously a critic to wander an inch from the theories of drama he so carefully propounded beforehand. The best criticism of Eliot's plays has been written by Eliot himself, and few theoreticians have proved their views so convincingly in practice. Eliot, a great poet, became both master and pupil of dramatic theory, yet however important his plays were, he was never to write a *chef-d'oeuvre*. His best play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, is noble in its theme and treatment, but lacks the natural abundance of creative genius. His cold, austere intellectuality is apparent in all his plays, and the more his plays have moved from spiritual to secular, the more onerous this has become in making his plays acceptable." But perhaps the statement most frequently trotted out by those unsympathetic to Eliot as dramatist is simply that he wrote verse plays that were social caricatures. Miss Gardner answers thus: "I cannot take very seriously a criticism that assumes that what is temporarily unfashionable is permanently out-of-date. The tradition of social comedy which Eliot took up is a very tough tradition. At the moment these plays are dated, but as they recede into history their social verisimilitude will be as much a source of strength as is the social truth of Restoration Comedy."

Eliot himself believed that *The Family Reunion*, at least poetically, was the best of all his plays. Helen Gardner, among several others, believes that *The Cocktail Party* and *The Confidential Clerk* are his finest. Miss Gardner says of these plays: "No other plays of our generation present with equal force, sympathy, wisdom, and wit the classic subject of comedy: our almost, but mercifully not wholly, unlimited powers of self-deception, and the shocks and surprises that life gives to our poses and pretenses." But history will almost certainly endow *Murder in the Cathedral* with the longest life and the greatest fame. John Gross notes: "Whether or not *Murder in the Cathedral* augments our ability to live, it is certainly a remarkable piece of work. It is Eliot's one indubitable theatrical triumph, and the one English addition to the classic repertoire since Shaw."

Stephen Spender has said of Eliot: "He was more inimitable than any other modern poet ... yet more could be learned from his theory and practice than from any other writer. This man who seemed so unapproachable was the most approached by younger poets—and the most helpful to them—of any poet of his generation," except for Ezra Pound. Certainly it was because he was willing to explicate, and thus to share, the principles by which he worked and lived that he became a great critic. Carlo Linati, one of the first in Italy to write about Eliot, found his poetry "irrational, incomprehensible." But, he added, "because Eliot is first of all a critic, literary criticism is the field in which his personality has found its full expression." Mario Praz notes that, "in the *Partisan Review* for February, 1949, when Eliot's career was nearly concluded, Delmore Schwartz expressed this opinion: 'When we think of the character of literary dictators in the past, it is easy to see that since 1922, at least, Eliot has occupied a position in the English-speaking world analogous to that occupied by Ben Jonson, Dryden, Pope, Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, and Matthew Arnold. It is noticeable that each of these dictators has been a critic as well as a poet, and we may infer from this the fact that it is necessary for them to practice both poetry and criticism.' And the eminent historian of criticism Rene Wellek wrote in *The Sewanee Review* for July, 1956: 'T. S. Eliot is by far the most important critic of the twentieth century in the English-speaking world.'"

Grant T. Webster states that "it is an error in tone and taste to treat [Eliot] as a systematic thinker, as a builder of a critical system" because Eliot himself, dividing criticism into "essays of generalization" and "appreciations of individual authors," came to abandon the former in favor of the latter which, he said, "seem to me to have the best chance of retaining some value for future readers." Praz writes: "Eliot ..., with a typical Anglo-Saxon shyness, has waived any claim to systematic philosophical thought, in statements like the following: 'I have no

general theory of my own.... The extreme of theorizing about the nature of poetry, the essence of poetry if there is any, belongs to the study of aesthetics and is no concern of the poet or of a critic with my limited qualifications."

Eliot's concern for the lasting value of his (or any) criticism is paralleled by his own awareness of those who preceded him. As John Paul Pritchard explains: "Eliot required that for the understanding of any living artist he be set for contrast and comparison among those dead artists" before him; and "the poet's contribution is not that in which he differs from tradition, but that part of his work most in harmony with the dead poets who preceded him. From these premises Eliot concluded that the poet's work must be judged by standards from the past." And since, as Poirier suggests, he "chooses to devalue literature in the interests of the pre-eminent values of language," Eliot is again led to a poetry which primarily serves the language as it has been invested with life *by tradition*. But, Praz points out, "the critic's task should be to see literature 'not as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time; to see the best work of our time and the best work of twenty-five hundred years ago with the same eyes.'" In other words, the poetry itself "does not matter" for Eliot in this sense; as he told Durrell, the "prose sense comes first, and ... poetry is merely prose developed by a knowledge of aeronautics."

Eliot's type of criticism, writes Praz, "in his own words, is meant to be an integration of scholarly criticism. In *The Music of Poetry* he said that his method was that of a poet 'always trying to defend the kind of poetry he is writing.'" Since Eliot wanted to write poetry "with the greatest economy of words, and with the greatest austerity in the use of metaphor, simile, verbal beauty, and elegance," he turned to Dante, whose language, says Praz, "is the perfection of a common language." Also, Praz continues, "what Eliot [saw] in Dante—who is almost the sole poet for whom he [had] kept up a constant cult—is more the fruit of a poet's sensibility than of a critical evaluation. He [saw] in Dante clear visual images [and] a concise and luminous language." Thus, in establishing criteria for his own poetry, Eliot formalized critical "theories" useful to his own thinking. The resultant eclecticism is, according to Austin Warren, a theory of poetry which "falls neither into didacticism nor into its opposite heresies, imagism and echolalia. The real 'purity' of poetry—to speak in terms at once paradoxical and generic—is to be constantly and richly impure: neither philosophy, nor psychology, nor imagery, nor music alone, but a significant tension between all of them."

Certainly among the most celebrated of Eliot's critical statements are his terms "objective correlative" and "dissociation of sensibility." The former, Praz explains, is Eliot's term for "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion," which is to be expressed "in the form of art." The latter term, writes Pritchard, was used by Eliot "to indicate [an] inability to 'devour any kind of experience.'" Frank Kermode defines Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility" as "an historical theory to explain the dearth of objective correlatives in a time when the artist, alienated from his environment ... is working at the beginning of a dark age 'under conditions that seem unpropitious,' in an everworsening climate of imagination."

Regardless of his imposing stature as a literary critic, Eliot, in his later years, seemed to re-examine his earlier statements with mistrust. Eliot told Donald Hall in 1959 that, "as one gets older, one is not quite confident in one's ability to distinguish new genius among younger men." Perhaps the same diminishing confidence in his critical ability led to the various recantations (most notable in his Milton criticism) which characterized much of his later work. I. A. Richards writes: "Gentleness and justness, these are the marks of his later criticism, with its elaborate measures taken to repair any injustices—to Milton, to Shelley, to Coleridge, or to *meaning* or to *interpretation* or even to *education*—that his earlier pronouncements seemed to him to have committed. I doubt if another critic can be found so ready to amend what he had come to consider his own former aberrations." (Conrad Aiken recently quoted from a very early letter in which Eliot called Ezra Pound's poetry "touchingly incompetent." When Hall asked him about this evaluation Eliot replied, "Hah! That was a bit brash, wasn't it?") Richards continues: "These reversals and recantations strike me as springing from an everdeepening scepticism, a questioning of the very roots of critical pretensions. It is as though, in the course of acquiring the tremendous authority that the editor of *The Criterion* came to enjoy, TSE had learned too much about the game of opinion-forming and had become alarmed and indeed irked by the weight his judgments were being accorded. He was no longer amused by the reverence with which they were received."

In his excellent summary of Eliot's critical stance, Alvarez writes: "Our interest and standards in literature are Eliot's creation. And of course this is something more profound than the enthusiasm aroused by a few well-timed articles. His critical pronouncements were made valid by his poetry. So he did more than change the standards of critical judgment; he altered the whole mode of expression in order to make room for his originality."

A review of Eliot's lectures, only recently published in *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry: The Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1926, and the Turnbull Lectures at the Johns Hopkins University, 1933*, reveals that Eliot "repeatedly cannibalized" them for "subsequent essays," as Helen Vendler notes in *The New Republic*. "And many of their seminal ideas—from the decline of culture since the thirteenth century to a consequent 'dissociation of sensibility' (as intellect detached itself from emotion)—made their way rapidly into critical discourse." Vendler remarks on the profound influence Eliot's ideas had on other critics. "Eliot's writings were always so fertile in suggestion, that cultural critics, religious writers, poets and professors all mined them as sources of provocative obiter dicta."

The lectures themselves are somewhat scattered, written "hurriedly" and during a time of great personal distress for Eliot—his marriage to his wife Vivienne was ending (the relationship later became the subject of a film, *Tom and Viv*) and he was about to convert to the Anglican Church. "And so it isn't surprising," finds Alexander Theroux in the *Chicago Tribune Books*, "to note Eliot's compulsion in the Clark Lectures to put something in order, to seek some sort of wholeness, cultural if not personal." Theroux continues, "The lectures were fulsome scholarship and far from easy to grasp." Robert Craft, writing for *Washington Post Book World*, states, "In general, Eliot's lectures are less finely concentrated than his essays." To assist readers, the editor, Ronald Schuchard, clarified and corrected Eliot's notes and pointed out themes reused by Eliot elsewhere. However, Eric Griffith pronounces in the *Times Literary Supplement*, "They make uncomfortable reading, and may be supposed to have made uncomfortable listening in the black and gold splendour of the hall at Trinity, overlooked as it is by the dominating, narrowed gaze of Henry VIII, who had a shorter way with marital dissatisfactions." Theroux notes the lectures received mixed reviews in their day and concedes, "Even upon reading, there is a pithiness wanting, much needless erudition and unintentional obfuscation." However, he concludes, "there is nothing false or weakly undeliberated in *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*. These are the observations of a man who loved poetry...and for that they are eminently important."

To draw a portrait of Eliot the man, Neville Braybrooke writes, one must follow hints with guesses; "and this is precisely what Eliot would have liked, because it is a method in which surprises will frequently recur." For instance, Braybrooke continues, one might be shocked to learn that the author of *The Idea of a Christian Society* loved "whoopie cushions and joke cigars. But no man can always stay at the sublime heights, and if, paradoxically enough, some of the more conservative elements in his family were baffled by the sublime heights that he reached in his work, then at least they would have understood his practical joker side." One might also be surprised to learn that the greatest man of letters of his time was devoted to Sherlock Holmes. Durrell writes: "At the mention of the name he lit up like a torch. He, it seemed, was a tremendous fan of Holmes and could quote at length from the saga. 'I flatter myself,' he said—and this is the nearest to an immodesty that I had ever heard him go—'that I know the names of everyone, even the smallest character.' Two minutes afterward he found he could not recall the name of one of Doyle's puppets. His annoyance was comical. He struck his knee with irritation and concentrated. It would not come. Then he burst out laughing at himself." Allen Tate reports fondly that Eliot's laugh "was never hearty; it was something between a chuckle and a giggle."

The Eliot family motto is *Tace et fac*, and it has been said that he "worked assiduously" and "grew silently." Sir Herbert Read describes him as "a serious but not necessarily a solemn man, a severe man never lacking in kindness and sympathy, a profound man (profoundly learned, profoundly poetic, profoundly spiritual). And yet to outward appearance a correct man, a conventional man, an infinitely polite man—in brief, a gentleman." Richard Poirier writes: "Eliot as a projection of his *oeuvres* has a form distinctly unlike the form of any of his poems. He is infrangible, while his poems are fragmentary and seemingly irresolute about their fragmentariness. His poetry is about the difficulty of conceiving anything. Never merely expressive of ideas already successfully

shaped in the mind, his poems enact the mind's effort even to form an idea. Yet he thrives upon some inward assurance, mysterious and not always accessible, that cannot be translated into programmatic thinking or into daytime sense." And Stephen Spender summarizes: "Religiously, poetically and intellectually, this very private man kept open house.... Yet in spite of all this, he was sly, ironic, a bit cagey, a bit calculating perhaps, the Eliot whom Ezra Pound called 'old Possum.'"

One can read the reminiscences of his friends and guess at personal things about "Tom" Eliot (although he would be highly pleased, one is sure, to be able to invalidate our conclusions). Spender, for instance, writes: "[Eliot's] first wife, who had been a dancer ..., was gay, talkative, a chatter-box. She wanted to enjoy life, found Eliot inhibiting and inhibited, yet worshipped him.... There was a time when the Eliots separated, and Eliot lived by himself, wore a monocle, was known to the neighbours as Captain Eliot." Aldous Huxley once told Robert Craft that "the marriage in *The Cocktail Party* was inspired—if that is the word—by Tom's own [first] marriage. His wife, Vivienne, was an ether addict, you know, and the house smelled like a hospital. All that dust and despair in Eliot's poetry is to be traced to this fact." Derek Stanford, too, has done some conjecturing about the subjectivity of Eliot's work. Citing the well-known lines, "Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children, / Hidden excitedly, containing laughter. / Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind / Cannot bear very much reality," Stanford writes: "This is as near to confession as Eliot need ever come. *The Four Quartets* are deeply concerned with first and last things, with archetypal experience and states: birth, pro-creation, death, judgment, salvation, damnation; and if I read this passage aright it originates in Eliot's loss and need of domestic life before his second marriage." But, as Stanford later points out, the origin doesn't really matter.

Of course Eliot himself has told us ("no," says Stravinsky, "Eliot never 'told,' he imparted") something about his life, his work, and the circumstances of the former as they are manifested in the latter. He told Hall that he began to write poetry when he was about fourteen years old, "under the inspiration of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*, [and I wrote] a number of very gloomy and atheistical and despairing quatrains in the same style, which fortunately I suppressed completely—so completely that they don't exist." When George Seferis asked him how he wrote *The Waste Land*, Eliot answered: "I'd been sick and the doctors recommended rest. I went to Mar-gate (he smiled), in November. There I wrote the first part. Then I went to Switzerland on vacation and finished the poem. It was double its present length. I sent it to Pound; he cut out half of it." (The half which Pound excised and which was thought for many years to be lost or destroyed was found recently and has been on display at the New York Public Library.) (Leonard Unger adds that Pound the mentor also "persuaded Eliot not to use as epigraph a quotation from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, not to use 'Gerontion' as a prelude to *The Waste Land*, [and] to retain the section called 'Death by Water' [which is Eliot's translation of his own French verses in 'Dans le Restaurant'].") When the resultant poem appeared, "the first issue of *Time* [March 3, 1923] reported the rumor that *The Waste Land* was written as a hoax.") Eliot also told Hall: "Whether I write or type, composition of any length, a play for example, means for me regular hours, say ten to one. I found that three hours a day is about all I can do of actual composing." He told Durrell that "a poet must be deliberately lazy. One should write as little as one possibly can. I always try to make the whole business seem as unimportant as I can." Durrell once tried to persuade Eliot to go to Greece, but Eliot said that he "preferred gloomy places to write in." When Hall asked him if "the optimal career for a poet would involve no work at all but writing and reading," Eliot said, "No, ... it is very dangerous to give an optimal career for everybody.... I feel quite sure that if I'd started by having independent means, if I hadn't had to bother about earning a living and could have given all my time to poetry, it would have had a deadening influence on me."

Eliot has said that his poetry "has obviously more in common with my distinguished contemporaries in America than with anything written in my generation in England. That I'm sure of." He admits that, in his own youth, he had very little sense of the literary times, that he felt no dominating presence of an older poet as one now feels the immediate influence of Eliot, Pound, and Stevens. "I think it was rather an advantage not having any living poets in England or America in whom one took any particular interest," he told Hall. "I don't know what it would be like, but I think it would be a rather troublesome distraction to have such a lot of dominating presences ... about. Fortunately we weren't bothered by each other.... There was Yeats, but it was the early Yeats. It was too much Celtic twilight for me. There was really nothing except the people of the 90's who had all died of drink or

suicide or one thing or another."

Publication of Eliot's *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems, 1909-1917* in 1997 sheds new light on the young poet. As Sarah Lyall notes in the *New York Times*, these poems were not meant by Eliot for publication. Sold to his friend and patron, John Quinn in 1922, "The poet's instructions could not have been more clear. 'I beg you fervently to keep them to yourself and see that they are never printed.'" While Eliot found them inferior, much was made over the poems' content. As Paul Levy notes in *The Wall Street Journal*: "These 'poems' are not helpful to those who wish to defend Eliot from charges of racism and anti-Semitism." They include "bawdy, scatological limericks with racist imagery that describe, among other things, the encounter of a highly sexed Christopher Columbus with King Bolo, a well-endowed black monarch," states Lyall. The editor, Christopher Ricks, notes these were previously published in other collections and were commented on by Conrad Aiken almost fifty years ago. The collection as a whole provides additional insight into Eliot's evolution as a poet. Concludes Levy, "These formerly lost early works are meaning-laden exceptions to...Eliot's magpie poetic method, the making of patchwork patterns of phrases and strings of words, very often borrowed from other poets' verses, without the use of quotation marks. We can now more easily trace the development of the (relatively) meaning-free mature works and see, in his concern for formal configuration, the evolution of a genuine modernist."

Today, as always, critical evaluations include sincere dislike of Eliot's work. In 1963 John Frederick Nims observed that Eliot "woos the lugubrious," that his poems "are a bore, obtruding and exhorting, buttonholing us with 'Redeem the time' and so forth." Though Nims concedes that Eliot "outranks ... just about all [contemporary poets]," he is concerned because Eliot does not readily enchant the reader, and because his poetry tends to translate easily. The sterility, inaction, detachment, and despair which dominate Eliot's poetry are, in the opinion of several critics, epitomized in V.S. Pritchett's description of Eliot as "a trim anti-Bohemian with black bowler and umbrella ... ushering us to our seats in hell." But for most, Eliot was, at the time of his death, the most imposing literary figure in the world. As early as 1917 Eliot declared: "The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered." Stephen Spender writes: "I think it can now be said that the novelties he introduced—none more striking than the reappearance of *ideas* in poetry—have been assimilated and become part of that marvelous order, now slightly altered, of imperishable works in English." Frank Kermode adds: "Eliot certainly has the marks of a modern kind of greatness, those beneficial intuitions of irregularity and chaos, the truth of the foul rag-and-bone shop. Yet we remember him as celebrating order. Over the years he explored the implications of his attitudes to order, and it is doubtful whether many people capable of understanding him now have much sympathy with his views. His greatness will rest on the fruitful recognition of disorder, though the theories will have their interest as theories held by a great man." And Scott-James has said that Eliot "brought into poetry something which in this generation was needed: a language spare, sinewy, modern; a fresh and springy metrical form; thought that was adult; and an imagination aware of what is bewildering and terrifying in modern life and in all life. He has done more than any other [contemporary] English poet to make this age conscious of itself, and, in being conscious, apprehensive."

Eliot himself once said: "One seems to become a myth, a fabulous creature that doesn't exist. One doesn't feel any different. It isn't that you get bigger to fit the world, the world gets smaller to fit you. You remain exactly the same. Obscurity in writing is confused with novelty." But as Eliot's reputation grew, his poetry became increasingly more private. He never attempted to "redeem mankind"; but he did give to his age, as John Gross writes, "an idiom and a mythology." In 1948 his contribution was justly recognized. Harvey Breit tells us that, "when the official cable from the Nobel Prize Committee in Stockholm reached him, he was immensely pleased. There must have been, it was suggested, some ironic satisfaction as well: ... in the Forties, the recipient of the highest formal literary honor; in the Twenties, Mr. Eliot had been almost universally considered decadent, obscure and a passing fashion. 'It amuses me,' he said without amusement. ('Shall I say it just that way—gently?' [Breit] asked. 'Say it just that way—gently,' he agreed, 'for I don't wish to ridicule anyone.')

It has been said that Eliot never lost his charm. Analyses of the poetry, the plays, the criticism, will be added for

years to come to the many shelves of existing Eliot criticism. Readers will continue to guess about what the man "was really like." But perhaps Frank Morley made the most appropriate statement of all when he related that, while he listened to the funeral service at Westminster Abbey, he was "thinking of Eliot as a man who had very unusual powers of trespass into different hearts."

A memorial service for Eliot at Westminster Abbey, February 4, 1965, was published as *Order of Service in Memory of Thomas Stearns Eliot*, Hove Shirley Press (London), 1965. On June 14, 1965, a program entitled "Homage to T. S. Eliot" was presented at the Globe Theatre in London. To the program Igor Stravinsky contributed "Introitus," a new choral work written in Eliot's memory, and Henry Moore a huge sculpture entitled "The Archer." Andrei Voznesensky, Peter O'Toole, Laurence Olivier, and Paul Scofield recited. Poems read during the program were selected by W.H. Auden, and Cleanth Brooks contributed a brief narration.

Eliot's works have been translated into at least twenty-two languages. Harvard University has recorded his readings of "*The Hollow Men*," "*Gerontion*," "*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*," "*Journey of the Magi*," "*A Song for Simeon, Triumphal March*," "*Difficulties of a Statesman*," "*Fragment of an Agon*," and "*Four Quartets*." Eliot's readings of *The Waste Land*, "*Landscapes I and II*," and "*Sweeney Among the Nightingales*" have been recorded by the Library of Congress.

Professional Career

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, assistant in philosophy department, 1913-14; teacher of French, Latin, mathematics, drawing, geography, and history at High Wycombe Grammar School, London, then at Highgate School, London, 1915-17; Lloyds Bank Ltd., London, clerk in the Colonial and Foreign Department, 1917-25; *The Egoist*, London, assistant editor, 1917-19; founder of the *Criterion* (literary quarterly), London, 1922, and editor, 1922-39 (ceased publication, at Eliot's decision, in 1939 because of the war and paper shortage); Faber and Gwyer Ltd. (publishers), later Faber & Faber Ltd., London, literary editor and member of the advisory board, 1925-65. Clark Lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1926; Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University, six months, 1932-33; Page-Barbour Lecturer at University of Virginia, 1933; resident at Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, 1948; Theodore Spencer Memorial Lecturer at Harvard University, 1950; lecturer at University of Chicago during the fifties; lecturer at Library of Congress, at University of Texas, at University of Minnesota, and before many other groups. President of London Library, 1952-65.

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George Orwell

Eric Arthur Blair (25 June 1903 – 21 January 1950), who used the pen name **George Orwell**, was an English novelist, essayist, journalist and critic. His work is marked by lucid prose, awareness of social injustice, opposition to totalitarianism, and commitment to democratic socialism.

“It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.”

Originally titled *Last Man in Europe* it was renamed *Nineteen Eighty-Four* for unknown reasons, possibly a mere reversal of the last two digits of the year it was written. It was first met with conflicting criticisms and acclaim; some reviewers disliked its dystopian satire of totalitarian regimes, nationalism, the class system, bureaucracy, and world leaders’ power struggles, while others panned it as nihilistic prophesy on the downfall of humankind. Some still see it as anti-Catholic with Big Brother replacing God and church. From it the term *Orwellian* has evolved, in reference to an idea or action that is hostile to a free society. Yet, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has proven to be a profoundly meaningful work and continues to be one of the world’s most widely read and quoted novels into the twenty-first century. Inspired by Yevgeny Zamyatin's (1884-1937) *We*, Blair worked intensely, often writing ten hours a day and even when bedridden with tuberculosis in his last days continued to labour over it. From his essay “Why I Write”;

“First I spent five years in an unsuitable profession (the Indian Imperial Police, in Burma), and then I underwent poverty and the sense of failure. This increased my natural hatred of authority and made me for the first time fully aware of the existence of the working classes, and the job in Burma had given me some understanding of the nature of imperialism: but these experiences were not enough to give me an accurate political orientation. Then came Hitler, the Spanish Civil War, etc. By the end of 1935 I had still failed to reach a firm decision.”

He goes on to say;

“The Spanish war and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it.”

Commonly ranked as one of the most influential English writers of the 20th century, and as one of the most important chroniclers of English culture of his generation, Orwell wrote literary criticism, poetry, fiction, and polemical journalism. He is best known for the dystopian novel Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) and the allegorical novella Animal Farm (1945). His non fiction works, including The Road to Wigan Pier (1937), documenting his experience of working class life in the north of England, and Homage to Catalonia (1938), an account of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, are widely acclaimed, as are his numerous essays on politics, literature,

language, and culture. In 2008, The Times ranked him second on a list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945".

Orwell's work continues to influence popular and political culture, and the term Orwellian — descriptive of totalitarian or authoritarian social practices — has entered the language together with several of his neologisms, including cold war, Big Brother, Thought Police, Room 101, doublethink, and thoughtcrime.

Life

Education and Early Years 1903-1921

Eric Arthur Blair was born on 25 June 1903 in Motihari, Bengal (now Bihar) India, into a family of the “lower-upper middle class” as he wryly puts it in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1933). He was the son of Ida Mabel née Limouzin (1875–1943) and Richard Walmesley Blair (1857–1938), who worked as a sub-deputy opium agent for the Indian Civil Service under the British Raj. Eric rarely saw his father until he had retired in 1912. Eric’s grandfather had been a wealthy plantation and slave owner but the fortunes dwindled by the time he was born. He had two sisters, Marjorie and Avril.

At the age of one Eric and his mother settled in England; his father joined them in 1912. At the age of five, Blair entered the Anglican parish school of Henley-on-Thames which he attended for two years before entering the prestigious St. Cyprian’s school in Sussex. Corporal punishment was common in the day and possibly a source of his initial resentment towards authority. While there, Blair wrote his first published work, the poem “Awake! Young Men of England”; “Oh! think of the War Lord’s mailed fist, That is striking at England today.” With pressures to excel, Eric earned a scholarship to “the most costly and snobbish of the English Public Schools” Eton College where he attended between 1917 and 1921, and where Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World* (1932) taught him French.

Indian Civil Service 1922-1927

Following in his father’s footsteps, Blair went to Burma (now Myanmar) to join the Indian Imperial Police, much like author H. H. Munro or ‘Saki’ had done in 1893. During the next five years he grew to love the Burmese and resent the oppression of imperialism and decided to become a writer instead. Works he wrote influenced by this period of his life are his essay “A Hanging” (1931); “*It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man.*” and “Shooting an Elephant” (1936); “*It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant – it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery.*”. His novel *Burmese Days* was first published in the United States in 1934 and then London in 1935, also based on his days in service.

Paris and London 1928-1936

After Orwell resigned, he moved to Paris to try his hand at short stories, writing freelance for various periodicals though he ended up destroying them because nobody would publish them. He had to resort to menial jobs including one at the pseudonymous ‘Hotel X’ that barely provided him enough to eat as a *plongeur*;

“[A] *plongeur* is one of the slaves of the modern world. Not that there is any need to whine over him, for he is better off than many manual workers, but still, he is no freer than if he were bought and sold. His work is servile and without art; he is paid just enough to keep him alive; his only holiday is the sack... trapped by a routine which makes thought impossible. If *plongeurs* thought at all, they would long ago have formed a union and gone on strike for better treatment. But they do not think, because they have no leisure for it; their life has made slaves of them.” —*Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933)

After a bout of pneumonia in 1929 Blair moved back to England to live in East London and adopted his pseudonym George Orwell, partly to avoid embarrassing his family. *Down and Out in Paris and London*, similarly to Emile Zola's *The Fat and the Thin* (1873) famously exposes the seedy underbelly of Paris and accounts his days of living hand to mouth;

"At present I do not feel that I have seen more than the fringe of poverty. Still I can point to one or two things I have definitely learned by being hard up. I shall never again think that all tramps are drunken scoundrels, nor expect a beggar to be grateful when I give him a penny, nor be surprised if men out of work lack energy, nor subscribe to the Salvation Army, nor pawn my clothes, nor refuse a handbill, nor enjoy a meal at a smart restaurant. That is a beginning."

A proponent for socialism, Blair now wanted to write for the 'common man' and purposefully lived as a tramp in London and the Home Counties and stayed with miners in the north. Blair learned of the disparity between the classes and came to know a life of poverty and hardship amongst beggars and thieves. His study of the under-classes in general would provide the theme for many of his works to follow. We read of his 'urban rides' and experience with the unemployed in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), written for the Left Book Club.

In 1932 Blair was a teacher for a time before moving to Hampstead, London to work in a bookstore. In the sardonically comical *Keep The Aspidistra Flying* (1936) Gordon Comstock spurns the 'Money God', materialism, and status, though that which he hates becomes an obsession. Comstock's political creed soon proves a cover-up for deep seated emotional issues;

"The money clinked in his trouser pocket as he got up. He knew the precise sum that was there. Fivepence halfpenny—twopence halfpenny and a Joey. He paused, took out the miserable little threepenny-bit, and looked at it. Beastly, useless thing! And bloody fool to have taken it! It had happened yesterday, when he was buying cigarettes. 'Don't mind a threepenny-bit, do you, sir?' the little bitch of a shop-girl had chirped. And of course he had let her give it him. 'Oh no, not at all!' he had said—fool, bloody fool!"

In 1936 Blair and once student of J.R.R. Tolkien student Eileen O'Shaughnessy (1905-1945) married. In 1944 they would adopt a son, Richard Horatio. Based on his teaching days, *A Clergyman's Daughter* was published in 1935.

Spanish Civil War

When civil war broke out, Blair and his wife both wanted to fight for the Spanish government against Francisco Franco's Nationalist uprising. While on the front at Huesca in Aragon Blair was shot in the throat by "*a Fascist sniper*". In Barcelona he joined the anti-Stalinist Spanish Trotskyist 'Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista' or POUM, the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification. When the communists partly gained control and tried to purge the POUM, many of Blair's friends were arrested, shot, or disappeared. He and Eileen barely escaped with their lives in 1937. His autobiographical *Homage to Catalonia* is written in the first person, mere months after the events.

"Shall the common man be pushed back into the mud, or shall he not? I myself believe, perhaps on insufficient grounds, that the common man will win his fight sooner or later, but I want it to be sooner and not later—some time within the next hundred years, say, and not some time within the next ten thousand years. That was the real issue of the Spanish war, and of the last war, and perhaps of other wars yet to come."—from his essay "Looking Back on the Spanish War"

WW II, the Home War Effort, and Fame 1939-1950

Back in England, Blair set to freelance writing again for such publications as *New English Weekly*, *The Tribune* and *New Statesman*. His essay subjects include fellow authors Charles Dickens, William Butler Yeats, Arthur Koestler, and P.G. Wodehouse. Essay titles include “Inside the Whale” (1940), “The Lion and The Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius” (1941), “Notes on Nationalism” (1945), “How the Poor Die” (1946), and “Reflections on Gandhi” (1949). *Coming Up For Air* was published in 1939. Blair joined the Home Guards and also worked in broadcasting with the BBC in propaganda efforts to garner support from Indians and East Asians. He was also literary editor for the left wing *The Tribune*, writing his column “As I Please” until 1945, the same year he became a war correspondent for *The Observer*. Eileen O’Shaughnessy died on 29 March 1945 while undergoing surgery in Newcastle upon Tyne.

In 1946 Blair lived for a year at Barnhill on the Isle of Jura. For years he had been developing his favourite novel that would cinch his literary legacy, *Animal Farm* (1944). “*On my return from Spain I thought of exposing the Soviet myth in a story that could be easily understood.*” Publishers did not want to touch his anti-Stalinist allegory while war was still raging so it was held for publishing until after the war had ended. From Chapter One of *Animal Farm*:

“Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever. Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself.”

Back in England, in 1949 Blair was admitted to the Cotswolds Sanatorium, Gloucestershire for tuberculosis, the same year he married Sonia Bronwell (1918-1980). Eric Arthur Blair died suddenly in London on 21 January 1950 at the age of forty-six, succumbing to the tuberculosis that had plagued him for the last three years of his life. He lies buried in the All Saint’s Churchyard in Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire, England.

George Orwell’s life and works have been the source of inspiration for many other authors’ works. *Keep The Aspidochelone Flying*, *Animal Farm*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have inspired numerous television and film adaptations. He has also contributed numerous concepts, words, and phrases to present day language including *Newspeak*; *doublethink* “the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them”; *thoughtcrime*; *four legs good, two legs bad*; *all animals are created equal, but some animals are more equal than others*; *He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past*; and *War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength*. Among the ranks of other such acclaimed literary giants as Jonathan Swift and Aldous Huxley, George Orwell is a master of wit and satire, critically observing the politics of his time and prophetically envisioning the future. He devoted much of his life to various causes critical of capitalism, imperialism, fascism, and Stalinism, but in the end what he “*most wanted to do is to make political writing into an art.*”

“*Liberty is telling people what they do not want to hear.*” —from a preface to *Animal Farm*

Literary Career and Legacy

During most of his career, Orwell was best known for his journalism, in essays, reviews, columns in newspapers and magazines and in his books of reportage: *Down and Out in Paris and London* (describing a period of poverty in these cities), *The Road to Wigan Pier* (describing the living conditions of the poor in northern England, and the class divide generally) and *Homage to Catalonia*. According to Irving Howe, Orwell was “the best English essayist since Hazlitt, perhaps since Dr Johnson.”

Modern readers are more often introduced to Orwell as a novelist, particularly through his enormously successful titles Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. The former is often thought to reflect degeneration in the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism; the latter, life under totalitarian rule. Nineteen Eighty-Four is often compared to Brave New World by Aldous Huxley; both are powerful dystopian novels warning of a future world where the state machine exerts complete control over social life. In 1984, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 were honoured with the Prometheus Award for their contributions to dystopian literature. In 2011 he received it again for *Animal Farm*.

Coming Up for Air, his last novel before World War II is the most "English" of his novels; alarms of war mingle with images of idyllic Thames-side Edwardian childhood of protagonist George Bowling. The novel is pessimistic; industrialism and capitalism have killed the best of Old England, and there were great, new external threats. In homely terms, Bowling posits the totalitarian hypotheses of Borkenau, Orwell, Silone and Koestler: "Old Hitler's something different. So's Joe Stalin. They aren't like these chaps in the old days who crucified people and chopped their heads off and so forth, just for the fun of it ... They're something quite new—something that's never been heard of before".

Literary Influences

In an autobiographical piece that Orwell sent to the editors of *Twentieth Century Authors* in 1940, he wrote: "The writers I care about most and never grow tired of are: Shakespeare, Swift, Fielding, Dickens, Charles Reade, Flaubert and, among modern writers, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence. But I believe the modern writer who has influenced me most is Somerset Maugham, whom I admire immensely for his power of telling a story straightforwardly and without frills." Elsewhere, Orwell strongly praised the works of Jack London, especially his book *The Road*. Orwell's investigation of poverty in *The Road to Wigan Pier* strongly resembles that of Jack London's *The People of the Abyss*, in which the American journalist disguises himself as an out-of-work sailor in order to investigate the lives of the poor in London. In his essay "Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of Gulliver's Travels" (1946) Orwell wrote: "If I had to make a list of six books which were to be preserved when all others were destroyed, I would certainly put Gulliver's Travels among them."

Other writers admired by Orwell included: Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Gissing, Graham Greene, Herman Melville, Henry Miller, Tobias Smollett, Mark Twain, Joseph Conrad and Yevgeny Zamyatin.^[101] He was both an admirer and a critic of Rudyard Kipling, praising Kipling as a gifted writer and a "good bad poet" whose work is "spurious" and "morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting," but undeniably seductive and able to speak to certain aspects of reality more effectively than more enlightened authors. He had a similarly ambivalent attitude to G. K. Chesterton, whom he regarded as a writer of considerable talent who had chosen to devote himself to "Roman Catholic propaganda".

Orwell as Literary Critic

Throughout his life Orwell continually supported himself as a book reviewer, writing works so long and sophisticated they have had an influence on literary criticism. He wrote in the conclusion to his 1940 essay on Charles Dickens,

When one reads any strongly individual piece of writing, one has the impression of seeing a face somewhere behind the page. It is not necessarily the actual face of the writer. I feel this very strongly with Swift, with Defoe, with Fielding, Stendhal, Thackeray, Flaubert, though in several cases I do not know what these people looked like and do not want to know. What one sees is the face that the writer ought to have. Well, in the case of Dickens I see a face that is not quite the face of Dickens's photographs, though it resembles it. It is the face of a man of about forty, with a small beard and a high colour. He is laughing, with a touch of anger in his laughter, but no triumph, no malignity. It is the face of a man who is always fighting against something, but who fights in the open and is not frightened, the face of a man who is generously angry—in other words, of a nineteenth-

century liberal, a free intelligence, a type hated with equal hatred by all the smelly little orthodoxies which are now contending for our souls.

Orwell wrote a critique of George Bernard Shaw's play Arms and the Man. He considered this Shaw's best play and the most likely to remain socially relevant, because of its theme that war is not, generally speaking, a glorious romantic adventure. His 1945 essay *In Defense of P.G. Wodehouse* contains an amusing assessment of his writing and also argues that his broadcasts from Germany (during the war) did not really make him a traitor. He accused The Ministry of Information of exaggerating Wodehouse's actions for propaganda purposes.

Reception and Evaluations of Orwell's Works

Arthur Koestler mentioned Orwell's "uncompromising intellectual honesty [which] made him appear almost inhuman at times." Ben Wattenberg stated: "Orwell's writing pierced intellectual hypocrisy wherever he found it." According to historian Piers Brendon, "Orwell was the saint of common decency who would in earlier days, said his BBC boss Rushbrook Williams, 'have been either canonised – or burnt at the stake'". However, Raymond Williams in Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review describes Orwell as a "successful impersonation of a plain man who bumps into experience in an unmediated way and tells the truth about it." Christopher Norris declared that Orwell's "homespun empiricist outlook – his assumption that the truth was just there to be told in a straightforward common-sense way – now seems not merely naive but culpably self-deluding". The American scholar Scott Lucas has described Orwell as an enemy of the Left. John Newsinger has argued that Lucas could only do this however by portraying "all of Orwell's attacks on Stalinism [-] as if they were attacks on socialism, despite Orwell's continued insistence that they were not."

Orwell's work has taken a prominent place in the school literature curriculum in England, with *Animal Farm* a regular examination topic at the end of secondary education (GCSE), and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* a topic for subsequent examinations below university level (A Levels). Alan Brown noted that this brings to the forefront questions about the political content of teaching practices. Study aids, in particular with potted biographies, might be seen to help propagate the Orwell myth so that as an embodiment of human values he is presented as a "trustworthy guide", while examination questions sometimes suggest a "right ways of answering" in line with the myth.

Historian John Rodden stated: "John Podhoretz did claim that if Orwell were alive today, he'd be standing with the neo-conservatives and against the Left. And the question arises, to what extent can you even begin to predict the political positions of somebody who's been dead three decades and more by that time?"

In *Orwell's Victory*, Christopher Hitchens argues, "In answer to the accusation of inconsistency Orwell as a writer was forever taking his own temperature. In other words, here was someone who never stopped testing and adjusting his intelligence".

John Rodden points out the "undeniable conservative features in the Orwell physiognomy" and remarks on how "to some extent Orwell facilitated the kinds of uses and abuses by the Right that his name has been put to. In other ways there has been the politics of selective quotation." Rodden refers to the essay "Why I Write", in which Orwell refers to the Spanish Civil War as being his "watershed political experience", saying "The Spanish War and other events in 1936–37, turned the scale. Thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly against totalitarianism and for Democratic Socialism as I understand it." (emphasis in original) Rodden goes on to explain how, during the McCarthy era, the introduction to the Signet edition of *Animal Farm*, which sold more than 20 million copies, makes use of "the politics of ellipsis":

If the book itself, *Animal Farm*, had left any doubt of the matter, Orwell dispelled it in his essay *Why I Write*: 'Every line of serious work that I've written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly against

Totalitarianism ... dot, dot, dot, dot.' "For Democratic Socialism" is vaporised, just like Winston Smith did it at the Ministry of Truth, and that's very much what happened at the beginning of the McCarthy era and just continued, Orwell being selectively quoted.

Fyvel wrote about Orwell: "His crucial experience ... was his struggle to turn himself into a writer, one which led through long periods of poverty, failure and humiliation, and about which he has written almost nothing directly. The sweat and agony was less in the slum-life than in the effort to turn the experience into literature."

Influence on Language and Writing

In his essay Politics and the English Language (1946), Orwell wrote about the importance of precise and clear language, arguing that vague writing can be used as a powerful tool of political manipulation because it shapes the way we think. In that essay, Orwell provides six rules for writers:

- Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
- Never use a long word where a short one will do.
- If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- Never use the passive where you can use the active.
- Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
- Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Andrew N. Rubin argues, "Orwell claimed that we should be attentive to how the use of language has limited our capacity for critical thought just as we should be equally concerned with the ways in which dominant modes of thinking have reshaped the very language that we use."

The adjective Orwellian connotes an attitude and a policy of control by propaganda, surveillance, misinformation, denial of truth, and manipulation of the past. In Nineteen Eighty-Four Orwell described a totalitarian government that controlled thought by controlling language, making certain ideas literally unthinkable. Several words and phrases from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have entered popular language. Newspeak is a simplified and obfuscatory language designed to make independent thought impossible. Doublethink means holding two contradictory beliefs simultaneously. The Thought Police are those who suppress all dissenting opinion. Prolefeed is homogenised, manufactured superficial literature, film and music, used to control and indoctrinate the populace through docility. Big Brother is a supreme dictator who watches everyone.

Orwell may have been the first to use the term cold war, in his essay, "You and the Atom Bomb", published in *Tribune*, 19 October 1945. He wrote:

We may be heading not for general breakdown but for an epoch as horribly stable as the slave empires of antiquity. James Burnham's theory has been much discussed, but few people have yet considered its ideological implications;— this is, the kind of world-view, the kind of beliefs, and the social structure that would probably prevail in a State which was at once unconquerable and in a permanent state of 'cold war' with its neighbours.

Personal life

Childhood

Jacintha Buddicom's account *Eric & Us* provides an insight into Blair's childhood. She quoted his sister Avril that "he was essentially an aloof, undemonstrative person" and said herself of his friendship with the Buddicom "I do not think he needed any other friends beyond the schoolfriend he occasionally and appreciatively referred to as 'CC'". She could not recall his having schoolfriends to stay and exchange visits as

her brother Prosper often did in holidays. Cyril Connolly provides an account of Blair as a child in Enemies of Promise. Years later, Blair mordantly recalled his prep school in the essay "Such, Such Were the Joys", claiming among other things that he "was made to study like a dog" to earn a scholarship, which he alleged was solely to enhance the school's prestige with parents. Jacintha Buddicom repudiated Orwell's schoolboy misery described in the essay, stating that "he was a specially happy child". She noted that he did not like his name, because it reminded him of a book he greatly disliked - Eric, or, Little by Little, a Victorian boys' school story.

Connolly remarked of him as a schoolboy, "The remarkable thing about Orwell was that alone among the boys he was an intellectual and not a parrot for he thought for himself". At Eton, John Vaughan Wilkes, his former headmaster's son recalled, "... he was extremely argumentative—about anything—and criticising the masters and criticising the other boys ... We enjoyed arguing with him. He would generally win the arguments—or think he had anyhow." Roger Mynors concurs: "Endless arguments about all sorts of things, in which he was one of the great leaders. He was one of those boys who thought for himself ..."

Blair liked to carry out practical jokes. Buddicom recalls him swinging from the luggage rack in a railway carriage like an orangutan to frighten a woman passenger out of the compartment. At Eton he played tricks on John Crace, his Master in College, among which was to enter a spoof advertisement in a College magazine implying pederasty. Gow, his tutor, said he "made himself as big a nuisance as he could" and "was a very unattractive boy". Later Blair was expelled from the crammer at Southwold for sending a dead rat as a birthday present to the town surveyor. In one of his *As I Please* essays he refers to a protracted joke when he answered an advertisement for a woman who claimed a cure for obesity.

Blair had an interest in natural history which stemmed from his childhood. In letters from school he wrote about caterpillars and butterflies, and Buddicom recalls his keen interest in ornithology. He also enjoyed fishing and shooting rabbits, and conducting experiments as in cooking a hedgehog or shooting down a jackdaw from the Eton roof to dissect it. His zeal for scientific experiments extended to explosives—again Buddicom recalls a cook giving notice because of the noise. Later in Southwold his sister Avril recalled him blowing up the garden. When teaching he enthused his students with his nature-rambles both at Southwold and Hayes. His adult diaries are permeated with his observations on nature.

Relationships and Marriage

Buddicom and Blair lost touch shortly after he went to Burma, and she became unsympathetic towards him. She wrote that it was because of the letters he wrote complaining about his life, but an addendum to Eric & Us by Venables reveals that he may have lost sympathy through an incident which was at best a clumsy seduction.

Mabel Fierz, who later became Blair's confidante, said: "He used to say the one thing he wished in this world was that he'd been attractive to women. He liked women and had many girlfriends I think in Burma. He had a girl in Southwold and another girl in London. He was rather a womaniser, yet he was afraid he wasn't attractive."

Brenda Salkield (Southwold) preferred friendship to any deeper relationship and maintained a correspondence with Blair for many years, particularly as a sounding board for his ideas. She wrote: "He was a great letter writer. Endless letters, and I mean when he wrote you a letter he wrote pages." His correspondence with Eleanor Jacques (London) was more prosaic, dwelling on a closer relationship and referring to past rendezvous or planning future ones in London and Burnham Beeches.

When Orwell was in the sanatorium in Kent, his wife's friend Lydia Jackson visited. He invited her for a walk and out of sight "an awkward situation arose." Jackson was to be the most critical of Orwell's marriage to Eileen O'Shaughnessy, but their later correspondence hints at a complicity. Eileen at the time was more concerned about Orwell's closeness to Brenda Salkield. Orwell was to have an affair with his secretary at *Tribune* which

caused Eileen much distress, and others have been mooted. In a letter to Ann Popham he wrote: "I was sometimes unfaithful to Eileen, and I also treated her badly, and I think she treated me badly, too, at times, but it was a real marriage, in the sense that we had been through awful struggles together and she understood all about my work, etc." Similarly he suggested to Celia Kirwan that they had both been unfaithful. There are several testaments that it was a well-matched and happy marriage.

Blair was very lonely after Eileen's death, and desperate for a wife, both as companion for himself and as mother for Richard. He proposed marriage to four women, including Celia Kirwan, and eventually Sonia Brownell accepted. Orwell had met her when she was assistant to Cyril Connolly, at Horizon literary magazine. They were married on 13 October 1949, only three months before Orwell's death. Some maintain that Sonia was the model for Julia in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Religious Views

Orwell was a communicant member of the Church of England, he attended holy communion regularly, and allusions to Anglican life are made in his book *A Clergyman's Daughter*. Mulk Raj Anand has said that, at the BBC, Orwell could, and would, quote lengthy passages from the Book of Common Prayer. At the same time he found the church to be a "selfish ... church of the landed gentry" with its establishment "out of touch" with the majority of its communicants and altogether a pernicious influence on public life. Moreover, Orwell expressed some scepticism about religion: "It seems rather mean to go to HC [Holy Communion] when one doesn't believe, but I have passed myself off for pious & there is nothing for it but to keep up with the deception." Yet, he was married according to the rites of the Church of England in both his first marriage at the church at Wallington, and in his second marriage on his deathbed in University College Hospital, and he left instructions that he was to receive an Anglican funeral.

In their 1972 study, *The Unknown Orwell*, the writers Peter Stansky and William Abrahams noted that at Eton Blair displayed a "sceptical attitude" to Christian belief. Crick observed that Orwell displayed "a pronounced anti-Catholicism". Evelyn Waugh, writing in 1946, acknowledged Orwell's high moral sense and respect for justice but believed "he seems never to have been touched at any point by a conception of religious thought and life."

The ambiguity in his belief in religion mirrored the dichotomies between his public and private lives: Stephen Ingle wrote that it was as if the writer George Orwell "vaunted" his unbelief while Eric Blair the individual retained "a deeply ingrained religiosity". Ingle later noted that Orwell did not accept the existence of an afterlife, believing in the finality of death while living and advocating a moral code based on Judeo-Christian beliefs. Orwell wrote in part V of his essay, "Such, Such Were the Joys": "Till about the age of fourteen I believed in God, and believed that the accounts given of him were true. But I was well aware that I did not love him."

Political Views

Orwell liked to provoke argument by challenging the status quo, but he was also a traditionalist with a love of old English values. He criticised and satirised, from the inside, the various social milieux in which he found himself – provincial town life in *A Clergyman's Daughter*; middle-class pretention in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*; preparatory schools in "Such, Such Were the Joys"; colonialism in *Burmese Days*, and some socialist groups in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. In his *Adelphi* days he described himself as a "Tory-anarchist."

In 1928, Orwell began his career as a professional writer in Paris at a journal owned by the French Communist, Henri Barbusse. His first article, *La Censure en Angleterre*, was an attempt to account for the 'extraordinary and illogical' moral censorship of plays and novels then practised in Britain. His own explanation was that the rise of the "puritan middle class," who had stricter morals than the aristocracy, tightened the rules of censorship in

the 19th century. Orwell's first published article in his home country, *A Farthing Newspaper*, was a critique of the new French daily the *Ami de Peuple*. This paper was sold much more cheaply than most others, and was intended for ordinary people to read. However, Orwell pointed out that its proprietor François Coty also owned the right-wing dailies Le Figaro and Le Gaulois, which the *Ami de Peuple* was supposedly competing against. Orwell suggested that cheap newspapers were no more than a vehicle for advertising and anti-leftist propaganda, and predicted the world might soon see free newspapers which would drive legitimate dailies out of business.

The Spanish Civil War played the most important part in defining Orwell's socialism. He wrote to Cyril Connolly from Barcelona on 8 June 1937: "I have seen wonderful things and at last really believe in Socialism, which I never did before." Having witnessed the success of the anarcho-syndicalist communities, for example in Anarchist Catalonia, and the subsequent brutal suppression of the anarcho-syndicalists, anti-Stalin communist parties and revolutionaries by the Soviet Union-backed Communists, Orwell returned from Catalonia a staunch anti-Stalinist and joined the Independent Labour Party, his card being issued on 13 June 1938. Although he was never a Trotskyist, he was strongly influenced by the Trotskyist and anarchist critiques of the Soviet regime, and by the anarchists' emphasis on individual freedom. In Part 2 of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, published by the Left Book Club, Orwell stated: "a real Socialist is one who wishes – not merely conceives it as desirable, but actively wishes – to see tyranny overthrown." Orwell stated in "Why I Write" (1946): "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it." Orwell was a proponent of a federal socialist Europe, a position outlined in his 1947 essay "Toward European Unity," which first appeared in Partisan Review. According to biographer John Newsinger,

the other crucial dimension to Orwell's socialism was his recognition that the Soviet Union was not socialist. Unlike many on the left, instead of abandoning socialism once he discovered the full horror of Stalinist rule in the Soviet Union, Orwell abandoned the Soviet Union and instead remained a socialist—indeed he became more committed to the socialist cause than ever."

In his 1938 essay "Why I joined the Independent Labour Party," published in the ILP-affiliated New Leader, Orwell wrote:

For some years past I have managed to make the capitalist class pay me several pounds a week for writing books against capitalism. But I do not delude myself that this state of affairs is going to last forever ... the only régime which, in the long run, will dare to permit freedom of speech is a Socialist régime. If Fascism triumphs I am finished as a writer – that is to say, finished in my only effective capacity. That of itself would be a sufficient reason for joining a Socialist party.

Towards the end of the essay, he wrote: "I do not mean I have lost all faith in the Labour Party. My most earnest hope is that the Labour Party will win a clear majority in the next General Election."

Orwell was opposed to rearmament against Nazi Germany—but he changed his view after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the outbreak of the war. He left the ILP because of its opposition to the war and adopted a political position of "revolutionary patriotism". In December 1940 he wrote in *Tribune* (the Labour left's weekly): "We are in a strange period of history in which a revolutionary has to be a patriot and a patriot has to be a revolutionary." During the war, Orwell was highly critical of the popular idea that an Anglo-Soviet alliance would be the basis of a post-war world of peace and prosperity. In 1942, commenting on journalist E. H. Carr's pro-Soviet views, Orwell stated: "all the appeasers, e.g. Professor E. H. Carr, have switched their allegiance from Hitler to Stalin."

On anarchism, Orwell wrote in *The Road to Wigan Pier*: "I worked out an anarchistic theory that all government is evil, that the punishment always does more harm than the crime and the people can be trusted to behave decently if you will only let them alone." He continued however and argued that "it is always necessary

to protect peaceful people from violence. In any state of society where crime can be profitable you have got to have a harsh criminal law and administer it ruthlessly."

In his reply (dated 15 November 1943) to an invitation from the Duchess of Atholl to speak for the British League for European Freedom, he stated that he didn't agree with their objectives. He admitted that what they said was "more truthful than the lying propaganda found in most of the press" but added that he could not "associate himself with an essentially Conservative body" that claimed to "defend democracy in Europe" but had "nothing to say about British imperialism." His closing paragraph stated: "I belong to the Left and must work inside it, much as I hate Russian totalitarianism and its poisonous influence in this country."

Orwell joined the staff of *Tribune* as literary editor, and from then until his death, was a left-wing (though hardly orthodox) Labour-supporting democratic socialist. On 1 September 1944, about the Warsaw Uprising, Orwell expressed in *Tribune* his hostility against the influence of the alliance with the USSR over the allies: "Do remember that dishonesty and cowardice always have to be paid for. Do not imagine that for years on end you can make yourself the boot-licking propagandist of the sovietic regime, or any other regime, and then suddenly return to honesty and reason. Once a whore, always a whore." According to Newsinger, although Orwell "was always critical of the 1945–51 Labour government's moderation, his support for it began to pull him to the right politically. This did not lead him to embrace conservatism, imperialism or reaction, but to defend, albeit critically, Labour reformism." Between 1945 and 1947, with A. J. Ayer and Bertrand Russell, he contributed a series of articles and essays to Polemic, a short-lived British "Magazine of Philosophy, Psychology, and Aesthetics" edited by the ex-Communist Humphrey Slater.

Writing in the spring of 1945 a long essay titled "Antisemitism in Britain," for the *Contemporary Jewish Record*, Orwell stated that anti-Semitism was on the increase in Britain, and that it was "irrational and will not yield to arguments." He argued that it would be useful to discover why anti-Semites could "swallow such absurdities on one particular subject while remaining sane on others." He wrote: "For quite six years the English admirers of Hitler contrived not to learn of the existence of Dachau and Buchenwald. ... Many English people have heard almost nothing about the extermination of German and Polish Jews during the present war. Their own anti-Semitism has caused this vast crime to bounce off their consciousness." In Nineteen Eighty-Four, written shortly after the war, Orwell portrayed the Party as enlisting anti-Semitic passions against their enemy, Goldstein.

Orwell publicly defended P.G. Wodehouse against charges of being a Nazi sympathiser – occasioned by his agreement to do some broadcasts over the German radio in 1941 – a defence based on Wodehouse's lack of interest in and ignorance of politics.

Special Branch, the intelligence division of the Metropolitan Police, maintained a file on Orwell for more than 20 years of his life. The dossier, published by The National Archives, states that, according to one investigator, Orwell had "advanced Communist views and several of his Indian friends say that they have often seen him at Communist meetings." However, MI5, the intelligence department of the Home Office, noted: "It is evident from his recent writings – 'The Lion and the Unicorn' – and his contribution to Gollancz's symposium *The Betrayal of the Left* that he does not hold with the Communist Party nor they with him."

Social Interactions

Orwell was noted for very close and enduring friendships with a few friends, but these were generally people with a similar background or with a similar level of literary ability. Ungregarious, he was out of place in a crowd and his discomfort was exacerbated when he was outside his own class. Though representing himself as a spokesman for the common man, he often appeared out of place with real working people. His brother-in-law Humphrey Dakin, a "Hail fellow, well met" type, who took him to a local pub in Leeds, said that he was told by the landlord: "Don't bring that bugger in here again." Adrian Fierz commented "He wasn't interested in racing or

greyhounds or pub crawling or shove ha'penny. He just did not have much in common with people who did not share his intellectual interests." Awkwardness attended many of his encounters with working-class representatives, as with Pollitt and McNair. but his courtesy and good manners were often commented on. Jack Common observed on meeting him for the first time, "Right away manners, and more than manners—breeding—showed through."

In his tramping days, he did domestic work for a time. His extreme politeness was recalled by a member of the family he worked for; she declared that the family referred to him as "Laurel" after the film comedian. With his gangling figure and awkwardness, Orwell's friends often saw him as a figure of fun. Geoffrey Gorer commented "He was awfully likely to knock things off tables, trip over things. I mean, he was a gangling, physically badly co-ordinated young man. I think his feeling [was] that even the inanimate world was against him ..." When he shared a flat with Heppenstall and Sayer, he was treated in a patronising manner by the younger men. At the BBC, in the 1940s, "everybody would pull his leg," and Spender described him as having real entertainment value "like, as I say, watching a Charlie Chaplin movie." A friend of Eileen's reminisced about her tolerance and humour, often at Orwell's expense.

One biography of Orwell accused him of having had an authoritarian streak. In Burma, he struck out at a Burmese boy who while "fooling around" with his friends had "accidentally bumped into him" at a station, with the result that Orwell "fell heavily" down some stairs. One of his former pupils recalled being beaten so hard he could not sit down for a week. When sharing a flat with Orwell, Heppenstall came home late one night in an advanced stage of loud inebriation. The upshot was that Heppenstall ended up with a bloody nose and was locked in a room. When he complained, Orwell hit him a crack across the legs with a shooting stick and Heppenstall then had to defend himself with a chair. Years later, after Orwell's death, Heppenstall wrote a dramatic account of the incident called "The Shooting Stick" and Mabel Fierz confirmed that Heppenstall came to her in a sorry state the following day.

However, Orwell got on well with young people. The pupil he beat considered him the best of teachers, and the young recruits in Barcelona tried to drink him under the table—though without success. His nephew recalled Uncle Eric laughing louder than anyone in the cinema at a Charlie Chaplin film.

In the wake of his most famous works, he attracted many uncritical hangers-on, but many others who sought him found him aloof and even dull. With his soft voice, he was sometimes shouted down or excluded from discussions. At this time, he was severely ill; it was wartime or the austerity period after it; during the war his wife suffered from depression; and after her death he was lonely and unhappy. In addition to that, he always lived frugally and seemed unable to care for himself properly. As a result of all this, people found his circumstances bleak. Some, like Michael Ayton, called him "Gloomy George," but others developed the idea that he was a "secular saint."

Although Orwell was frequently heard on the BBC for panel discussion and one-man broadcasts, no copy of his voice is known to exist.

Lifestyle

"By putting the tea in first and stirring as one pours, one can exactly regulate the amount of milk, whereas one is likely to put in too much milk if one does it the other way round"

—One of Orwell's eleven rules for making tea from his essay "A Nice Cup of Tea", appearing in the London Evening Standard, 12 January 1946.

Orwell was a heavy smoker, rolling his own cigarettes from strong shag tobacco, in spite of his bronchial condition. His penchant for the rugged life often took him to cold and damp situations, both in the long term as

in Catalonia and Jura, and short term, for example, motorcycling in the rain and suffering a shipwreck. His love of strong tea was legendary—he had Fortnum & Mason's tea brought to him in Catalonia and in 1946 his essay "A Nice Cup of Tea" appeared in the *London Evening Standard* on how to make it, with Orwell writing, "tea is one of the mainstays of civilisation in this country and causes violent disputes over how it should be made". He appreciated English beer, taken regularly and moderately, despised drinkers of lager and wrote about an imagined, ideal British pub in his 1946 newspaper article "The Moon Under Water". Not as particular about food, he enjoyed the wartime "Victory Pie" extolled canteen food at the BBC, and once ate the cat's dinner by mistake. He preferred traditional English dishes, such as roast beef and kippers. Reports of his Islington days refer to the cosy afternoon tea table.

His dress sense was unpredictable and usually casual. In Southwold he had the best cloth from the local tailor, but was equally happy in his tramping outfit. His attire in the Spanish Civil War, along with his size 12 boots, was a source of amusement. David Astor described him as looking like a prep school master, while according to the Special Branch dossier, Orwell's tendency to dress "in Bohemian fashion" revealed that the author was "a Communist".

Orwell's confusing approach to matters of social decorum—on the one hand expecting a working-class guest to dress for dinner, and on the other, slurping tea out of a saucer at the BBC canteen—helped stoke his reputation as an English eccentric.

About George Orwell by George Woodcock

Born Eric Arthur Blair in Motihari, Bengal, India, in 1903, George Orwell, novelist, essayist and critic, went on to become best known for his novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Born Eric Arthur Blair, George Orwell created some of the sharpest satirical fiction of the 20th century with such works as *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He was a man of strong opinions who addressed some of the major political movements of his times, including imperialism, fascism and communism.

The son of a British civil servant, George Orwell spent his first days in India, where his father was stationed. His mother brought him and his older sister, Marjorie, to England about a year after his birth and settled in Henley-on-Thames. His father stayed behind in India and rarely visited. (His younger sister, Avril, was born in 1908.) Orwell didn't really know his father until he retired from the service in 1912. And even after that, the pair never formed a strong bond. He found his father to be dull and conservative.

According to one biography, Orwell's first word was "beastly." He was a sick child, often battling bronchitis and the flu. Orwell was bit by the writing bug at an early age, reportedly composing his first poem around the age of four. He later wrote, "I had the lonely child's habit of making up stories and holding conversations with imaginary persons, and I think from the very start my literary ambitions were mixed up with the feeling of being isolated and undervalued." One of his first literary successes came at the age of 11 when he had a poem published in the local newspaper.

Like many other boys in England, Orwell was sent to boarding school. In 1911 he went to St. Cyprian's in the coastal town of Eastbourne, where he got his first taste of England's class system. On a partial scholarship, Orwell noticed that the school treated the richer students better than the poorer ones. He wasn't popular with his peers, and in books he found comfort from his difficult situation. He read works by Rudyard Kipling and H. G. Wells, among others. What he lacked in personality, he made up for in smarts. Orwell won scholarships to Wellington College and Eton College to continue his studies.

After completing his schooling at Eton, Orwell found himself at a dead end. His family did not have the money to pay for a university education. Instead he joined the India Imperial Police Force in 1922. After five years in Burma, Orwell resigned his post and returned to England. He was intent on making it as a writer.

After leaving the India Imperial Force, Orwell struggled to get his writing career off the ground. His first major work, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, (1933) explored his time eking out a living in these two cities. Orwell took all sorts of jobs to make ends meet, including being a dishwasher. The book provided a brutal look at the lives of the working poor and of those living a transient existence. Not wishing to embarrass his family, the author published the book under the pseudonym George Orwell.

Sometimes called the conscience of a generation, Orwell next explored his overseas experiences in *Burmese Days*, published in 1934. The novel offered a dark look at British colonialism in Burma, then part of the country's Indian empire. Orwell's interest in political matters grew rapidly after this novel was published. Also around this time, he met Eileen O'Shaughnessy. The pair married in June 1936, and Eileen supported and assisted Orwell in his career.

In December 1936, Orwell traveled to Spain, where he joined one of the groups fighting against General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. Orwell was badly injured during his time with a militia, getting shot in the throat and arm. For several weeks, he was unable to speak. Orwell and his wife, Eileen, were indicted on treason charges in Spain. Fortunately, the charges were brought after the couple had left the country.

Other health problems plagued the talented writer not long after his return to England. For years, Orwell had periods of sickness, and he was officially diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1938. He spent several months at the Preston Hall Sanatorium trying to recover, but he would continue to battle with tuberculosis for the rest of his life. At the time he was initially diagnosed, there was no effective treatment for the disease.

To support himself, Orwell took on all sorts of writing work. He wrote numerous essays and reviews over the years, developing a reputation for producing well-crafted literary criticism. In 1941, Orwell landed a job with the BBC as a producer. He developed news commentary and shows for audiences in the eastern part of the British Empire. Orwell enticed such literary greats as T. S. Eliot and E. M. Forster to appear on his programs. With World War II raging on, Orwell found himself acting as a propagandist to advance the country's side. He loathed this part of his job and resigned in 1943. Around this time, Orwell became the literary editor for a socialist newspaper.

Orwell is best known for two novels, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, both of which were published toward the end of his life. *Animal Farm* (1945) was an anti-Soviet satire in a pastoral setting featuring two pigs as its main protagonists. These pigs were said to represent Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky. The novel brought Orwell great acclaim and financial rewards.

In 1949, Orwell published another masterwork, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (or *1984* in later editions). This bleak vision of the world divided into three oppressive nations stirred up controversy among reviewers, who found this fictional future too despairing. In the novel, Orwell gave readers a glimpse into what would happen if the government controlled every detail of a person's life, down to their own private thoughts.

Nineteen Eighty-Four proved to be another huge success for the author, but he had little time to enjoy it. By this time, Orwell was in the late stages of his battle with tuberculosis. He died on January 21, 1950, in a London hospital. He may have passed away all too soon, but his ideas and opinions have lived on through his work. Both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have been turned into films and have enjoyed tremendous popularity over the years.

Orwell was married to Eileen O'Shaughnessy until her death in 1945. According to several reports, the pair had an open marriage. Orwell had a number of dalliances during this first marriage. In 1944 the couple adopted a

son, whom they named Richard Horatio Blair, after one of Orwell's ancestors. Their son was largely raised by Orwell's sister Avril after Eileen's death.

Near the end of his life, Orwell proposed to editor Sonia Brownell. He married her in 1950, only a short time before his death. Brownell inherited Orwell's estate and made a career out of managing his legacy.

George Orwell, pseudonym of Eric Arthur Blair (born 1903, Motihāri, Bengal, India—died Jan. 21, 1950, London), English novelist, essayist, and critic famous for his novels Animal Farm (1945) and Nineteen Eighty-four (1949), the latter a profound anti-Utopian novel that examines the dangers of totalitarian rule.

Born Eric Arthur Blair, Orwell never entirely abandoned his original name, but his first book (Down and Out in Paris and London) appeared as the work of George Orwell (the surname he derived from the beautiful River Orwell in East Anglia). In time his nom de plume became so closely attached to him that few people but relatives knew his real name was Blair. The change in name corresponded to a profound shift in Orwell's life-style, in which he changed from a pillar of the British imperial establishment into a literary and political rebel.

He was born in Bengal, into the class of sahibs. His father was a minor British official in the Indian civil service; his mother, of French extraction, was the daughter of an unsuccessful teak merchant in Burma. Their attitudes were those of the "landless gentry," as Orwell later called lower-middle-class people whose pretensions to social status had little relation to their income. Orwell was thus brought up in an atmosphere of impoverished snobbery. After returning with his parents to England, he was sent in 1911 to a preparatory boarding school on the Sussex coast, where he was distinguished among the other boys by his poverty and his intellectual brilliance. He grew up a morose, withdrawn, eccentric boy, and he was later to tell of the miseries of those years in his posthumously published autobiographical essay, *Such, Such Were the Joys* (1953).

Orwell won scholarships to two of England's leading schools, Winchester and Eton, and chose the latter. He stayed from 1917 to 1921. Aldous Huxley was one of his masters, and it was at Eton that he published his first writing in college periodicals. Instead of accepting a scholarship to a university, Orwell decided to follow family tradition and, in 1922, went to Burma as assistant district superintendent in the Indian Imperial Police. He served in a number of country stations and at first appeared to be a model imperial servant. Yet from boyhood he had wanted to become a writer, and when he realized how much against their will the Burmese were ruled by the British, he felt increasingly ashamed of his role as a colonial police officer. Later he was to recount his experiences and his reactions to imperial rule in his novel Burmese Days and in two brilliant autobiographical sketches, "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging," classics of expository prose.

In 1927 Orwell, on leave to England, decided not to return to Burma, and on Jan. 1, 1928, he took the decisive step of resigning from the imperial police. Already in the autumn of 1927 he had started on a course of action that was to shape his character as a writer. Having felt guilty that the barriers of race and caste had prevented his mingling with the Burmese, he thought he could expiate some of his guilt by immersing himself in the life of the poor and outcast people of Europe. Donning ragged clothes, he went into the East End of London to live in cheap lodging houses among labourers and beggars; he spent a period in the slums of Paris and worked as a dishwasher in French hotels and restaurants; he tramped the roads of England with professional vagrants and joined the people of the London slums in their annual exodus to work in the Kentish hopfields.

These experiences gave Orwell the material for Down and Out in Paris and London (1933), in which actual incidents are rearranged into something like fiction. The book's publication in 1933 earned him some initial literary recognition. Orwell's first novel, *Burmese Days* (1934), established the pattern of his subsequent fiction in its portrayal of a sensitive, conscientious, and emotionally isolated individual who is at odds with an oppressive or dishonest social environment. The main character of *Burmese Days* is a minor administrator who seeks to escape from the dreary and narrow-minded chauvinism of his fellow British colonialists in Burma. His sympathies for the Burmese, however, end in an unforeseen personal tragedy. The protagonist of Orwell's next novel, A Clergyman's Daughter (1935), is an unhappy spinster who achieves a brief and accidental liberation in

her experiences among some agricultural labourers. Keep the Aspidistra Flying (1936) is about a literarily inclined bookseller's assistant who despises the empty commercialism and materialism of middle-class life but who in the end is reconciled to bourgeois prosperity by his forced marriage to the girl he loves.

Orwell's revulsion against imperialism led not only to his personal rejection of the bourgeois life-style but to a political reorientation as well. Immediately after returning from Burma he called himself an anarchist and continued to do so for several years; during the 1930s, however, he began to consider himself a socialist, though he was too libertarian in his thinking ever to take the further step—so common in the period—of declaring himself a communist.

Orwell's first socialist book was an original and unorthodox political treatise entitled The Road to Wigan Pier (1937). It begins by describing his experiences when he went to live among the destitute and unemployed miners of northern England, sharing and observing their lives; it ends in a series of sharp criticisms of existing socialist movements. It combines mordant reporting with a tone of generous anger that was to characterize Orwell's subsequent writing.

By the time *The Road to Wigan Pier* was in print, Orwell was in Spain; he went to report on the Civil War there and stayed to join the Republican militia, serving on the Aragon and Teruel fronts and rising to the rank of second lieutenant. He was seriously wounded at Teruel, damage to his throat permanently affecting his voice and endowing his speech with a strange, compelling quietness. Later, in May 1937, after having fought in Barcelona against communists who were trying to suppress their political opponents, he was forced to flee Spain in fear of his life. The experience left him with a lifelong dread of communism, first expressed in the vivid account of his Spanish experiences, Homage to Catalonia (1938), which many consider one of his best books.

Returning to England, Orwell showed a paradoxically conservative strain in writing Coming Up for Air (1939), in which he uses the nostalgic recollections of a middle-aged man to examine the decency of a past England and express his fears about a future threatened by war and fascism. When war did come, Orwell was rejected for military service, and instead he headed the Indian service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). He left the BBC in 1943 and became literary editor of the *Tribune*, a left-wing socialist paper associated with the British Labour leader Aneurin Bevan. At this period Orwell was a prolific journalist, writing many newspaper articles and reviews, together with serious criticism, like his classic essays on Charles Dickens and on boys' weeklies and a number of books about England (notably The Lion and the Unicorn, 1941) that combined patriotic sentiment with the advocacy of a libertarian, decentralist socialism very much unlike that practiced by the British Labour Party.

In 1944 Orwell finished Animal Farm, a political fable based on the story of the Russian Revolution and its betrayal by Joseph Stalin. In this book a group of barnyard animals overthrow and chase off their exploitative human masters and set up an egalitarian society of their own. Eventually the animals' intelligent and power-loving leaders, the pigs, subvert the revolution and form a dictatorship whose bondage is even more oppressive and heartless than that of their former human masters. ("All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.") At first Orwell had difficulty finding a publisher for this small masterpiece, but when it appeared in 1945 *Animal Farm* made him famous and, for the first time, prosperous.

Animal Farm was one of Orwell's finest works, full of wit and fantasy and admirably written. It has, however, been overshadowed by his last book, Nineteen Eighty-four (1949), a novel he wrote as a warning after years of brooding on the twin menaces of Nazism and Stalinism. The novel is set in an imaginary future in which the world is dominated by three perpetually warring totalitarian police states. The book's hero, the Englishman Winston Smith, is a minor party functionary in one of these states. His longing for truth and decency leads him to secretly rebel against the government, which perpetuates its rule by systematically distorting the truth and continuously rewriting history to suit its own purposes. Smith has a love affair with a like-minded woman, but then they are both arrested by the Thought Police. The ensuing imprisonment, torture, and reeducation of Smith

are intended not merely to break him physically or make him submit but to root out his independent mental existence and his spiritual dignity until he can love only the figure he previously most hated: the apparent leader of the party, Big Brother. Smith's surrender to the monstrous brainwashing techniques of his jailers is tragic enough, but the novel gains much of its power from the comprehensive rigour with which it extends the premises of totalitarianism to their logical end: the love of power and domination over others has acquired its perfected expression in the perpetual surveillance and omnipresent dishonesty of an unassailable and irresistible police state under whose rule every human virtue is slowly being suborned and extinguished. Orwell's warning of the potential dangers of totalitarianism made a deep impression on his contemporaries and upon subsequent readers, and the book's title and many of its coined words and phrases ("Big Brother is watching you," "newspeak," "doublethink") became bywords for modern political abuses.

Orwell wrote the last pages of *Nineteen Eighty-four* in a remote house on the Hebridean island of Jura, which he had bought from the proceeds of *Animal Farm*. He worked between bouts of hospitalization for tuberculosis, of which he died in a London hospital in January 1950.

Bibliography

Novels

- 1934 – Burmese Days
- 1935 – A Clergyman's Daughter
- 1936 – Keep the Aspidistra Flying
- 1939 – Coming Up for Air
- 1945 – Animal Farm
- 1949 – Nineteen Eighty-Four

Nonfiction

- 1933 – Down and Out in Paris and London
- 1937 – The Road to Wigan Pier
- 1938 – Homage to Catalonia
- Biography of George Orwell
- Forum Discussions

Unit IV

Albert Camus

By David Simpson

Albert Camus was a French-Algerian existentialist. He was a journalist, playwright, novelist, writer of philosophical essays, and Nobel laureate. Though neither by advanced training nor profession a philosopher, Camus nevertheless through his literary works and in numerous reviews, articles, essays, and speeches made important, forceful contributions to a wide range of issues in moral philosophy – from terrorism and political violence to suicide and the death penalty. In awarding him its prize for literature in 1957, the Nobel committee cited the author's persistent efforts to "illuminate the problem of the human conscience in our time," and it is pre-eminently as a writer of conscience and as a champion of imaginative literature as a vehicle of philosophical insight and moral truth that Camus was honored by his own generation and is still admired today. He was at the height of his career, at work on an autobiographical novel, planning new projects for theatre, film, and television, and still seeking a solution to the lacerating political turmoil in his native Algeria, when he died tragically in an automobile accident in January, 1960.

Life

The writer Albert Camus was born on November 7, 1913, in Mondovi, a small village near the seaport city of Bonê (present-day Annaba) in the northeast region of French Algeria. He was the second child of Lucien Auguste Camus, a military veteran and wine-shipping clerk, and of Catherine Marie Cardona, a house-keeper and part-time factory worker. (Note: Although Camus himself believed that his father was Alsatian and a first-generation émigré, research by biographer Herbert Lottman indicates that the Camus family was originally from Bordeaux and that the first Camus to leave France for Algeria was actually the author's great-grandfather, who in the early 19th century became part of the first wave of European colonial settlers in the new melting pot of North Africa.)

Shortly after the outbreak of WWI, when Camus was less than a year old, his father was recalled to military service and on October 11, 1914, died of shrapnel wounds suffered at the first battle of the Marne. As a child, about the only thing Camus ever learned about his father was that he had once become violently ill after witnessing a public execution. This anecdote, which surfaces in fictional form in the author's novel *L'Étranger* and which is also recounted in his philosophical essay "Reflections on the Guillotine," strongly affected Camus and influenced his own lifelong opposition to the death penalty.

After his father's death, Camus, his mother, and older brother moved to Algiers where they lived with his maternal uncle and grandmother in her cramped second-floor apartment in the working-class district of Belcourt. Camus' mother Catherine, who was illiterate, partially deaf, and afflicted with a speech pathology, worked in an ammunition factory and cleaned homes to help support the family. In his posthumously published autobiographical novel *The First Man*, Camus recalls this period of his life with a mixture of pain and affection as he describes conditions of harsh poverty (the three-room apartment had no bathroom, no electricity, and no running water) relieved by hunting trips, family outings, childhood games, and scenic flashes of sun, seashore, mountain, and desert.

Camus attended elementary school at the local Ecole Communale, and it was there that he encountered the first in a series of teacher-mentors who recognized and nurtured the young boy's lively intelligence. These father-figures introduced him to a new world of history and imagination and to literary landscapes far beyond the dusty streets of Belcourt and working-class poverty. Though stigmatized as a *pupille de la nation* (that is, a war veteran's child dependent on public welfare) and hampered by recurrent health issues, Camus distinguished himself as a student and was eventually awarded a scholarship to attend high school at the Grand Lycee. Located near the famous Kasbah district, the school brought him into close proximity with the native Moslem community and thus to an early recognition of the idea of the "outsider" that would dominate his later writings. It was during his high school years that Camus became an avid reader (absorbing Gide, Proust, Verlaine, and Bergson, among others), learned Latin and English, and developed a lifelong interest in literature, art, theatre, and film. He also enjoyed sports, especially soccer, of which he once wrote (recalling his early experience as a goal-keeper): "I learned . . . that a ball never arrives from the direction you expected it. That helped me in later life, especially in mainland France, where nobody plays straight." It was also during this period that Camus suffered his first serious attack of tuberculosis, a disease that was to afflict him, on and off, throughout his career.

By the time he finished his *Baccalauréat* degree (June, 1932), Camus was already contributing articles to *Sud*, a literary monthly, and looking forward to a career in journalism, the arts, or higher education. The next four years (1933-37) were an especially busy period in his life, during which he attended college, worked at odd jobs, married his first wife (Simone Hié), divorced, briefly joined the Communist party, and effectively began his professional theatrical and writing career. Among his various employments during the time were stints of routine office work (one job consisted of a Bartleby-like recording and sifting of meteorological data; another involved paper-shuffling in an auto license bureau), and one can well imagine that it was during this period that his famous conceptions of Sisyphean struggle and of heroic defiance in the face of the Absurd first began to take shape within his imagination.

In 1933 Camus enrolled at the University of Algiers to pursue his *diplome d'études supérieures*, specializing in philosophy and gaining certificates in sociology and psychology along the way. In 1936 he became a co-founder along with a group of young fellow intellectuals of the *Théâtre du Travail*, a professional acting company specializing in drama with left-wing political themes. Camus served the company as both an actor and director and also contributed scripts, including his first published play *Revolt in Asturia*, a drama based on an ill-fated workers' revolt during the Spanish Civil War. That same year Camus also earned his degree and completed his dissertation, a study of the influence of Plotinus and neo-Platonism on the thought and writings of St. Augustine.

Over the next three years Camus further established himself as an emerging author, journalist, and theatre professional. After his disillusionment with and eventual expulsion from the Communist Party, he reorganized his dramatic company and renamed it the *Théâtre de l'Equipe* (literally the Theater of the Team). The name change signaled a new emphasis on classic drama and avant-garde aesthetics and a shift away from labor politics and agitprop. In 1938 he joined the staff of a new daily newspaper, the *Alger Républicain*, where his assignments as a reporter and reviewer covered everything from contemporary European literature to local political trials. It was during this period that he also published his first two literary works – *L'Envers et l'endroit* (*Betwixt and Between*), a collection of five short semi-autobiographical and philosophical pieces (1937) and *Noces* (*Nuptials*), a series of lyrical celebrations interspersed with wistful political and philosophical reflections on North Africa and the Mediterranean.

The 1940's witnessed Camus' gradual ascendance to the rank of world-class literary intellectual. He started the decade as a locally acclaimed author and playwright, but a figure virtually unknown outside the city of Algiers. He ended it as an internationally recognized novelist, dramatist, journalist, philosophical essayist, and champion of freedom. This period of his life began inauspiciously – war in Europe, the occupation of France, official censorship, and a widening crackdown on left-wing journals. Camus was still without stable employment or steady income when, after marrying his second wife, Francine Faure, in December of 1940, he departed Lyons, where he had been working as a journalist, and returned to Algeria. To help make ends meet, he taught part-time (French history and geography) at a private school in Oran. All the while he was putting finishing touches to his first novel *L'Etranger* (*The Stranger*), which was finally published in 1942 to favorable critical response, including a lengthy and penetrating review by Jean-Paul Sartre. The novel propelled him into immediate literary renown.

Camus returned to France in 1942 and a year later began working for the clandestine newspaper *Combat*, the journalistic arm and voice of the French Resistance movement. During this period, while contending with recurrent bouts of tuberculosis, he also published *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (*The Myth of Sisyphus*), his philosophical anatomy of suicide and the absurd, and joined Gallimard Publishing as an editor, a position he held until his death.

After the Liberation, Camus continued as editor of *Combat*, oversaw the production and publication of two plays, *Le Malentendu* (*The Misunderstanding*) and *Caligula*, and assumed a leading role in Parisian intellectual society in the company of Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir among others. In the late 40's his growing reputation as a writer and thinker was enlarged by the publication of *La Peste* (*The Plague*), an allegorical novel and fictional parable of the Nazi Occupation and the duty of revolt, and by lecture tours to the United States and South America. In 1951 he published *L'Homme Revolte* (*The Rebel*), a reflection on the nature of freedom and rebellion and a philosophical critique of revolutionary violence. This powerful and controversial work, with its explicit condemnation of Marxism-Leninism and its emphatic denunciation of unrestrained violence as a means of human liberation, led to an eventual falling out with Sartre and to his being branded a reactionary in the view of many European Communists. Yet it also established him as an outspoken champion of individual freedom and as an impassioned critic of tyranny and terrorism, whether practiced by the Left or by the Right.

In 1956, Camus published *La Chute* (*The Fall*), the short, confessional novel, which unfortunately would be the last of his completed major works and which in the opinion of some critics is the most elegant, and most underrated, of all his books. During this period he was still afflicted by tuberculosis and was perhaps even more

sorely beset by the deteriorating political situation (which had by now escalated from demonstrations and occasional terrorist and guerilla attacks into open violence and insurrection) in his native Algeria. Camus still hoped to champion some kind of rapprochement that would allow the native Moslem population and the French *pied noir* minority to live together peaceably in a new de-colonized and largely integrated, if not fully independent, nation. Alas, by this point, as he himself must have painfully recognized, the odds of such an outcome were becoming increasingly unlikely.

In the fall of 1957, following publication of *L'Exil et le Royaume* (*Exile and the Kingdom*), a collection of short fiction, Camus was shocked by news that he had been awarded the Nobel prize for literature. He absorbed the announcement with mixed feelings of gratitude, humility, and amazement. On the one hand, the award was obviously a tremendous honor. On the other, not only did he feel that his friend and esteemed fellow novelist Andre Malraux was more deserving, he was also aware that the Nobel itself was widely regarded as the kind of accolade usually given to artists *at the end of a long career*. Yet, as he indicated in his acceptance speech at Stockholm, he considered his own career as still in mid-flight, with much yet to accomplish and even greater writing challenges ahead:

. . . Every person, and assuredly every artist, wants to be recognized. So do I. But I have been unable to comprehend your decision without comparing its resounding impact with my own actual status. A man almost young, rich only in his doubts, and with his work still in progress. . . how could such a man not feel a kind of panic at hearing the decree that transports him all of a sudden. . . to the center of a glaring spotlight? And with what feelings could he accept this honor at a time when other writers in Europe, among them the very greatest, are condemned to silence, and even at a time when the country of his birth is going through unending misery?

Of course Camus could not have known as he spoke these words that most of his writing career was in fact behind him. Over the next two years, he published articles and continued to write, produce, and direct plays, including his own adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*. He also formulated new concepts for film and television, assumed a leadership role in a new experimental national theater, and continued to campaign for peace and a political solution in Algeria. Unfortunately, none of these latter projects would be brought to fulfillment. On January 4th of 1960, Camus died tragically in a car accident while a passenger in a vehicle driven by his friend and publisher Michel Gallimard, who also suffered fatal injuries. The author was buried in the local cemetery at Lourmarin, a village in Provencal where he and his wife and daughters had lived for nearly a decade.

Upon hearing of Camus' death, Sartre wrote a moving eulogy in the *France-Observateur*, saluting his former friend and political adversary not only for his distinguished contributions to French literature but especially for the heroic moral courage and "stubborn humanism" which he brought to bear against the "massive and deformed events of the day."

Literary Career

According to Sartre's perceptive appraisal, Camus was less a novelist than a writer of philosophical tales and parables in the tradition of Voltaire. This assessment accords with Camus' own judgment that his fictional works were not true novels (Fr. *romans*), a form he associated with the densely populated and richly detailed social panoramas of writers like Balzac, Tolstoy, and Proust, but rather *contes* ("tales") and *recits* ("narratives") combining philosophical and psychological insights.

In this respect, it is also worth noting that at no time in his career did Camus ever describe himself as a deep thinker or lay claim to the title of philosopher. Instead, he nearly always referred to himself simply, yet proudly, as *un ecrivain* – a writer. This is an important fact to keep in mind when assessing his place in intellectual history and in twentieth-century philosophy. For by no means does he qualify as a system-builder or theorist or even as a disciplined thinker. He was instead (and here again Sartre's assessment is astute) a sort of all-purpose critic and modern-day *philosophe*: a debunker of mythologies, a critic of fraud and superstition, an enemy of

terror, a voice of reason and compassion, and an outspoken defender of freedom – all in all a figure very much in the Enlightenment tradition of Voltaire and Diderot. For this reason, in assessing Camus' career and work, it may be best simply to take him at his own word and characterize him first and foremost as a *writer* – advisedly attaching the epithet *philosophical* for sharper accuracy and definition.

Camus, Philosophical Literature, and the Novel of Ideas

To pin down exactly why and in what distinctive sense Camus may be termed a *philosophical* writer, we can begin by comparing him with other authors who have merited the designation. Right away, we can eliminate any comparison with the efforts of Lucretius and Dante, who undertook to unfold entire cosmologies and philosophical systems in epic verse. Camus obviously attempted nothing of the sort. On the other hand, we can draw at least a limited comparison between Camus and writers like Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche – that is, with writers who were first of all philosophers or religious writers, but whose stylistic achievements and literary flair gained them a special place in the pantheon of world literature as well. Here we may note that Camus himself was very conscious of his debt to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (especially in the style and structure of *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*) and that he might very well have followed in their literary-philosophical footsteps if his tuberculosis had not side-tracked him into fiction and journalism and prevented him from pursuing an academic career.

Perhaps Camus himself best defined his own particular status as a philosophical writer when he wrote (with authors like Melville, Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, and Kafka especially in mind): “The great novelists are philosophical novelists”; that is, writers who eschew systematic explanation and create their discourse using “images instead of arguments.” (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, p.74.)

By his own definition then Camus is a philosophical writer in the sense that he has (a) conceived his own distinctive and original world-view and (b) sought to convey that view mainly through images, fictional characters and events, and dramatic presentation rather than through critical analysis and direct discourse. He is also both a novelist of ideas and a psychological novelist. And in this respect he certainly compares most closely to Dostoyevsky and Sartre, two other writers who combine a unique and distinctly philosophical outlook, acute psychological insight, and a dramatic style of presentation. (Like Camus, Sartre was a productive playwright, and Dostoyevsky remains perhaps the most dramatic of all novelists, as Camus himself seems to have realized, having adapted both *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Possessed* for the stage.)

Works

Camus' reputation rests largely on the three novels published during his lifetime (*The Stranger*, *The Plague*, and *The Fall*) and on his two major philosophical essays (*The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*). However, his body of work also includes a collection of short fiction (*Exile and the Kingdom*), an autobiographical novel *The First Man*, a number of dramatic works (most notably *Caligula*, *The Misunderstanding*, and *The Just Assassins*), several translations and adaptations (including new versions of works by Calderon, Lope de Vega, Dostoyevsky, and Faulkner), and a lengthy assortment of essays, prose pieces, critical reviews, transcribed speeches and interviews, articles, and works of journalism. A brief summary and description of the most important of Camus' writings is presented below as preparation for a larger discussion of his philosophy and world-view, including his main ideas and recurrent philosophical themes.

a. Fiction

***The Stranger* (1942)** – From its cold opening lines, “Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday; I can't be sure,” to its bleak concluding image of a public execution set to take place beneath the “benign indifference of the universe,” Camus' first and most famous novel takes the form of a terse, flat, first-person narrative by its main character Meursault, a very ordinary young man of unremarkable habits and unemotional affect who, inexplicably and in an almost absent-minded way, kills an Arab and then is arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. The neutral style of the novel – typical of what the critic Roland Barthes called “writing degree zero” – serves as a perfect vehicle for the descriptions and commentary of its anti-hero narrator, the

ultimate “outsider” and a person who seems to observe everything, including his own life, with almost pathological detachment.

The Plague (1947) – Set in the coastal town of Oran, Camus’ second novel is the story of an outbreak of plague, traced from its subtle, insidious, unheeded beginnings through its horrible, all-encompassing, and seemingly inescapable dominion to its eventual climax and decline, all told from the viewpoint of one of the survivors. Camus made no effort to conceal the fact that his novel was partly based on and could be interpreted as an allegory or parable of the rise of Nazism and the nightmare of the Occupation. However, the plague metaphor is both more complicated and more flexible than that, extending to signify the Absurd in general as well as any calamity or disaster that tests the mettle of human beings, their endurance, solidarity, sense of responsibility, compassion, and will. At the end of the novel, the plague finally retreats, and the narrator reflects that a time of pestilence teaches “that there is more to admire in men than to despise.” But he also knows “that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good,” that “the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again” and send them forth yet once more to spread death and contagion into a happy and unsuspecting city.

The Fall (1956) – Camus’ third novel, and the last to be published during his lifetime, is, in effect, an extended dramatic monologue spoken by M. Jean-Baptiste Clamence, a dissipated, cynical, former Parisian attorney (who now calls himself a “judge-penitent”) to an unnamed auditor (and thus indirectly to the reader). Set in a seedy bar amid the night-life of Amsterdam, the work is a small masterpiece of compression and style: a confessional (and semi-autobiographical) novel, an arresting character study and psychological portrait, and at the same time a wide-ranging philosophical discourse on guilt and innocence, expiation and punishment, good and evil.

b. Drama

***Caligula* (1938, first produced 1945).** “Men die and are not happy” – such is the complaint against the universe pronounced by the young emperor Caligula, who in Camus’ play is less the murderous lunatic, slave to incest, narcissist and megalomaniac of Roman history than a theatrical martyr-hero of the Absurd, a man who carries his philosophical quarrel with the meaninglessness of human existence to a kind of fanatical but logical extreme. Camus himself described his hero as a man “obsessed with the impossible” and willing to pervert all values and if necessary destroy himself and all those around him in the pursuit of absolute liberty. Caligula was Camus’ first attempt at portraying a figure in absolute defiance of the Absurd, and through three revisions of the play over a period of several years he eventually achieved a remarkable composite by adding touches of Sade, of revolutionary nihilism, of the Nietzschean Superman, of his own version of Sisypheus, and even of Mussolini and Hitler, to his original portrait.

c. Essays, Letters, Prose Collections, Articles, and Reviews

Betwixt and Between (1937) – This short collection of semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional, philosophical pieces might be dismissed as juvenilia and largely ignored if it were not for the fact that it represents Camus’ first attempt to formulate a coherent life-outlook and world-view. The collection, which in a way serves as a germ or starting point for the author’s later philosophy, consists of five lyrical essays. In “L’Ironie” (“Irony”), a reflection on youth and age, Camus asserts, in the manner of a young disciple of Pascal, our essential solitariness in life and death. In “Entre Oui et Non” (“Between yes and no”) he suggests that to hope is as empty and as pointless as to despair. Yet he goes beyond nihilism by positing a fundamental value to existence-in-the-world. In “La Mort dans l’âme” (Death in the soul”) he supplies a sort of existential travel review, contrasting his impressions of central and eastern Europe (which he views as purgatorial and morgue-like) with the more spontaneous life of Italy and Mediterranean culture. The piece thus affirms the author’s lifelong preference for the color and vitality of the Mediterranean world, and especially North Africa, as opposed to what he perceives as the soulless cold-heartedness of modern Europe. In “Amour de vivre” (“Love of life”) he claims there can be no love of life without despair of life and thus largely re-asserts the essentially tragic, ancient Greek view that the very beauty of human existence is largely contingent upon its brevity and fragility. The concluding essay, “L’Envers et l’endroit” (“Betwixt and between”), summarizes and re-emphasizes the basically Romantic themes

of the collection as a whole: our fundamental “aloneness,” the importance of imagination and openness to experience, the imperative to “live as if”

Noces (Nuptials) (1938) – This collection of four rhapsodic narratives supplements and amplifies the youthful philosophy expressed in *Betwixt and Between*. That joy is necessarily intertwined with despair, that the shortness of life confers a premium on intense experience, and that the world is both beautiful and violent – these are once again Camus’ principal themes. “Summer in Algiers,” which is probably the best (and best-known) of the essays in the collection, is a lyrical, at times almost ecstatic, celebration of sea, sun, and the North African landscape. Affirming a defiantly atheistic creed, Camus concludes with one of the core ideas of his philosophy: “if there is a sin against life, it consists not so much in despairing as in hoping for another life and in eluding the implacable grandeur of this one.”

The Myth of Sisyphus (1943) – If there is a single non-fiction work that can be considered an essential or fundamental statement of Camus’ philosophy, it is this extended essay on the ethics of suicide (eventually translated and repackaged for American publication in 1955). For it is here that Camus formally introduces and fully articulates his most famous idea, the concept of the Absurd, and his equally famous image of life as a Sisyphean struggle. From its provocative opening sentence (“There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide”) to its stirring, paradoxical conclusion (“The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy”), the book has something interesting and challenging on nearly every page and is shot through with brilliant aphorisms and insights. In the end, Camus rejects suicide: the Absurd must not be evaded either by religion (“philosophical suicide”) or by annihilation (“physical suicide”); the task of living should not merely be accepted, it must be embraced.

The Rebel (1951) – Camus considered this work a continuation of the critical and philosophical investigation of the Absurd that he began with *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Only this time his concern is not the ethics of suicide, but the problem of murder. After introducing the view that an authentic life inevitably involves some form of conscientious moral revolt, he ends up arguing that only in rare, and in very narrowly defined, instances can political violence be morally justified. Camus’ critique of revolutionary violence and terror in this work, and particularly his caustic assessment of Marxism-Leninism (which he accused of sacrificing innocent lives on the altar of History), touched nerves throughout Europe and led to his celebrated feud with Sartre and other French leftists.

Resistance, Rebellion, and Death (1957) – This posthumous collection is of interest to students of Camus mainly because it brings together an unusual assortment of his non-fiction writings on a wide range of topics, from art and politics to the advantages of pessimism and the virtues (from a non-believer’s standpoint) of Christianity. Of special interest are two pieces that helped secure Camus’ worldwide reputation as a voice of liberty: “Letters to a German Friend” (a set of four letters originally written during the Nazi Occupation) and “Reflections on the Guillotine” (a denunciation of the death penalty cited for special mention by the Nobel committee and eventually revised and re-published as a companion essay to go with fellow death-penalty opponent Arthur Koestler’s “Reflections on Hanging”).

Philosophy

“More a writer than a philosopher.”

(Assessment penciled on Camus’ dissertation by his dissertation adviser.)

To re-emphasize a point made earlier, Camus considered himself first and foremost a *writer (un écrivain)*. And at various times in his career he also accepted the labels *journalist*, *humanist*, *novelist*, and even *moralist*. However, he apparently never felt comfortable identifying himself as a *philosopher* – a term he seems to have associated with rigorous academic training, systematic thinking, logical consistency, and a coherent, carefully defined doctrine or body of ideas.

This is not to suggest that Camus lacked ideas or to say that his thought cannot be considered a personal *philosophy*. It is simply to point out that he was not a systematic, or even a notably disciplined, thinker and that, unlike Heidegger and Sartre, for example, he showed very little interest in metaphysics and ontology (which seems to be one of the reasons he consistently denied that he was an existentialist). In short, he was not much given to speculative philosophy or any kind of abstract theorizing. His thought is instead nearly always related to current events (e.g., the Spanish War, revolt in Algeria) and is consistently grounded in down-to-earth moral and political reality.

a. Background and Influences

Though he was baptized, raised, and educated as a Catholic and invariably respectful towards the Church, Camus seems to have been a natural-born pagan who showed almost no instinct whatsoever for belief in the supernatural. Even as a youth he was more of a sun-worshiper and nature lover than a boy notable for his piety or religious faith. On the other hand, there is no denying that Christian literature and philosophy served as an important influence on his early thought and intellectual development. As a young high school student Camus studied the Bible, read and savored the Spanish mystics St. Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, and was introduced to the thought of St. Augustine (who would later serve as the subject of his baccalaureate dissertation and become – as a fellow North African writer, quasi-existentialist, and conscientious observer-critic of his own life – an important lifelong influence).

In college Camus absorbed Kierkegaard (who, after Augustine, was probably the single greatest Christian influence on his thought). He also studied Schopenhauer and Nietzsche (undoubtedly the two writers who did the most to set him on his own path of defiant pessimism and atheism). Other notable influences include not only the major modern philosophers from the academic curriculum – from Descartes and Spinoza to Bergson – but also, and just as importantly, philosophical writers like Stendhal, Melville, Dostoyevsky, and Kafka.

b. Development

The two earliest expressions of Camus' personal philosophy are his works *Betwixt and Between* (1937) and *Nuptials* (1938). Here he unfolds what is essentially a hedonistic, indeed almost primitivistic, celebration of nature and the life of the senses. In the Romantic poetic tradition of writers like Rilke and Wallace Stevens, he offers a forceful rejection of all hereafters and an emphatic embrace of the here and now. There is no salvation, he argues, no transcendence; there is only the enjoyment of consciousness and natural being. One life, *this* life, is enough. Sky and sea, mountain and desert, have their own beauty and magnificence and constitute a sufficient heaven.

The critic John Cruikshank termed this stage in Camus' thinking "naïve atheism" and attributed it to his ecstatic and somewhat immature "Mediterraneanism." "Naïve" seems an apt characterization for a philosophy that is romantically bold and uncomplicated, yet somewhat lacking in sophistication and logical clarity. On the other hand, if we keep in mind Camus' theatrical background and preference for dramatic presentation, there may actually be more depth and complexity to his thought here than meets the eye. That is to say, just as it would be simplistic and reductive to equate Camus' philosophy of revolt with that of his character Caligula (who is at best a kind of extreme or mad spokesperson for the author), so in the same way it is possible that the *pensees* and opinions presented in *Nuptials* and *Betwixt and Between* are not so much the views of Camus himself as the poetically heightened observations of an artfully crafted narrator – an exuberant alter ego who is far more spontaneous and free-spirited than his more naturally reserved and sober-minded author.

In any case, regardless of our assessment of the ideas expressed in *Betwixt and Between* and *Nuptials*, it is clear that these early writings represent an important, if comparatively raw and simple, beginning stage in Camus' development as a thinker and that his views at this point differ markedly from his more mature philosophy in several noteworthy respects. In the first place, the Camus of *Nuptials* is still a young man of twenty-five, aflame with youthful *joie de vivre*. He favors a life of impulse and daring as it was honored and practiced in both Romantic literature and in the streets of Belcourt. Recently married and divorced, raised in poverty and in close quarters, beset with health problems, this young man develops an understandable passion for clear air, open

space, colorful dreams, panoramic vistas, and the breath-taking prospects and challenges of the larger world. Consequently, the Camus of the period 1937-38 is a decidedly different writer from the Camus who will ascend the dais at Stockholm nearly twenty years later.

The young Camus, that is to say, is more of a sensualist and pleasure-seeker, more of a dandy and aesthete, than the more hardened and austere figure who will endure the Occupation while serving in the French underground. He is a writer passionate in his conviction that life ought to be lived vividly and intensely – indeed *rebelliously* (to use the term that will take on increasing importance in his thought). He is also a writer attracted to causes, though he is not yet the author who will become world-famous for his moral seriousness and passionate commitment to justice and freedom. All of which is understandable. After all, the Camus of the middle 1930's had not yet witnessed and absorbed the shattering spectacle and disillusioning effects of the Spanish Civil War, the rise of Fascism, Hitlerism, and Stalinism, the coming into being of total war and weapons of mass destruction, and the terrible reign of genocide and terror that would characterize the period 1938-1945. It was under the pressure and in direct response to the events of this period that Camus' mature philosophy – with its core set of humanistic themes and ideas – emerged and gradually took shape. That mature philosophy is no longer a “naïve” atheism, but on the contrary a very reflective and critical brand of unbelief. It is proudly and inconsolably pessimistic, but not in a polemical or overbearing way. It is unbending, hard-headed, determinedly skeptical. It is tolerant and respectful of world religious creeds, but at the same time wholly unsympathetic to them. In the end it is an affirmative philosophy that accepts and approves, and in its own way blesses, our dreadful mortality and our fundamental isolation in the world.

c. Themes and Ideas

Regardless of whether he is producing drama, fiction, or non-fiction, Camus in his mature writings nearly always takes up and re-explores the same basic philosophical issues. These recurrent *topoi* constitute the key components of his thought. They include themes like the Absurd, alienation, suicide, and rebellion that almost automatically come to mind whenever his name is mentioned. Hence any summary of his place in modern philosophy would be incomplete without at least a brief discussion of these ideas and how they fit together to form a distinctive and original world-view.

i. The Absurd

Even readers not closely acquainted with Camus' works are aware of his reputation as the philosophical expositor, anatomist, and poet-apostle of the absurd. Indeed as even sit-com writers and stand-up comics apparently understand (odd fact: Camus has been used to explain episodes of *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons*), it is largely through the thought and writings of the French-Algerian author that the concept of absurdity has become a part not only of world literature and twentieth-century philosophy, but of modern popular culture as well.

What then is meant by the notion of the absurd? Contrary to the view conveyed by popular culture, the absurd, (at least in Camus' terms) does not simply refer to some vague perception that modern life is fraught with paradoxes, incongruities, and intellectual confusion. (Although that perception is certainly consistent with his formula.) Instead, as he himself emphasizes and tries to make clear, the absurd expresses a fundamental disharmony, a tragic incompatibility, in our existence. In effect, he argues that the absurd is the product of a collision or confrontation between our human desire for order, meaning, and purpose in life and the blank, indifferent “silence of the universe.” (“The absurd is not in man nor in the world,” Camus explains, “but in their presence together. . . it is the only bond uniting them.”)

So here we are: poor creatures desperately seeking hope and meaning in a hopeless, meaningless world. Sartre, in his essay-review of *The Stranger* provides an additional gloss on the idea: “The absurd, to be sure, resides neither in man nor in the world, if you consider each separately. But since man's dominant characteristic is ‘being in the world,’ the absurd is, in the end, an inseparable part of the human condition.” The absurd, then, presents itself in the form of an existential opposition. It arises from the human demand for clarity and transcendence on the one hand and a cosmos that offers nothing of the kind on the other. Such is our fate: we inhabit a world that is indifferent to our sufferings and deaf to our protests.

In Camus' view there are three possible philosophical responses to this predicament. Two of these he condemns as evasions; the other he puts forward as a proper solution.

Our first choice is blunt and simple: physical suicide. If we decide that a life without some essential purpose or meaning is not worth living, we can simply choose to kill ourselves. Camus rejects this choice as cowardly. In his terms it is a repudiation or renunciation of life, not a true revolt.

Choice two is the religious solution of positing a transcendent world of solace and meaning beyond the Absurd. Camus calls this solution "philosophical suicide" and rejects it as transparently evasive and fraudulent. To adopt a supernatural solution to the problem of the absurd (for example, through some type of mysticism or leap of faith) is to annihilate reason, which in Camus' view is as fatal and self-destructive as physical suicide. In effect, instead of removing himself from the absurd confrontation of self and world like the physical suicide, the religious believer simply removes the offending world, replacing it, via a kind of metaphysical abracadabra, with a more agreeable alternative.

Choice three (in Camus' view the only authentic and valid solution) is simply to accept absurdity, or better yet to embrace it, and to continue living. Since the absurd in his view is an unavoidable, indeed defining, characteristic of the human condition, the only proper response to it is full, unflinching, courageous acceptance. Life, he says, can "be lived all the better if it has no meaning."

The example par excellence of this option of spiritual courage and metaphysical revolt is the mythical Sisyphus of Camus' philosophical essay. Doomed to eternal labor at his rock, fully conscious of the essential hopelessness of his plight, Sisyphus nevertheless pushes on. In doing so he becomes for Camus a superb icon of the spirit of revolt and of the human condition. To rise each day to fight a battle you know you cannot win, and to do this with wit, grace, compassion for others, and even a sense of mission, is to face the Absurd in a spirit of true heroism.

Over the course of his career, Camus examines the Absurd from multiple perspectives and through the eyes of many different characters – from the mad Caligula, who is obsessed with the problem, to the strangely aloof and yet simultaneously self-absorbed Mersault, who seems indifferent to it even as he exemplifies and is finally victimized by it. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* Camus traces it in specific characters of legend and literature (Don Juan, Ivan Karamazov) and also in certain character types (the Actor, the Conqueror), all of whom may be understood as in some way a version or manifestation of Sisyphus, the archetypal absurd hero.

[Note: A rather different, yet possibly related, notion of the absurd is proposed and analyzed in the work of Kierkegaard, especially in *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition*. For Kierkegaard, however, the absurd describes not an essential and universal human condition, but the special condition and nature of religious faith – a paradoxical state in which matters of will and perception that are objectively impossible can nevertheless be ultimately true. Though it is hard to say whether Camus had Kierkegaard particularly in mind when he developed his own concept of the absurd, there can be little doubt that Kierkegaard's knight of faith is in certain ways an important predecessor of Camus' Sisyphus: both figures are involved in impossible and endlessly agonizing tasks, which they nevertheless confidently and even cheerfully pursue. In the knight's quixotic defiance and solipsism, Camus found a model for his own ideal of heroic affirmation and philosophical revolt.]

ii. Revolt

The companion theme to the Absurd in Camus' oeuvre (and the only other philosophical topic to which he devoted an entire book) is the idea of Revolt. What is revolt? Simply defined, it is the Sisyphean spirit of defiance in the face of the Absurd. More technically and less metaphorically, it is a spirit of opposition against *any* perceived unfairness, oppression, or indignity in the human condition.

Rebellion in Camus' sense begins with a recognition of boundaries, of limits that define one's essential selfhood and thus must not be infringed – as when the slave stands up to his master and says in effect "thus far, and no further, shall I be commanded." This defining of the self as at some point inviolable appears to be an act of pure egoism and individualism, but it is not. In fact Camus argues at some length to show that an act of conscientious

revolt is ultimately far more than just an individual gesture or an act of solitary protest. The rebel, he writes, holds that there is a “common good more important than his own destiny” and that there are “rights more important than himself.” He acts “in the name of certain values which are still indeterminate but which he feels are common to himself and to all men.” (*The Rebel*, 15-16.)

Camus then goes on to assert that an “analysis of rebellion leads at least to the suspicion that, contrary to the postulates of contemporary thought, a human nature does exist, as the Greeks believed.” After all, “Why rebel,” he asks, “if there is nothing permanent in the self worth preserving?” The slave who stands up and asserts himself actually does so for “the sake of everyone in the world.” He declares in effect that “all men – even the man who insults and oppresses him – have a natural community.” Here we may note that the idea that there may indeed be an essential human nature was actually more than a “suspicion” as far as Camus himself was concerned. Indeed for him it was more like a fundamental article of his humanist faith. In any case it represents one of the core principles of his ethics and is one of the things that sets his philosophy apart from existentialism. True revolt, then, is performed not just for the self but in solidarity with and out of compassion for others. And for this reason, Camus is led to conclude, that revolt too has its limits. If it begins with and necessarily involves a recognition of human community and a common human dignity, it cannot, without betraying its own true character, treat others as if they were lacking in that dignity or not a part of that community. In the end it is remarkable, and indeed surprising, how closely Camus’ philosophy of revolt, despite the author’s fervent atheism and individualism, echoes Kantian ethics with its prohibition against treating human beings as means and its ideal of the human community as a kingdom of ends.

iii. *The Outsider*

A recurrent theme in Camus’ literary works, which also shows up in his moral and political writings, is the character or perspective of the “stranger” or outsider. Mersault, the laconic narrator of *The Stranger*, is the most obvious example. He seems to observe everything, even his own behavior, from an outside perspective. Like an anthropologist, he records his observations with clinical detachment at the same time that he himself is warily observed by the community around him.

Camus came by this perspective naturally. As a European in Africa, an African in Europe, an infidel among Moslems, a lapsed Catholic, a Communist Party drop-out, an underground resister (who at times had to use code names and false identities), a “child of the state” raised by a widowed mother (who was illiterate and virtually deaf and dumb), Camus lived most of his life *in* various groups and communities without really being *of* them. This outside view, the perspective of the exile, became his characteristic stance as a writer. It explains both the cool, objective (“zero-degree”) precision of much of his work and also the high value he assigned to longed-for ideals of friendship, community, solidarity, and brotherhood.

iv. *Guilt and Innocence*

Throughout his writing career, Camus showed a deep interest in questions of guilt and innocence. Once again Mersault in *The Stranger* provides a striking example. Is he legally innocent of the murder he is charged with? Or is he technically guilty? On the one hand, there seems to have been no conscious intention behind his action. Indeed the killing takes place almost as if by accident, with Mersault in a kind of absent-minded daze, distracted by the sun. From this point of view, his crime seems surreal and his trial and subsequent conviction a travesty. On the other hand, it is hard for the reader not to share the view of other characters in the novel, especially Mersault’s accusers, witnesses, and jury, in whose eyes he seems to be a seriously defective human being – a kind of hollow man at best; at worst a monster of self-centeredness and insularity. That the character has evoked such a wide range of responses from critics and readers – from sympathy to horror – is a tribute to the psychological complexity and subtlety of Camus’ portrait.

Camus’ brilliantly crafted final novel, *The Fall*, continues his keen interest in the theme of guilt, this time via a narrator who is virtually obsessed with it. The significantly named Jean-Baptiste Clamence (a voice in the wilderness calling for universal clemency and forgiveness) is tortured by guilt in the wake of a seemingly casual incident. While strolling home one drizzly November evening, he shows little concern and almost no emotional

reaction at all to the suicidal plunge of a young woman into the Seine. But afterwards the incident begins to gnaw at him, and eventually he comes to view his inaction as typical of a long pattern of personal vanity and as a colossal failure of human sympathy on his part. Wracked by remorse and self-loathing, he gradually descends into a figurative hell. Formerly an attorney, he is now a self-described “judge-penitent” (a combination sinner, tempter, prosecutor, and father-confessor), who shows up each night at his local haunt, a sailor’s bar near Amsterdam’s red light district, where, somewhat in the manner of Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner, he recounts his story to whoever will hear it. In the final sections of the novel, amid distinctly Christian imagery and symbolism, he declares his crucial insight that, despite our pretensions to righteousness, *everyone is guilty*. Hence no human being has the right to pass final moral judgment on another.

In a final twist, Clamence asserts that his acid self-portrait is also a mirror for his contemporaries. Hence his confession is also an accusation – not only of his nameless companion (who serves as the mute auditor for his monologue) but ultimately of the *hypocrite lecteur* as well.

v. Christianity vs. “Paganism”

The theme of guilt and innocence in Camus’ writings relates closely to another recurrent tension in his thought: the opposition of Christian and pagan ideas and influences. At heart a nature-worshiper, and by instinct a skeptic and non-believer, Camus nevertheless retained a lifelong interest and respect for Christian philosophy and literature. In particular, he seems to have recognized St. Augustine and Kierkegaard as intellectual kinsmen and writers with whom he shared a common passion for controversy, literary flourish, self-scrutiny, and self-dramatization. Christian images, symbols, and allusions abound in all his work (probably more so than in the writing of any other avowed atheist in modern literature), and Christian themes – judgment, forgiveness, despair, sacrifice, passion, etc. – permeate the novels. (Mersault and Clamence, it is worth noting, are presented not just as sinners, devils, and outcasts, but in several instances explicitly, and not entirely ironically, as Christ figures.)

Meanwhile alongside and against this leitmotif of Christian images and themes, Camus sets the main components of his essentially pagan world view. Like Nietzsche, he maintains a special admiration for Greek heroic values and pessimism and for classical virtues like courage and honor. What might be termed Romantic values also merit particular esteem within his philosophy: passion, absorption in *being*, sensory experience, the glory of the moment, the beauty of the world.

As a result of this duality of influence, Camus’ basic philosophical problem becomes how to reconcile his Augustinian sense of original sin (universal guilt) and rampant moral evil with his personal ideal of pagan primitivism (universal innocence) and his conviction that the natural world and our life in it have intrinsic beauty and value. Can an absurd world have intrinsic value? Is authentic pessimism compatible with the view that there is an essential dignity to human life? Such questions raise the possibility that there may be deep logical inconsistencies within Camus’ philosophy, and some critics (notably Sartre) have suggested that these inconsistencies cannot be surmounted except through some sort of Kierkegaardian leap of faith on Camus’ part – in this case a leap leading to a belief not in God, but in man.

Such a leap is certainly implied in an oft-quoted remark from Camus’ “Letter to a German Friend,” where he wrote: “I continue to believe that this world has no supernatural meaning . . . But I know that something in the world has meaning – man.” One can find similar affirmations and protestations on behalf of humanity throughout Camus’ writings. They are almost a hallmark of his philosophical style. Oracular and high-flown, they clearly have more rhetorical force than logical potency. On the other hand, if we are trying to locate Camus’ place in European philosophical tradition, they provide a strong clue as to where he properly belongs. Surprisingly, the sentiment here, a commonplace of the Enlightenment and of traditional liberalism, is much closer in spirit to the exuberant secular humanism of the Italian Renaissance than to the agnostic skepticism of contemporary post-modernism.

vi. Individual vs. History and Mass Culture

A primary theme of early twentieth-century European literature and critical thought is the rise of modern mass civilization and its suffocating effects of alienation and dehumanization. By the time Camus was establishing his literary reputation, this theme had become pervasive. Anxiety over the fate of Western culture, already intense, escalated to apocalyptic levels with the sudden emergence of fascism, totalitarianism, and new technologies of coercion and death. Here then was a subject ready-made for a writer of Camus' political and humanistic views. He responded to the occasion with typical force and eloquence.

In one way or another, the themes of alienation and dehumanization as by-products of an increasingly technical and automated world enter into nearly all of Camus' works. Even his concept of the Absurd becomes multiplied by a social and economic world in which meaningless routines and mind-numbing repetitions predominate. The drudgery of Sisyphus is mirrored and amplified in the assembly line, the business office, the government bureau, and especially in the penal colony and concentration camp.

In line with this theme, the ever-ambiguous Merseault in *The Stranger* can be understood as both a depressing manifestation of the newly emerging mass personality (that is, as a figure devoid of basic human feelings and passions) and, conversely, as a lone hold-out, a last remaining specimen of the old Romanticism – and hence a figure who is viewed as both dangerous and alien by the robotic majority. Similarly, *The Plague* can be interpreted, on at least one level, as an allegory in which humanity must be preserved from the fatal pestilence of mass culture, which converts formerly free, autonomous, independent-minded, human beings into a soulless new species.

In his reflections on this theme, Camus differs from most other European writers (and especially from those on the Left) in viewing mass reform and revolutionary movements, notably Marxism, as representing at least as great a threat to individual freedom as industrial capitalism. Throughout his career he continued to cherish and defend old-fashioned virtues like personal courage and honor that other Left-wing intellectuals tended to view as reactionary or bourgeois.

vii. Suicide

Suicide is the central subject of *The Myth of Sisyphus* and serves as a background theme in *Caligula* and *The Fall*. (In *Caligula* the mad title character, in a fit of horror and revulsion at the meaninglessness of life, would rather die – and bring the world down with him – than accept a cosmos that is indifferent to human fate or that will not submit to his individual will. In *The Fall*, a stranger's act of suicide serves as the starting point for a bitter ritual of self-scrutiny and remorse on the part of the narrator).

Like Wittgenstein (who had a family history of suicide and suffered from bouts of depression), Camus considered suicide the fundamental issue for moral philosophy. However, unlike other philosophers who have written on the subject (from Cicero and Seneca to Montaigne and Schopenhauer), Camus seems uninterested in assessing the traditional motives and justifications for suicide (for instance, to avoid a long, painful, and debilitating illness or as a response to personal tragedy or scandal). Indeed he seems interested in the problem only to the extent that it represents one possible response to the Absurd. His verdict on the matter is unqualified and clear: the only courageous and morally valid response to the Absurd is to continue living. "Suicide is not an option."

viii. The Death Penalty

From the time he first heard the story of his father's literal nausea and revulsion after witnessing a public execution, Camus began a vocal and lifelong opposition to the death penalty. Executions by guillotine were a common public spectacle in Algeria during his lifetime, but he refused to attend them and recoiled bitterly at their very mention.

Condemnation of capital punishment is both explicit and implicit in his writings. For example, in *The Stranger* Merseault's long confinement during his trial and his eventual execution are presented as part of an

elaborate, ceremonial ritual involving both public and religious authorities. The grim rationality of this process of legalized murder contrasts markedly with the sudden, irrational, almost accidental nature of his actual crime. Similarly, in the *Myth of Sisyphus*, the would-be suicide is contrasted with his fatal opposite, the man condemned to death, and we are continually reminded that a sentence of death is our common fate in an absurd universe.

Camus' opposition to the death penalty is not specifically philosophical. That is, it is not based on a particular moral theory or principle (such as Cesare Beccaria's utilitarian objection that capital punishment is wrong because it has not been proven to have a deterrent effect greater than life imprisonment). Camus' opposition, in contrast, is humanitarian, conscientious, almost visceral. Like Victor Hugo, his great predecessor on this issue, he views the death penalty as an egregious barbarism – an act of blood riot and vengeance covered over with a thin veneer of law and civility to make it acceptable to modern sensibilities. That it is also an act of vengeance aimed primarily at the poor and oppressed, and that it is given religious sanction, makes it even more hideous and indefensible in his view.

Camus' essay "Reflections on the Guillotine" supplies a detailed examination of the issue. An eloquent personal statement, with compelling psychological and philosophical insights, it includes the author's direct rebuttal to traditional retributionist arguments in favor of capital punishment (such as Kant's claim that death is the legally appropriate, indeed morally required, penalty for murder). To all who argue that murder must be punished in kind, Camus replies:

Capital punishment is the most premeditated of murders, to which no criminal's deed, however calculated, can be compared. For there to be an equivalency, the death penalty would have to punish a criminal who had warned his victim of the date on which he would inflict a horrible death on him and who, from that moment onward, had confined him at his mercy for months. Such a monster is not to be encountered in private life.

Camus concludes his essay by arguing that, at the very least, France should abolish the savage spectacle of the guillotine and replace it with a more humane procedure (such as lethal injection). But he still retains a scant hope that capital punishment will be completely abolished at some point in the time to come: "In the unified Europe of the future the solemn abolition of the death penalty ought to be the first article of the European Code we all hope for." Camus himself did not live to see the day, but he would no doubt be gratified to know that abolition of capital punishment is now an essential prerequisite for membership in the European Union.

Existentialism

Camus is often classified as an existentialist writer, and it is easy to see why. Affinities with Kierkegaard and Sartre are patent. He shares with these philosophers (and with the other major writers in the existentialist tradition, from Augustine and Pascal to Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche) an habitual and intense interest in the active human psyche, in the life of conscience or spirit as it is actually experienced and lived. Like these writers, he aims at nothing less than a thorough, candid exegesis of the human condition, and like them he exhibits not just a philosophical attraction but also a personal commitment to such values as individualism, free choice, inner strength, authenticity, personal responsibility, and self-determination.

However, one troublesome fact remains: throughout his career Camus repeatedly denied that he was an existentialist. Was this an accurate and honest self-assessment? On the one hand, some critics have questioned this "denial" (using the term almost in its modern clinical sense), attributing it to the celebrated Sartre-Camus political "feud" or to a certain stubbornness or even contrariness on Camus' part. In their view, Camus qualifies as, at minimum, a closet existentialist, and in certain respects (e.g., in his unconditional and passionate concern for the individual) as an even truer specimen of the type than Sartre himself.

On the other hand, besides his personal rejection of the label, there appear to be solid reasons for challenging the claim that Camus is an existentialist. For one thing, it is noteworthy that he never showed much interest in

(indeed he largely avoided) metaphysical and ontological questions (the philosophical *raison d'être* and bread and butter of Heidegger and Sartre). Of course there is no rule that says an existentialist must be a metaphysician. However, Camus' seeming aversion to technical philosophical discussion does suggest one way in which he distanced himself from contemporary existentialist thought.

Another point of divergence is that Camus seems to have regarded existentialism as a complete and systematic world-view, that is, a fully articulated doctrine. In his view, to be a true existentialist one had to commit to the entire doctrine (and not merely to bits and pieces of it), and this was apparently something he was unwilling to do.

Yet a further point of separation, and possibly a decisive one, is that Camus actively challenged and set himself apart from the existentialist motto that *being precedes essence*. Ultimately, against Sartre in particular and existentialists in general, he clings to his instinctive belief in a common human nature. In his view human existence necessarily includes an essential core element of dignity and value, and in this respect he seems surprisingly closer to the humanist tradition from Aristotle to Kant than to the modern tradition of skepticism and relativism from Nietzsche to Derrida (the latter his fellow-countryman and, at least in his commitment to human rights and opposition to the death penalty, his spiritual successor and descendant).

Significance and Legacy

Obviously, Camus' writings remain the primary reason for his continuing importance and the chief source of his cultural legacy. But his fame is also due (and that in no small part and to a degree unusual among writers and intellectuals) to his exemplary life. He truly lived his philosophy. And thus it is in his personal political stands and public statements as well as in his books that we can find his views clearly articulated. In short, he bequeathed not just his words but also his actions. Taken together, those words and actions embody a core set of liberal democratic values – including tolerance, justice, liberty, open-mindedness, respect for personhood, condemnation of violence, and resistance to tyranny – that can be fully approved and acted upon by the modern intellectual *engagé*.

On a purely literary level, one of Camus' most original contributions to modern discourse is his distinctive prose style. Terse and hard-boiled, yet at the same time lyrical, and indeed capable of great, soaring flights of emotion and feeling, Camus' style represents a deliberate attempt on his part to wed the famous clarity, elegance, and dry precision of the French philosophical tradition with the more sonorous and opulent manner of 19th century Romantic fiction. The result is something like a cross between Hemingway (a Camus favorite) and Melville (another favorite); or between Diderot and Hugo. For the most part when we read Camus we encounter the plain syntax, simple vocabulary, and biting aphorism typical of modern theatre or noir detective fiction. However, this base style frequently becomes a counterpoint or springboard for extended musings and lavish descriptions almost in the manner of Proust. And here we may note that this attempted reconciliation or union of opposing styles is not just an aesthetic gesture on the author's part. It is also a moral and political statement as well. It says, in effect, that the life of reason and the life of feeling need not be opposed; that intellect and passion can, and should, operate together.

Perhaps the greatest inspiration and example that Camus provides for contemporary readers is the lesson that it is still possible for a serious thinker to face the modern world (with a full understanding of its contradictions, injustices, brutal flaws, and absurdities) with hardly a grain of hope, yet utterly without cynicism. To read Camus is to find words like *justice*, *freedom*, *humanity*, and *dignity* used plainly and openly, without apology or embarrassment, and without the pained or derisive facial expressions or invisible quotation marks that almost automatically accompany those terms in public discourse today.

At Stockholm Camus concluded his Nobel acceptance speech with a stirring reminder and challenge to modern writers. “The nobility of our craft,” he declared, “will always be rooted in two commitments, both difficult to maintain: the refusal to lie about what one knows and the resistance to oppression.” He left behind a body of work faithful to his own credo that the arts of language must always be used in the service of truth and the service of liberty.

Albert Camus: Philosopher of the Absurd

By Jim Marshall

Albert Camus (1913-1960), novelist, dramatist, philosopher, essayist, was born in Algeria on 7 November, 1913. His mother was Spanish and his Breton father was killed in World War I in 1914. Camus was raised and studied under difficult but reasonably happy circumstances: “though I was born poor, I was born under a happy sky in a natural setting with which one feels in union, unalienated”. Initially a journalist in Algiers, and later in Paris, he was Editor of *Combat*, the underground resistance newspaper from 1942 to 1946. Camus, like his friends Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, was then an active member of the resistance. He was but 46 when he was killed instantly in a road accident in January 1960, having been offered a lift back to Paris by a close friend (Roger Gallimard, the publisher, who later died of injuries sustained in the crash). The Nobel prize for literature was awarded to Camus in 1957.

Whilst his major interest was mainly in literature, he studied philosophy at Algiers University, and wrote didactic texts which are certainly philosophical. In philosophical histories or dictionaries he is usually listed under French existentialism and accorded higher status, as philosopher, than Simone de Beauvoir. Camus rejected the category “existentialist”. For many years a friend of Jean-Paul Sartre and Beauvoir they were to experience a massive “falling out”. But this had earlier roots, to do with jealousy, with Camus’ fierce individualism, combined with a post political ethics, and a refusal to commit himself politically to causes at a time after WW II when Sartre, under the influence of Beauvoir, was moving away from his earlier violent and alienated notion of the individual. The final straws were probably Sartre siding with the Communists (Camus would have no truck with them), an intemperate review of *L’Homme Révolté* in *Les Temps Modernes*, and an equally intemperate reply by Camus. Sartre responded equally as badly to Camus in *Les Temps Moderne* (August, 1952): “... you may be my brother — brotherhood is cheap — you certainly aren’t my comrade” (Sartre, 1952). (But they had been comrades in the resistance).

Camus had enormous consideration for others and was extremely generous, perhaps to a fault. In his early days Beauvoir said that she liked “the hungry ardour” of their companion, yet that he could become concerned that his generosity was received with ingratitude. He could become formal in discussion if not righteous and, “pen in hand, he became a rigid moralist” (Beauvoir, 1968: p.61). Perhaps the acclaim and his good luck went to his head. Nor as moralist did he have time for the deliberations and the risks involved in translating his moralism into political thought and action. In his later life he was probably closer to Gaullism than socialism, refusing to denounce colonialism in Algeria in Stockholm where he was to be awarded his Nobel prize. But in an ever increasing modernism and performativity Camus traces the disappearance of old Europe and the “spaces” where morals and justice are being replaced by the spaces of new technologies.

The essential philosophical thought of Camus is to be found in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1943) (*The Myth of Sisyphus* [1943]) and *L’Homme Révolté* (1951) (Transl. into English as *The Rebel* [1969]) although there are differences and developments between the two. These ideas are of course explored in his novels. A major thesis of Camus, in both tracts, is the problematisation of death. In the earlier tract it is suicide and in the latter it is the death of others, especially murder. They do not involve studies of death but, instead, attitudes towards death. If we can have experience of “other things” we cannot experience death, Camus argues for, at best, any “experience” is second hand and parasitic. Camus’ ongoing point is that we can have no experience of death, in the sense that we experience sense data, emotions, etc., but that death is, as human beings, our only certainty. He has been

titled as the writer of the absurd which, in his thought, can be described as the confrontation between our human demands for justice and rationality with a contingent and indifferent universe. Hence life is meaningless. Yet, we must accept the absurdity of life and we must go on living — Sisyphus accepts his futile fate. But: “Finally I come to death”.

In *Le Myth de Sisyphe* absurdity is a sensation or feeling, which seizes us suddenly. It is at the base of thought and action, even though it is indeterminate and confused and, if present, it is distant in time. Time is our worst enemy, causing us to place ourselves in time, and live with the future in mind — we are ardent for tomorrow — even though much of life is mechanical repetition. Faced by the absurdity of life consciousness becomes crucial to Camus’ thought — it is the only good and the real good. It permits one to discern meaning and, as the world has no meaning, it is ultimately absurd (though it is the relationship between consciousness and the world which is said to be absurd).

Our reaction to this experience of absurdity is pursued in *L’Homme Révolté*. Metaphysical rebellion is the answer to absurdity. It “is the means by which a man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation ... it disputes the ends of man and creation... (it) protests against the human condition ...”(The Rebel, p.29). Rebellion indefatigably confronts evil. But it also sets limits, beyond which one cannot go, for rebellion without limits ends in slavery: “... he who dedicates himself to the duration of his life, to the house he builds, to the dignity of mankind, dedicates himself to the earth ... and sustains the world again and again” (ibid., p. 267).

There is then a message of hope in rebellion because consciousness can make the walls or limits that could not formerly be penetrated, transparent. Consciousness is promoted by the absurd. There is a promise of a real awakening and no chance of returning to repose. But here Camus stops. There are no principles which define an appropriate rebellion. He is not so much theoretical here but practical. Each situation is new and the appropriate action determined by analysis of that situation. Camus was against violence but under certain conditions the rebel would choose limited and brief violence. On the eve of the liberation of Paris in WW II, he wrote in *Combat*: “... the barricades of freedom have once more been thrown up. Once more justice must be bought with the blood of men ... their reasons must then have been overwhelming for them suddenly to seize the guns and shoot steadily, in the night, at those soldiers who for two years thought that war was easy” (Camus, 1944).

There are limits then between opposites and moderation is the key. There are dualisms such as life and death; love and hatred; “tenderness” and “justice”; and justice for man against the contingencies of history. Somewhat paradoxically the rebel must at one and the same time reject and accept history, and simultaneously deny and affirm. Camus always sought a middle path, an equilibrium, and moderation. But without principles for such moderate forms of rebelling Camus seems almost anarchistic.

This concept of absurdity of the human condition is to be found in the Theatre of the Absurd which uses a variety of dramatic techniques which defy rational analysis in their presentation of the absurdity of the human condition. The term was coined by Martin Esslin in 1961 but he developed the notion of the absurd from Camus’ *Le Myth de Sisyphe*. Dramatists to whom this title might be applied include Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter.

Talking of the death of her former friend Simone de Beauvoir was to say: “it wasn’t the fifty-year old man who’d just died I was mourning; not that just man without justice, so arrogant and touchy behind his stern mask ... it was the companion of our hopeful years, whose open face laughed and smiled so easily, the young ambitious writer, wild to enjoy life, its pleasures, its triumphs and comradeship, friendship, love and happiness. Death had brought him back to life; for him time no longer existed” (Beauvoir, 1968, p.497).

Sartre in a eulogy for him in *France-Observateur* on 7 January 1960 said: “He was, in this century and against history, the current heir to that long line of moralists whose works perhaps constitute that which is most original in French letters. His stubborn humanism, narrow and pure, austere and sensual, battled uncertainly against the massive and misshapen events of this our time. But, inversely, through his obstinate refusal, he reaffirmed, in

the heart of our era, against the Machiavellians, against the golden calf of realism, the existence of morality” (Sartre, 1960, p. 110).

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Albert Camus and Absurdism

“There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.” The statement reveals one of the dilemmas of the philosophy of Absurd [also called as Absurdism] which Camus sought to answer. The Algerian-born French thinker Albert Camus was one of the leading thinkers of Absurdism. He was actually a writer and novelist with a strong philosophical bent. Absurdism is an off-shoot of Existentialism and shares many of its characteristics. Camus himself was labeled as an ‘Existentialist’ in his own life, but he rejected this title. He was not the first to present the concept of Absurd but it was owing to him that this idea gained popularity and influence, and it transformed into a proper philosophical movement of Absurdism. His famous novels include *The Stranger* [also translated as *The Outsider*] and *The Fall*, while *The Myth of Sisyphus* is his most important book with regard to his philosophy of the Absurd. He was one of the youngest people to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature, when he became a Nobel Laureate in 1957. It is an ironic fact that he died in a car accident in 1960, as he had once remarked that the most absurd way to die would be in a car accident. Camus was a friend of Sartre and worked with him for quite some time, but the two got separated over the issue of communism, as Sartre was a Marxist while Camus opposed it believing that this would lead to totalitarianism.

The foundations of the concept of Absurd can be traced back to the deeply religious Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, also regarded as the fore-father of Existentialism. Kierkegaard describes the Absurd as a situation in life which all the rational and thinking abilities of a person are unable to tell him which course of action to adopt in life, but in this very uncertainty he is forced to act or make a decision. He has to do something but his reason offers him no help. He writes in one of his journals: “What is the Absurd? It is, as may quite easily be seen, that I, a rational being, must act in a case where my reason, my powers of reflection, tell me: you can just as well do the one thing as the other, that is to say where my reason and reflection say: you cannot act and yet here is where I have to act...”

Since the beginning, thinkers have strived to find out the meaning to life and have pondered over the purpose and objective of this universe. Either they have concluded that this life is meaningless and purposeless, or they have taken refuge in some faith and religious belief such as the existence of God to make-up for this apparent lack of meaning. Even in the latter case, the question arises: what is the purpose of God? And it is this question which a believer has no answer to, as Kierkegaard pointed out, rendering belief in God (or any other religious

authority) as absurd. Hence there exists an absurdity which can not be eliminated.

Camus believed in the first scenario: a life intrinsically devoid of meaning and purpose. He refuses to accept any meaning that is beyond this existence. "I don't know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do not know the meaning... What can a meaning outside my condition mean to me? I can understand only in human terms."

But if life is absurd, what is the point of living on? Why shouldn't we commit suicide and hasten our fate? Using the Greek myth of Sisyphus as a metaphor, Camus attempts to answer this question and present an alternative to suicide. How to live with the consciousness of this absurdity of life is the central question of Camus's philosophy. "Does the absurd dictate death?" Camus believes that the answer is no. The appropriate response to the experience of Absurd, Camus suggests, is to live in full consciousness of it. He rejects all those things which erase the consciousness of absurd, such as religious faith, suicide and Existentialism.

Camus begins with a criticism on Existentialism. He says that Existentialists recognize initially that this life is absurd and meaningless, but they then take an 'existential leap' or a 'leap of faith' and attribute a fabricated meaning to their existence, and often they deify the Absurd. Camus calls it a 'philosophical suicide'. For example, about Chestov he writes: "[When] Chestov discovers the fundamental absurdity of all existence, he does not say 'This is absurd', but rather 'This is God'" And he says about Kierkegaard "Kierkegaard likewise takes the leap. His childhood having been so frightened by Christianity, he ultimately returns to its harshest aspect. For him too, antinomy and paradox become the criteria of the religious." And in contrast, Camus believes that "The absurd... does not lead to God... the absurd is sin without God."

Sisyphus was a clever and devious character in Greek mythology, who had an excessive zeal for life. He managed to deceive Death as well as Hades but ultimately he was caught, and for his audacity, he was condemned forever to push a heavy boulder up a mountain slope, and only to see it roll back again to the valley each time it reached the top. "They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor."

Camus imagines Sisyphus laboriously rolling the heavy rock, exerting his full strength to the top of the hill. But then he watches the stone roll back, all his measureless effort wasted, and now he will have to push it up again. Sisyphus walks down the slope towards the rock. And it is in this descent that Camus's interest is focused. "It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end. That hour like a breathing-space which returns as surely as his suffering, that is the hour of consciousness. At each of those moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks toward the lairs of the gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock."

Why does this account of Sisyphus arouse dreadfulness in us? Is it because the endless futility of Sisyphus's toil evokes horror? But then, do we not realize that this myth is a metaphor for our very lives. Our lives too are spent in a useless working routine, whose end even we are not aware of. But it doesn't shock us like Sisyphus's punishment because we are not conscious of it. "If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd."

Yet, Sisyphus is superior to his fate because he has accepted. He will remain in torment and despair as long as he has hope or dream for something better. But once he has realized that this is what his life is, and what it will remain, and there is nothing better at all to look forward to, he will no longer be tormented by the absurdity of his existence. And this would be the key to his happiness. Camus ends his essay with the words, "One must imagine Sisyphus happy." But why *must* we imagine Sisyphus to be happy? Is it some sort of a necessary conclusion? Let us consider the scenario: Sisyphus has fully accepted the reality of his life, the fact that it is absurd. Now if he is not happy, it would mean that life is not intrinsically happy; that happiness can only be

found by some sort of an illusion, by means of an escape from reality. We have to believe Sisyphus to be happy if we wish to believe in genuine happiness, a happiness that is real because it is an outcome of the awareness of the reality of life itself.

We must note here that although Camus sees life as absurd and ultimately irrational, he does not advocate a stoic acceptance of the difficulties and problems of life. Camus believed life to be valuable and worth-defending, and all his life he did engage in different activities to help the poor and the oppressed.

Camus, Absurdity, and Revolt by Tim Rayner

Albert Camus (1913-1960) was a French writer and existentialist philosopher. He was born in Algeria, then a colony of France, which gave him a unique perspective on life as an outsider. Camus is widely acknowledged as the greatest of the philosophers of 'the absurd'. His idea is simple: Human beings are caught in a constant attempt to derive meaning from a meaningless world. This is the 'paradox of the absurd'.

Camus' novels *The Outsider* (1942), *The Plague* (1947), and *The Fall* (1956) are classics of existentialist fiction. His philosophical writings *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) and *The Rebel* (1951) are profound statements of position. Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957. Unlike fellow existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, he accepted it.

It is instructive to consider the differences between Sartre and Camus. The men were friends in the war years. Together, they edited the political journal *Combat*. But Sartre and Camus fell out on account of their views on Stalin and communism. In the 1950s, Sartre threw his support behind Stalin's vision of the global communist struggle. Camus was unimpressed by the "ends justify the means" mentality of the communist revolutionaries, and would have no truck with Stalin's mass production of a perfected humanity. In *The Rebel*, he made his criticisms plain. Sartre responded in anger and ended their friendship.

The break-up was a long time coming. Philosophically, Camus differed with Sartre on key issues including the definition of existential authenticity. Sartre argued that authenticity involves making a *fundamental choice* about how to live – as a philosopher, writer, communist, whatever. The caveat is that we acknowledge that this is only a choice, and there are other choices we can make in life. Camus argued for what is ultimately, I think, a more uncompromising position: that existential authenticity demands that we admit to ourselves that our plans and projects are *for the most part hopeless and in vain* – and struggle on regardless. This, for Camus, is existential revolt – to affirm the absurdity of life and continue.

'Revolt ... is a constant confrontation between man and his own obscurity ... [It] is certainty of a crushing fate, without the resignation which out to accompany it'.

Camus crystallizes the attitude of revolt in the character of Sisyphus, a figure from Greek myth.

'The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor'.

Struggle to get out of bed in the morning? Imagine being Sisyphus. Sisyphus is forced each day to roll a boulder to the top of a mountain to watch it roll down again. This is the human condition, Camus says. A backbreaking labour without purpose, payoff, or end. Then you die.

Yet Camus affirms Sisyphus as the absurd hero.

What makes Sisyphus heroic? Sisyphus endures his fate. But what makes him heroic is not just that he suffers his fate, it is because he is 'superior' to it. Sisyphus does not weep and lament his state and condition. Out of scorn for the gods who condemned him to this fate, he affirms his labor, and concludes that all is well. Fixing his eye on the stone at the bottom of the hill, he trudges down the slope to retrieve it. Camus ends: 'One must imagine that Sisyphus is happy'.

To affirm the absurdity of existence and continue: this is revolt. Camus reflects:

'It may be thought that suicide follows revolt – but wrongly. ... [R]evolt gives value to life. ... To a man devoid of blinders, there is no finer sight than that of the intelligence at grips with a reality that transcends it' (Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*).

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Arthur Miller

Arthur Miller was an American playwright whose biting criticism of societal problems defined his genius. His best known play is Death of a Salesman.

“The structure of a play is always the story of how the birds came home to roost.”

—Arthur Miller

Arthur Asher Miller (October 17, 1915 – February 10, 2005) was an American playwright, essayist, and prominent figure in twentieth-century American theatre. Among his plays are All My Sons (1947), Death of a Salesman (1949), The Crucible (1953) and A View from the Bridge (1955, revised 1956). He also wrote the screenplay for the film The Misfits (1961).

Miller was often in the public eye, particularly during the late 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s. During this time, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama; testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee; and was married to Marilyn Monroe. He received the Prince of Asturias Award in 2002 and Jerusalem Prize in 2003.

Biography

Early Life

Arthur Asher Miller was born on October 17, 1915, in Harlem, in the New York City borough of Manhattan, the second of three children of Augusta (Barnett) and Isidore Miller. His father was an Austrian Jewish immigrant, and his mother was born in New York, to Austrian Jewish parents. His father owned a women's

clothing manufacturing business employing 400 people. He became a wealthy and respected man in the community. The family, including his younger sister Joan, lived on West 110th Street in Manhattan and owned a summer house in Far Rockaway, Queens. They employed a chauffeur. In the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the family lost almost everything and moved to Gravesend, Brooklyn. As a teenager, Miller delivered bread every morning before school to help the family. After graduating in 1932 from Abraham Lincoln High School, he worked at several menial jobs to pay for his college tuition.

At the University of Michigan, Miller first majored in journalism and worked as a reporter and night editor for the student paper, the Michigan Daily. It was during this time that he wrote his first play, No Villain. Miller switched his major to English, and subsequently won the Avery Hopwood Award for *No Villain*. The award brought him his first recognition and led him to begin to consider that he could have a career as a playwright. Miller enrolled in a playwriting seminar taught by the influential Professor Kenneth Rowe, who instructed him in his early forays into playwriting; Rowe emphasized how a play is built in order to achieve its intended effect, or what Miller called "the dynamics of play construction". Rowe provided realistic feedback along with much-needed encouragement, and became a lifelong friend. Miller retained strong ties to his alma mater throughout the rest of his life, establishing the university's Arthur Miller Award in 1985 and Arthur Miller Award for Dramatic Writing in 1999, and lending his name to the Arthur Miller Theatre in 2000. In 1937, Miller wrote Honors at Dawn, which also received the Avery Hopwood Award.

In 1938, Miller received a BA in English. After graduation, he joined the Federal Theater Project, a New Deal agency established to provide jobs in the theater. He chose the theater project although he had an offer to work as a scriptwriter for 20th Century Fox. However, Congress, worried about possible Communist infiltration, closed the project in 1939. Miller began working in the Brooklyn Navy Yard while continuing to write radio plays, some of which were broadcast on CBS.

In 1940, he married Mary Grace Slattery. The couple had two children, Jane and Robert (born May 31, 1947). Miller was exempted from military service during World War II because of a high-school football injury to his left kneecap.

Early Career

Miller wrote The Man Who Had All the Luck, which was produced in New Jersey in 1940 and won the Theatre Guild's National Award. The play closed after four performances with disastrous reviews.

In his book *Trinity of Passion*, author Alan M. Wald conjectures that Miller was "a member of a writer's unit of the Communist Party around 1946," using the pseudonym Matt Wayne, and editing a drama column in the magazine The New Masses.

In 1947, Miller's play All My Sons, the writing of which had commenced in 1941, was a success on Broadway (earning him his first Tony Award, for Best Author) and his reputation as a playwright was established. Years later, in a 1994 interview with Ron Rifkin, Miller said that most contemporary critics regarded All My Sons as "a very depressing play in a time of great optimism" and that positive reviews from Brooks Atkinson of The New York Times had saved it from failure.

In 1948, Miller built a small studio in Roxbury, Connecticut. There, in less than a day, he wrote Act I of Death of a Salesman. Within six weeks, he completed the rest of the play, one of the classics of world theater. *Death of a Salesman* premiered on Broadway on February 10, 1949 at the Morosco Theatre, directed by Elia Kazan, and starring Lee J. Cobb as Willy Loman, Mildred Dunnock as Linda, Arthur Kennedy as Biff, and Cameron Mitchell as Happy. The play was commercially successful and critically acclaimed, winning a Tony Award for Best Author, the New York Drama Circle Critics' Award, and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It was the first play to win all three of these major awards. The play was performed 742 times.

In 1952, Kazan appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC); unwilling to risk his promising career in Hollywood for the Communist cause that he had come to despise, Kazan named eight members of the Group Theatre, including Clifford Odets, Paula Strasberg, Lillian Hellman, J. Edward Bromberg, and John Garfield, who in recent years had been fellow members of the Communist Party. After speaking with Kazan about his testimony Miller traveled to Salem, Massachusetts to research the witch trials of 1692. The Crucible, in which Miller likened the situation with the House Un-American Activities Committee to the witch hunt in Salem in 1692, opened at the Beck Theatre on Broadway on January 22, 1953. Though widely considered only somewhat successful at the time of its initial release, today The Crucible is Miller's most frequently produced work throughout the world and was adapted into an opera by Robert Ward, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1962. Miller and Kazan were close friends throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, but after Kazan's testimony to the HUAC, the pair's friendship ended, and they did not speak to each other for the next ten years. The HUAC took an interest in Miller himself not long after *The Crucible* opened, denying him a passport to attend the play's London opening in 1954. Kazan defended his own actions through his film On the Waterfront, in which a dockworker heroically testifies against a corrupt union boss.

Miller's experience with the HUAC affected him throughout his life. In the late 1970s he became very interested in the highly publicized Barbara Gibbons murder case, in which Gibbons' son Peter Reilly was convicted of his mother's murder based on what many felt was a coerced confession and little other evidence. City Confidential, an A&E Network series, produced an episode about the murder, postulating that part of the reason Miller took such an active interest (including supporting Reilly's defense and using his own celebrity to bring attention to Reilly's plight) was because he had felt similarly persecuted in his run-ins with the HUAC. He sympathized with Reilly, whom he firmly believed to be innocent and to have been railroaded by the Connecticut State Police and the Attorney General who had initially prosecuted the case.

1956–1964

In 1956, a one-act version of Miller's verse drama A View from the Bridge opened on Broadway in a joint bill with one of Miller's lesser-known plays, A Memory of Two Mondays. The following year, Miller revised *A View from the Bridge* as a two-act prose drama, which Peter Brook directed in London. A French-Italian co-production Vu du pont, based on the play, was released in 1962.

In June 1956, Miller left his first wife Mary Slattery and on June 29 he married Marilyn Monroe. Miller and Monroe had met in April 23, 1951, when they had a brief affair, and had remained in contact since then.

When Miller applied in 1956 for a routine renewal of his passport, the HUAC used this opportunity to subpoena him to appear before the committee. Before appearing, Miller asked the committee not to ask him to name names, to which the chairman, Francis E. Walter (D-PA) agreed.

When Miller attended the hearing, to which Monroe accompanied him, risking her own career, he gave the committee a detailed account of his political activities. Reneging on the chairman's promise, the committee demanded the names of friends and colleagues who had participated in similar activities. Miller refused to comply, saying "I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him." As a result, a judge found Miller guilty of contempt of Congress in May 1957. Miller was sentenced to a \$500 fine or thirty days in prison, blacklisted, and disallowed a US passport. In 1958, his conviction was overturned by the court of appeals, which ruled that Miller had been misled by the chairman of the HUAC.

Miller began work on The Misfits, starring his wife. Miller later said that the filming was one of the lowest points in his life; shortly before the film's premiere in 1961, the pair divorced. 19 months later, Monroe died of a possible drug overdose. Miller's future wife Inge Morath worked as a photographer documenting the film's production. The film proved to be the last appearances for both Monroe and Clark Gable, and one of the last for Montgomery Clift.

Miller married photographer Inge Morath on February 17, 1962 and the first of their two children, Rebecca, was born September 15, 1962. Their son Daniel was born with Down syndrome in November 1966; he was institutionalized and excluded from the Millers' personal life at Arthur's insistence. The couple remained together until Inge's death in 2002. Arthur Miller's son-in-law, actor Daniel Day-Lewis, is said to have visited Daniel frequently, and to have persuaded Arthur Miller to reunite with his adult son, Daniel.

Later Career

In 1964 Miller's next play was produced. After the Fall is a deeply personal view of Miller's experiences during his marriage to Monroe. The play reunited Miller with his former friend Kazan: they collaborated on both the script and the direction. After the Fall opened on January 23, 1964 at the ANTA Theatre in Washington Square Park amid a flurry of publicity and outrage at putting a Monroe-like character, called Maggie, on stage. Robert Brustein, in a review in the New Republic, called *After the Fall* "a three and one half hour breach of taste, a confessional autobiography of embarrassing explicitness . . . there is a misogynistic strain in the play which the author does not seem to recognize. . . . He has created a shameless piece of tabloid gossip, an act of exhibitionism which makes us all voyeurs, . . . a wretched piece of dramatic writing." That same year, Miller produced Incident at Vichy. In 1965, Miller was elected the first American president of PEN International, a position which he held for four years. A year later, Miller organized the 1966 PEN congress in New York City. Miller also wrote the penetrating family drama, The Price, produced in 1968. It was Miller's most successful play since *Death of a Salesman*.

In 1969, Miller's works were banned in the Soviet Union after he campaigned for the freedom of dissident writers. Throughout the 1970s, Miller spent much of his time experimenting with the theatre, producing one-act plays such as *Fame* and *The Reason Why*, and traveling with his wife, producing *In The Country* and *Chinese Encounters* with her. Both his 1972 comedy The Creation of the World and Other Business and its musical adaptation, Up from Paradise, were critical and commercial failures.

Miller was an unusually articulate commentator on his own work. In 1978 he published a collection of his *Theater Essays*, edited by Robert A. Martin and with a foreword by Miller. Highlights of the collection included Miller's introduction to his *Collected Plays*, his reflections on the theory of tragedy, comments on the McCarthy Era, and pieces arguing for a publicly supported theater. Reviewing this collection in the *Chicago Tribune*, Studs Terkel remarked, "in reading [the *Theater Essays*]...you are exhilaratingly aware of a social critic, as well as a playwright, who knows what he's talking about."

In 1983, Miller traveled to China to produce and direct *Death of a Salesman* at the People's Art Theatre in Beijing. The play was a success in China and in 1984, *Salesman in Beijing*, a book about Miller's experiences in Beijing, was published. Around the same time, *Death of a Salesman* was made into a TV movie starring Dustin Hoffman as Willy Loman. Shown on CBS, it attracted 25 million viewers. In late 1987, Miller's autobiographical work, *Timebends*, was published. Before it was published, it was well known that Miller would not talk about Monroe in interviews; in *Timebends* Miller talks about his experiences with Monroe in detail.

During the early-mid 1990s, Miller wrote three new plays: The Ride Down Mt. Morgan (1991), The Last Yankee (1992), and Broken Glass (1994). In 1996, a film of *The Crucible* starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Paul Scofield, Bruce Davison, and Winona Ryder opened. Miller spent much of 1996 working on the screenplay to the film. Mr. Peters' Connections was staged Off-Broadway in 1998, and *Death of a Salesman* was revived on Broadway in 1999 to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. The play, once again, was a large critical success, winning a Tony Award for best revival of a play.

In 1993, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts. Miller was honored with the PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater Award for a Master American Dramatist in 1998. In 2001 the National Endowment for

the Humanities (NEH) selected Miller for the Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for achievement in the humanities. Miller's lecture was entitled "On Politics and the Art of Acting." Miller's lecture analyzed political events (including the U.S. presidential election of 2000) in terms of the "arts of performance," and it drew attacks from some conservatives such as Jay Nordlinger, who called it "a disgrace," and George Will, who argued that Miller was not legitimately a "scholar."

In 1999, Miller was awarded The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, one of the richest prizes in the arts, given annually to "a man or woman who has made an outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world and to mankind's enjoyment and understanding of life." In 2001, Miller received the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. On May 1, 2002, Miller was awarded Spain's Principe de Asturias Prize for Literature as "the undisputed master of modern drama." Later that year, Ingeborg Morath died of lymphatic cancer at the age of 78. The following year Miller won the Jerusalem Prize.

In December 2004, the 89-year-old Miller announced that he had been in love with 34-year-old minimalist painter Agnes Barley and had been living with her at his Connecticut farm since 2002, and that they intended to marry. Within hours of her father's death, Rebecca Miller ordered Barley to vacate the premises, having consistently opposed the relationship. Miller's final play, Finishing the Picture, opened at the Goodman Theatre, Chicago, in the fall of 2004, with one character said to be based on Barley. It was reported to be based on his experience during the filming *The Misfits*, though Miller insisted the play is a work of fiction with independent characters that were no more than composite shadows of history.

Death

Miller died of heart failure after a battle against cancer, pneumonia and congestive heart disease at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut. He had been in hospice care at his sister's apartment in New York since his release from hospital the previous month. He died on the evening of February 10, 2005 (the 56th anniversary of the Broadway debut of *Death of a Salesman*), aged 89, surrounded by Barley, family and friends. He is interred at Roxbury Center Cemetery in Roxbury.

Legacy

Arthur Miller's career as a writer spanned over seven decades, and at the time of his death, Miller was considered to be one of the greatest dramatists of the twentieth century. After his death, many respected actors, directors, and producers paid tribute to Miller, some calling him the last great practitioner of the American stage, and Broadway theatres darkened their lights in a show of respect. Miller's alma mater, the University of Michigan, opened the Arthur Miller Theatre in March 2007. As per his express wish, it is the only theatre in the world that bears Miller's name. Two months after Miller dies Peter O'Toole called him a "bore". Roger Kimball considered Miller's artistic accomplishments meager.

Christopher Bigsby wrote *Arthur Miller: The Definitive Biography* based on boxes of papers Miller made available to him before his death in 2005. The book was published in November 2008, and is reported to reveal unpublished works in which Miller "bitterly attack[ed] the injustices of American racism long before it was taken up by the civil rights movement".

Miller's papers are housed at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin.

Arthur Miller is also a member of the American Theater Hall of Fame. He was inducted in 1979.

Arthur Miller by Rachel Galvin

"The American Dream is the largely unacknowledged screen in front of which all American writing plays itself out," Arthur Miller has said. "Whoever is writing in the United States is using the American Dream as an ironical pole of his story. People elsewhere tend to accept, to a far greater degree anyway, that the conditions of life are hostile to man's pretensions." In Miller's more than thirty plays, which have won him a Pulitzer Prize and multiple Tony Awards, he puts in question "death and betrayal and injustice and how we are to account for this little life of ours."

For nearly six decades, Miller has been creating characters that wrestle with power conflicts, personal and social responsibility, the repercussions of past actions, and the twin poles of guilt and hope. In his writing and in his role in public life, Miller articulates his profound political and moral convictions. He once said he thought theater could "change the world." *The Crucible*, which premiered in 1953, is a fictionalization of the Salem witch-hunts of 1692, but it also deals in an allegorical manner with the House Un-American Activities Committee. In a note to the play, Miller writes, "A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence." Dealing as it did with highly charged current events, the play received unfavorable reviews and Miller was cold-shouldered by many colleagues. When the political situation shifted, *Death of a Salesman* went on to become Miller's most celebrated and most produced play, which he directed at the People's Art Theatre in Beijing in 1983.

A modern tragedian, Miller says he looks to the Greeks for inspiration, particularly Sophocles. "I think the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing-his sense of personal dignity," Miller writes. "From Orestes to Hamlet, Medea to Macbeth, the underlying struggle is that of the individual attempting to gain his 'rightful' position in his society." Miller considers the common man "as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were." *Death of a Salesman*, which opened in 1949, tells the story of Willy Loman, an aging salesman who makes his way "on a smile and a shoeshine." Miller lifts Willy's illusions and failures, his anguish and his family relationships, to the scale of a tragic hero. The fear of being displaced or having our image of what and who we are destroyed is best known to the common man, Miller believes. "It is time that we, who are without kings, took up this bright thread of our history and followed it to the only place it can possibly lead in our time-the heart and spirit of the average man."

Arthur Asher Miller, the son of a women's clothing company owner, was born in 1915 in New York City. His father lost his business in the Depression and the family was forced to move to a smaller home in Brooklyn. After graduating from high school, Miller worked jobs ranging from radio singer to truck driver to clerk in an automobile-parts warehouse. Miller began writing plays as a student at the University of Michigan, joining the Federal Theater Project in New York City after he received his degree. His first Broadway play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, opened in 1944 and his next play, *All My Sons*, received the Drama Critics' Circle Award. His 1949 *Death of a Salesman* won the Pulitzer Prize. In 1956 and 1957, Miller was subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee and was convicted of contempt of Congress for his refusal to identify writers believed to hold Communist sympathies. The following year, the United States Court of Appeals overturned the conviction. In 1959 the National Institute of Arts and Letters awarded him the Gold Medal for Drama. Miller has been married three times: to Mary Grace Slattery in 1940, Marilyn Monroe in 1956, and photographer Inge Morath in 1962, with whom he lives in Connecticut. He and Inge have a daughter, Rebecca. Among his works are *A View from the Bridge*, *The Misfits*, *After the Fall*, *Incident at Vichy*, *The Price*, *The American Clock*, *Broken Glass*, *Mr. Peters' Connections*, and *Timebends*, his autobiography. Miller's writing has earned him a lifetime of honors, including the Pulitzer Prize, seven Tony Awards, two Drama Critics Circle Awards, an Obie, an Olivier, the John F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Dorothy and Lillian Gish prize. He holds honorary doctorate degrees from Oxford University and Harvard University.

Throughout his life and work, Miller has remained socially engaged and has written with conscience, clarity, and compassion. As Chris Keller says to his mother in *All My Sons*, "Once and for all you must know that there's a universe of people outside, and you're responsible to it." Miller's work is infused with his sense of

responsibility to humanity and to his audience. "The playwright is nothing without his audience," he writes. "He is one of the audience who happens to know how to speak."

About Arthur Miller

American playwright who combined in his works social awareness with deep insights into personal weaknesses of his characters'. Miller is best known for the play *Death of a Salesman* (1949), or on the other hand, for his marriage to the actress Marilyn Monroe. Miller's plays continued the realistic tradition that began in the United States in the period between the two world wars. With Tennessee Williams, Miller was one of the best-known American playwrights after WW II. Several of his works were filmed by such director as John Huston, Sidney Lumet and Karel Reiz.

"Don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally paid to such a person." (from *Death of a Salesman*)

Arthur Miller was born in Harlem, New York City; the family moved shortly afterwards to a six-storey building at 451 10th Street between Lenox and Fifth Avenues. His father, Isidore Miller, was an illiterate Jewish immigrant from Poland. His successful ladies-wear manufacturer and shopkeeper was ruined in the depression. Augusta Barnett, Miller's mother, was born in New York, but her father came from the same Polish town as the Millers.

The sudden change in fortune had a strong influence on Miller. "This desire to move on, to metamorphose – or perhaps it is a talent for being contemporary – was given me as life's inevitable and rightful condition," he wrote in *Timebends: A Life* (1987). The family moved to a small frame house in Brooklyn, which is said to be the model for the Brooklyn home in *Death of a Salesman*. Miller spent his boyhood playing football and baseball, reading adventure stories, and appearing generally as a nonintellectual. "If I had any ideology at all it was what I had learned from Hearst newspapers," he once said. After graduating from a high school in 1932, Miller worked in automobile parts warehouse to earn money for college. Having read Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* Miller decided to become a writer. To study journalism he entered the University of Michigan in 1934, where he won awards for playwriting – one of the other awarded playwright was Tennessee Williams.

After graduating in English in 1938, Miller returned to New York. There he joined the Federal Theatre Project, and wrote scripts for radio programs, such as Columbia Workshop (CBS) and Cavalcade of America (NBC). Because of a football injury, he was exempt from draft. In 1940 Miller married a Catholic girl, Mary Slattery, his college sweetheart, with whom he had two children. Miller's first play to appear on Broadway was *The Man Who Had All The Luck* (1944). It closed after four performances. Three years later produced *All My Sons* was about a factory owner who sells faulty aircraft parts during World War II. It won the New York Drama Critics Circle award and two Tony Awards. In 1944 Miller toured Army camps to collect background material for the screenplay *The Story of G.I. Joe* (1945). Miller's first novel, *FOCUS* (1945), was about anti-Semitism.

Miller's plays often depict how families are destroyed by false values. Especially his earliest efforts show his admiration for the classical Greek dramatists. "When I began to write," he said in an interview, "one assumed inevitably that one was in the mainstream that began with Aeschylus and went through about twenty-five hundred years of playwriting." (from *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*, ed. by Christopher Bigsby, 1997)

Death of a Salesman brought Miller international fame, and become one of the major achievements of modern American theatre. It relates the tragic story of a salesman named Willy Loman, whose past and present are mingled in expressionistic scenes. Loman is not the great success that he claims to be to his family and friends.

The postwar economic boom has shaken up his life. He is eventually fired and he begins to hallucinate about significant events from his past. Linda, his wife, believes in the American Dream, but she also keeps her feet on the ground. Deciding that he is worth more dead than alive, Willy kills himself in his car – hoping that the insurance money will support his family and his son Biff could get a new start in his life. Critics have disagreed whether his suicide is an act of cowardice or a last sacrifice on the altar of the American Dream.

WILLY: I'm not interested in stories about the past or any crap of that kind because the woods are burning, boys, you understand? There's a big blaze going on all around. I was fired today.

BIFF (shocked): How could you be?

WILLY: I was fired, and I'm looking for a little good news to tell your mother, because the woman has waited and the woman has suffered. The gist of it is that I haven't got a story left in my head, Biff. So don't give me a lecture about facts and aspects. I am not interested. Now what've you got so say to me?

(from *Death of a Salesman*)

In 1949 Miller was named an "Outstanding Father of the Year", which manifested his success as a famous writer. But the wheel of fortune was going down. In the 1950s Miller was subjected to a scrutiny by a committee of the United States Congress investigating Communist influence in the arts. The FBI read his play *The Hook*, about a militant union organizer, and he was denied a passport to attend the Brussels premiere of his play *The Crucible* (1953). It was based on court records and historical personages of the Salem witch trials of 1692. In Salem one could be hanged because of "the inflamed human imagination, the poetry of suggestion." The daughter of Salem's minister falls mysteriously ill. Reverend Samuel Parris is a widower, and there is very little good to be said for him. He believes he is persecuted wherever he goes. Rumours of witchcraft spread throughout the people of Salem. "The times, to their eyes, must have been out of joint, and to the common folk must have seemed as insoluble and complicated as do ours today." The minister accuses Abigail Williams of wrongdoing, but she transforms the accusation into plea for help: her soul has been bewitched. Young girls, led by Abigail, make accusations of witchcraft against townspeople whom they do not like. Abigail accuses Elizabeth Proctor, the wife of an upstanding farmer, whom she had once seduced. Elizabeth's husband John Proctor reveals his past lechery. Elizabeth, unaware, fails to confirm his testimony. To protect him she testifies falsely that her husband has not been intimate with Abigail. Proctor is accused of witchcraft and condemned to death.

The Crucible, which received Antoinette Perry Award, was an allegory for the McCarthy era and mass hysteria. Although its first Broadway production flopped, it become one of Miller's most-produced play. Miller wrote *The Crucible* in the atmosphere in which the author saw "accepted the notion that conscience was no longer a private matter but one of state administration." In the play he expressed his faith in the ability of an individual to resist conformist pressures.

"You know, sometimes God mixes up the people. We all love somebody, the wife, the kids - every man's got somebody he loves, heh? But sometimes... there's too much. You know? There's too much, and it goes where it mustn't. A man works hard, he brings up a child, sometimes it's niece, sometimes even a daughter, and he never realizes it, but through the years - there is too much love for the daughter, there is too much love for the niece." (from *A View from the Bridge*)

Elia Kazan, with whom Miller had shared an artistic vision and for a period a girlfriend, the motion-picture actress Marilyn Monroe, named in 1952 eight former reds, who had been in the Communist Party with him. Kazan virtually became a pariah overnight, Miller remained a hero of the Left. Two short plays under the collective title *A View from the Bridge* were successfully produced in 1955. The drama, dealing with incestuous love, jealousy and betrayal, was also an answer to Kazan's film *On the Waterfront* (1954), in which the director justified his naming names.

In 1956 Miller was awarded honorary degree at the University of Michigan but also called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Miller admitted that he had attended certain meetings, but denied that he was a Communist. He had attended among others four or five writers's meetings sponsored by the Communist Party in 1947, supported a Peace Conference at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, and signed many appeals and protests. "Marilyn's fiance admits aiding reds," wrote the press. Refusing to offer other people's names, who had associated with leftist or suspected Communist groups, Miller was cited for contempt of Congress, but the ruling was reversed by the courts in 1958.

Miller – "the man who had all the luck" – married Marilyn Monroe in 1956; they divorced in 1961. At that time Marilyn was beyond saving. She died in 1962.

In the late 1950s Miller wrote nothing for the theatre. His screenplay *Misfits* was written with a role for his wife. The film was directed by John Huston, starring Montgomery Clift, Clark Gable, and Marilyn Monroe. Marilyn was always late getting to the set and used heavily drugs. The marriage was already breaking, and Miller was feeling lonely. John Huston wrote in his book of memoir, *An Open Book*, (1980): "One evening I was about to drive away from the location – miles out in the desert – when I saw Arthur standing alone. Marilyn and her friends hadn't offered him a ride back; they'd just left him. If I hadn't happened to see him, he would have been stranded out there. My sympathies were more and more with him." Later Miller said that there "should have been more long shots to remind us constantly how isolated there people were, physically and morally." Miller's last play, *Finishing the Picture*, produced in 2004, depicted the making of *Misfits*.

Miller was politically active throughout his life. In 1965 he was elected president of P.E.N., the international literary organization. At the 1968 Democratic Party Convention he was a delegate for Eugene McCarthy. In 1964 Miller returned to stage after a nine-year absence with the play *After the Fall*, a strongly autobiographical work, which dealt with the questions of guilt and innocence. The play also united Kazan and Miller, but their close friendship was over, destroyed by the blacklist. Many critics consider that Maggie, the self-destructive central character, was modelled on Monroe, though Miller denied this. A year after his divorce, Miller married the Austrian photographer Inge Morath (1923-2002), whom he had met during the filming of *The Misfits*. Miller co-operated with her on two books about China and Russia. After Inge Morath died, Miller plannd to marry Agnes Barley, a 34-year-old artist. In 1985 Miller went to Turkey with the playwright Harold Pinter. Their journey was arranged by PEN in conjunction with the Helsinki Watch Committee. One of their guides in Istanbul was Orhan Pamuk.

In the 1990s Miller wrote such plays as *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* (prod. 1991) and *The Last Yankee* (prod. 1993), but in an interview he stated that "It happens to be a very bad historical moment for playwriting, because the theater is getting more and more difficult to find actors for, since television pays so much and the movies even more than that. If you're young, you'll probably be writing about young people, and that's easier -- you can find young actors -- but you can't readily find mature actors." ('We're Probably in an Art That Is -- Not Dying', *The New York Times*, January 17, 1993) In 2002 Miller was honored with Spain's prestigious Principe de Asturias Prize for Literature, making him the first U.S. recipient of the award. Miller died of heart failure at home in Roxbury, Connecticut, on February 10, 2005.

Arthur Miller: None Without Sin

In the period immediately following the end of World War II, American theater was transformed by the work of playwright Arthur Miller. Profoundly influenced by the Depression and the war that immediately followed it, Miller tapped into a sense of dissatisfaction and unrest within the greater American psyche. His probing dramas proved to be both the conscience and redemption of the times, allowing people an honest view of the direction the country had taken.

Arthur Miller was born in Manhattan in 1915 to Jewish immigrant parents. By 1928, the family had moved to Brooklyn, after their garment manufacturing business began to fail. Witnessing the societal decay of the Depression and his father's desperation due to business failures had an enormous effect on Miller. After graduating from high school, Miller worked a number of jobs and saved up the money for college. In 1934, he enrolled in the University of Michigan and spent much of the next four years learning to write and working on a number of well-received plays.

After graduating, Miller returned to New York, where he worked as a freelance writer. In 1944, his first play, "The Man Who Had All the Luck", opened to horrible reviews. A story about an incredibly successful man who is unhappy with that success, "The Man Who Had All The Luck" was already addressing the major themes of Miller's later work. In 1945, Miller published a novel, FOCUS, and two years later had his first play on Broadway. "All My Sons," a tragedy about a manufacturer who sells faulty parts to the military in order to save his business, was an instant success. Concerned with morality in the face of desperation, "All My Sons" appealed to a nation having recently gone through both a war and a depression.

Only two years after the success of "All My Sons," Miller came out with his most famous and well-respected work, "Death of a Salesman." Dealing again with both desperation and paternal responsibility, "Death of a Salesman" focused on a failed businessman as he tries to remember and reconstruct his life. Eventually killing himself to leave his son insurance money, the salesman seems a tragic character out of Shakespeare or Dostoevsky. Winning both a Pulitzer Prize and a Drama Critics Circle Award, the play ran for more than seven hundred performances. Within a short while, it had been translated into over a dozen languages and had made its author a millionaire.

Overwhelmed by post-war paranoia and intolerance, Miller began work on the third of his major plays. Though it was clearly an indictment of the McCarthyism of the early 1950s, "The Crucible" was set in Salem during the witch-hunts of the late 17th century. The play, which deals with extraordinary tragedy in ordinary lives, expanded Miller's voice and his concern for the physical and psychological wellbeing of the working class. Within three years, Miller was called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and convicted of contempt of Congress for not cooperating. A difficult time in his life, Miller ended a short and turbulent marriage with actress Marilyn Monroe. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, he wrote very little of note, concentrating at first on issues of guilt over the Holocaust, and later moving into comedies.

It was not until the 1991 productions of his "The Ride Down Mount Morgan" and "The Last Yankee" that Miller's career began to see a resurgence. Both plays returned to the themes of success and failure that he had dealt with in earlier works. Concerning himself with the American dream, and the average American's pursuit of it, Miller recognized a link between the poverty of the 1920s and the wealth of the 1980s. Encouraged by the success of these works, a number of his earlier pieces returned to the stage for revival performances.

More than any other playwright working today, Arthur Miller has dedicated himself to the investigation of the moral plight of the white American working class. With a sense of realism and a strong ear for the American vernacular, Miller has created characters whose voices are an important part of the American landscape. His insight into the psychology of desperation and his ability to create stories that express the deepest meanings of struggle, have made him one of the most highly regarded and widely performed American playwrights. In his eighty-fifth year, Miller remains an active and important part of American theater.

Arthur Miller, an American Playwright by David Walsh

Death puts an end to the ongoing effort that most artists consider a "work in progress" until the final moments. The body of work, like it or not, is then a finished product, vulnerable to evaluation as a whole. The commentators, for better or worse, will have their day.

American playwright Arthur Miller, author of such well-known dramas as *Death of a Salesman* (1949) and *The Crucible* (1953), who outlasted many of his critics, is no exception to this general rule.

However one evaluates his work, Miller—who died February 10 at the age of 89—was unquestionably a major figure in postwar artistic life in the US and his death is necessarily the occasion for a consideration not only of his plays, but the era and social environment that helped produce them.

This is a large subject, and the present piece can hardly be the final word. It is intended to raise certain vexing problems in artistic and intellectual life in the US that seem inevitably to attach themselves to Miller's life and work.

That Miller was a personally decent man ought to figure prominently in any commentary. The American liberal intelligentsia took a drastic turn for the worse in the middle of the twentieth century, making a bargain with the most dastardly elements in American society. Political and intellectual life still suffers today from the consequences of that devil's pact. In the late 1940s and early 1950s renunciation of previous ideas and denunciation of former colleagues became a fashion that hardly anyone resisted.

Miller was perhaps the most well-known figure who did. He resisted the tide of cowardice, egoism and selfishness, personified by his one-time colleague director Elia Kazan, and refused to "name names" to the congressional witch-hunters. "My conscience will not permit me to use the name of another person," he told his persecutors in 1956.

The playwright, although he did not remain untouched by the difficult political climate, maintained a critical attitude toward American society until the end of his life. He supported and participated in the civil rights struggle. He famously opposed the Vietnam War. Unlike so many others, Miller did not take the easy route, rallying to a Reagan or turning "neo-conservative." Most recently, he criticized the US invasion of Iraq. Of George W. Bush, Miller said contemptuously, "He's not a very good actor. He's too obvious most of the time, he has no confidence in his own facade, so he's constantly overemphasizing his sincerity." Whatever the fate of his dramas, Miller's reputation as an individual of genuine integrity rests secure.

Nonetheless, the present task would be a more obviously pleasant one if one were able to claim that Miller was an enormous talent, or that he possessed at least the spark of genius (like a contemporary of his, Leonard Bernstein). It would be a mistake, in my view, to make either assertion. Rather, he was a liberal-minded and well-meaning man, with severe limitations as an artist.

Death of a Salesman and *The Crucible*, his most popular works, have their strengths, but in the end seem shallow. The first, in its rather sentimental tribute to "Everyman" Willy Loman, is something of a pseudo-tragedy that does not look terribly deeply at the lower middle class "dream of success" or any other aspect of American life.

Miller perhaps should have resisted the urge, as tempting as it might have been, to create a parallel between the Salem witch trials of 1692 and the anticommunist purges of the early 1950s. Articulate and intelligent as it is, *The Crucible* does not offer much insight into the source of McCarthyism or the state of American society as a whole.

If Miller was the leading American dramatist of the 1940s, 1950s and into the 1960s, and he probably was, that speaks more than anything else to the painful ideological-artistic conditions of the time. It is questionable how long his plays will endure as living, meaningful works.

His death has been greeted with an outpouring of praise for his work, some of it quite out of proportion. Steven Winn of the *San Francisco Chronicle* termed *Death of a Salesman* an "American *King Lear*." David Thacker, the British theater director, commented that "if you put Shakespeare to one side, Arthur Miller stands

comparison with any playwright writing in the English language for his contribution.” This is simply foolish. And not merely because Marlowe, Congreve, Gay, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Wilde and Shaw come immediately to mind. Placing Miller second or thirteenth on a list of great playwrights in the English language takes for granted that he was a great or even a consistently good playwright.

Thacker’s remark speaks to a certain divide between British and American critics and audiences in regard to Miller’s work. Playwright Harold Pinter, when he learned of the latter’s death, observed: “In the United States, they didn’t like him very much because he was too outspoken and too critical of the way of life in the United States and certain assumptions that were made over there.”

There might be something to this. Miller did indeed fall out of favor with US theater critics and audiences decades ago, and this was not entirely to his discredit. What replaced him in New York has not been an improvement; empty experimentalism and narcissistic playing at theatrical form, on the one hand, and bombastic musical revues, aimed at the tourist trade, on the other. The methodical, well-crafted dramas Miller brought forth no longer had a home, whereas in Britain the more highly-subsidized theaters and the circles around them kept such work alive.

In 2003 Miller lamented the deplorable state of New York theater, finding himself “wondering about Broadway’s relevance to the life of this world now.” While there had once been a “steady trickle” of “acerbic social commentary” in the American theater, it now appeared “to have dried up.”

One feels that a good deal of the effusion in the wake of Miller’s death is tinged by philistine self-satisfaction, the pleasure taken in eulogizing a safely deceased and relatively harmless icon. For example, this: “But beyond being a great playwright, Miller was a glorious example of what it meant to be a liberal when liberalism was in its prime. He stood up to McCarthyism in the Fifties as bravely as any American. In the mid-Sixties he stood up to communism by helping Soviet bloc authors as president of PEN, the international writers’ organization. Through the early Seventies he raised one of the most urgent, resonant voices against the Vietnam War.”

The *New York Times* has led the way in this effort, publishing no less than six obituaries, op-ed pieces and assorted articles on Miller in the first few days after his death, in addition to slide shows on its web site. Marilyn Berger commented that Miller’s work “exposed the flaws in the fabric of the American dream” in “dramas of guilt and betrayal and redemption that continue to be revived frequently at theaters all over the world. These dramas of social conscience were drawn from life and informed by the Great Depression.”

Charles Isherwood noted that Miller’s concerns “were with the moral corruption brought on by bending one’s ideals to society’s dictates, buying into the values of a group when they conflict with the voice of personal conscience.”

The *Nation*, the liberal-left publication whose outlook perhaps most closely corresponded to Miller’s own, editorialized rather pompously that when a figure like Miller dies, “his greatness swells in retrospect in a mound of accumulated tributes and memories.” Further on, the journal observed oddly, “In his plays Miller made no distinction between art and politics.”

The last comment was apparently intended as a compliment, but the editors may have given away more than they intended to. Art and politics cannot be identical. Art is not merely a means toward practical aims, it has an end in itself, to picture life in all its complexity. The editors’ comment smacks of something didactic and utilitarian. It reminds one of the populist formula that “art is what the people want,” which rejects the critical need, raised by both Trotsky and Wilde, to *educate* masses of people artistically. We would be bold enough to suggest that the *Nation*’s tepid and tired stew of national-reformist, Democratic Party politics will not under present conditions adequately nourish the genuinely creative imagination. And this leads us back to the “Miller problem.”

One of the issues that needs to be addressed in any consideration of the dramatist's work is why, despite his obvious intelligence, sensitivity and ability with language, there is such an inartistic quality to much of Miller's work, even, to borrow Plekhanov's phrase, an "anti-artistic element."

A reading of Miller's plays and essays, as well as a viewing of some of his work on film, makes largely dreary work. A good many sensible things are said, a number of worthy themes introduced, a certain quantity of believable moments dramatized, but, all in all, poring through his work is drudgery. The plays lack spontaneity and inspiration, the dramatic mechanisms are rather obvious and predictable.

If he were a poor craftsman that would be one thing, but Miller obviously labored diligently over his work and it won him wide recognition, after all, as "America's leading playwright." This often inartistic dreariness was not simply his, so to speak, it was embraced and made their own by wide sections of the intelligentsia, and not only in the US.

The problem then must lie in something more than a personal failing, or a simple misunderstanding. This raises certain questions. Is it possible that there are social circumstances and milieus that are uninspiring by their very nature? Or can there be conditions under which a writer feels content or at least obliged, consciously or otherwise, to be less than artistic? Were there ideological and political stances in the twentieth century that were not conducive to true artistic expression?

One has to examine the conditions under which Miller matured as an artist to begin to answer some of these questions.

The future playwright, born in 1915, belonged to that generation deeply affected by the Wall Street Crash of 1929. In Miller's case, the event was particularly traumatic, an awful bolt from the blue. His father, a wealthy New York garment manufacturer, had been speculating heavily on the stock market and lost everything in the Crash.

The Millers moved from an elegant apartment in Manhattan to a "flimsily built" house in the Gravesend section of Brooklyn, "a sad comedown" (Martin Gottfried, *Arthur Miller: His Life and Work*). Miller would later describe the Crash as a defining experience, "A month ago you were riding around in a limousine, now you were scraping around to pay the rent."

To what extent Miller ever fully worked through this experience, either in emotional or social terms, is questionable. In *The Price*, one of Miller's later plays, a character recalls how his mother vomited when his father told the family that "it was all gone.... All over his arms. His hands. Just kept on vomiting, like thirty-five years coming up."

The image of a blow delivered from on high recurs in his plays. Critic Henry Popkin, in an unfavorable commentary in 1960, asserted that each of Miller's plays exhibits "the same basic pattern: each one matches ordinary, uncomprehending people with extraordinary demands and accusations.... From day to day they live their placid, apparently meaningless lives, and suddenly the eternal intrudes, thunder sounds, the trumpet blows, and these startled mediocrities are whisked off to the bar of justice."

It is difficult not to see the financial crisis of 1929 literally "crashing" down on the heads of the Miller family in the background of this general pattern.

As it did for many, the Depression radicalized Miller. In 1934 he began attending the University of Michigan (tuition was only \$65 a semester), a school that, according to Gottfried's book, "was buzzing with left-wing political activities." As a reporter for the *Michigan Daily* he traveled to nearby Detroit and Flint to cover the unionization efforts at several General Motors plants and interviewed United Auto Workers leader Walter Reuther.

The personal and more general impact of the devastating economic depression, the example of the struggling auto workers and the radical atmosphere in Ann Arbor combined to propel Miller to the left, and inevitably to an admiration for the USSR. He later recalled that students “connected the Soviets with socialism and socialism with man’s redemption.”

In drawing near to the Communist Party, Miller and others of his generation were not, as they thought, adhering to a Marxist organization. The American CP was a thoroughly Stalinized formation, in the process of moving sharply to the right.

The Depression had shattered illusions about capitalism and increased the prestige of the Soviet Union, which became quasi-respectable in liberal circles by the mid-1930s, particularly after the adoption by the Stalinists of the Popular Front policy in 1935. The Soviet regime, frightened by the Nazi threat, now oriented itself to what it termed the “democratic” bourgeoisie, i.e., the ruling classes in Britain, France and the US.

Class no longer served as a meaningful term of reference; parties and regimes were either “fascist” or “anti-fascist.” The various national Communist parties, whose leaderships themselves had been Stalinized and reduced largely to slavish appendages of the Kremlin, abandoned attempts to establish the political independence of the working class or advance a socialist program. Their principal task became forming alliances with parties and movements that might show sympathy for the Soviet regime and its interests. For the CPUSA this translated into an endorsement, for all practical purposes, of Roosevelt and the New Deal.

It remains unclear whether Miller joined the Communist Party while in university or whether, in fact, he ever joined. In one of his first plays, which was never performed, a young man named “Arny” (Miller’s nickname was “Arty” at the time) is a member of the CP. Norman Rosten, Miller’s closest friend at university, joined the Young Communist League in Michigan. It seems likely that Miller did take that step, but he never clarified the matter.

One suspects that while the Depression and its disastrous impact rendered the Soviet Union more attractive, a sensible alternative to chaotic and destructive capitalism, Miller was less drawn to the Russian Revolution itself. That event finds little echo in his work. Nor does one find any indication that Trotsky’s opposition to Stalinism made an impression on Miller.

In this he was like many of those attracted to Stalinism in the late 1930s. Writing about a somewhat older generation, David North, in “Socialism, historical truth and the crisis of political thought in the United States,” noted, “Many liberal intellectuals were flattered by the new attention that the Stalinists devoted to them, and were pleased to find that their opinions and concerns were taken so seriously. Their personal identification with the Soviet Union seemed, at least in their own eyes, to make up for the fact that they lacked any independent program for radical action in the United States.

“The admiration among liberals for Soviet accomplishments and their political support for the Soviet regime did not at all signify an endorsement of revolutionary change within the United States. Far from it. Rather, many liberal intellectuals were inclined to view an alliance with the USSR as a means of strengthening their own limited agenda for social reform in the United States, as well as keeping fascism at bay in Europe. Among many liberal intellectuals, the Stalinist regime itself was admired not because it was considered the spearhead of world revolutionary change.”

Whether Miller considered himself a revolutionist or what he might have even meant by this is not entirely clear, but he would necessarily have received a great deal of political and ideological miseducation in Stalinist circles. While the party paid lip service to the ideas of Marx and Lenin, its orientation was largely crude and pragmatic, focusing on activism increasingly colored by populist and nationalist nostrums. To many liberals the Stalinist ideology seemed to dovetail rather conveniently with their own vague commitment to social progress and democratic reform.

Miller was not primarily a political activist. He determined at a relatively early age on writing as a vocation. He studied plays and playwriting in university: Ibsen in particular, but also Greek tragedy, the German expressionists, Brecht, Büchner, Frank Wedekind. Eugene O'Neill, the dominant figure in the American theater in the 1920s and 1930s, seemed too "cosmic" to Miller and unresponsive to social realities. He was more sympathetic to the efforts of Clifford Odets, author of *Waiting for Lefty* and other works, the leading left-wing playwright of the time. Shakespeare, oddly, is not mentioned in Gottfried's biography as a subject of study.

American Theater

The American theater, as a serious institution, dates from the period around World War I, when groups such as the Washington Square Players and the Provincetown Players established themselves. O'Neill, associated with the latter group, poured forth a series of expressive, often insufferable works (*Desire Under the Elms* [1924] *Strange Interlude* [1928] and *Mourning Becomes Electra* [1932] and many others), influenced by Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Freud (and Jung), which nonetheless transformed the American stage.

The "left" theater, which arose in the aftermath of the Crash of 1929, hardly offered an alluring alternative to O'Neill's cosmic and static fatalism. In the hands of Stalinist chief literary thug Michael Gold, subtlety and nuance were reduced to naught.

C.W. E. Bigsby, in his *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama*, observes that in the "proletarian" theater proposed by Gold, "The crudity of the work was in some sense to be the guarantee of its authenticity. It followed that articulateness was liable to be in some senses ambiguous, a potential class betrayal."

Bigsby, interestingly, cites Trotsky against Gold, pointing to the former's admonitions against "formless talk about proletarian culture," and notes further Trotsky's comment in *Literature and Revolution* that "weak and, what is more, illiterate poems do not make up proletarian poetry, because they do not make up poetry at all." This was not Marxism, but "reactionary populism.... Proletarian art should not be second-rate art."

Indeed the "second-rate" or worse "left" theater promoted by Gold has not endured; Odets remains, to a certain extent, but he was a cut above the rest. The American theater remained rather provincial and limited throughout the first half of the twentieth century and beyond. There is nothing to compare with developments in Germany (Brecht, Weill, Piscator and others) or the Soviet Union (Meyerhold, Vakhtangov, Mayakovsky's comedies, Babel's foray into playwriting). The hostile and ignorant reception received by Brecht, whatever his personal and artistic shortcomings, in 1935 in the New York theater world is some measure of that.

Miller's First Success

Upon graduating from the University of Michigan in 1938, Miller returned to Brooklyn, working briefly for the Federal Theater program. He married Mary Slattery, a Catholic from Ohio, in 1940. A few months after the US entered World War II, in the spring of 1942, Miller went to work at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

His first produced play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, opened and closed quickly in New York in 1944. He was to have considerably more success with his next effort, three years later.

All My Sons concerns two families in Ohio (the play was inspired by an anecdote related by his mother-in-law), the Kellers and the Deeveres. Joe Keller is a vulgar, successful small-town businessman whose company manufactures aircraft parts. As the play unfolds, in Ibsen-like fashion, we learn that his oldest son, Larry, a flyer, has been missing in action for three years. His fiancée, Ann Deever, has given up waiting for him and intends to marry his brother, Chris, contrary to the wishes of Larry's mother. We also discover that Ann's

father, Joe Keller's former partner, has been sent to the penitentiary for providing the military with defective parts that cost the lives of 21 airmen.

George Deever, Ann's brother, arrives at the Kellers' suburban home convinced that Joe actually authorized the fatal shipment. This proves, in fact, to be the case. To Chris's horror, Joe's crime is unmasked (as well, it turns out that Larry guessed his father's guilt and deliberately crashed his airplane). "I'm in business, a man is in business," Keller tells his son. "You lay forty years into a business and they knock you out in five minutes, what could I do, let them take forty years, let them take my life away?" Keller agrees to turn himself in, "Sure he was my son. But I think they were all my sons." He goes into the house and shoots himself.

More than its obvious social statement, about war profiteering and one's larger responsibility to society, the play's enduring impact, such as it is, emerges from the anger of the younger men against Keller and his generation. Something of Miller's own background and feelings makes itself felt in the seething fury of George Deever in particular. Other than that, *All My Sons* is largely patriotic, pat and contrived. Nonetheless, the drama clearly struck a chord with audiences still hopeful, like Miller himself, that a more populist, vaguely anti-capitalist New Dealism would flourish in postwar America.

Death of a Salesman

By the time *Death of a Salesman* opened in February 1949 that particular illusion had surely been crushed, with the onset of the Cold War and the anticommunist crusade, and Miller's new play no doubt reflects that reality.

The political situation in the US had transformed itself within a matter of months in 1947-48. Whereas the prospects for third-party candidate and former vice president Henry Wallace, who received the support of the American Stalinists, seemed relatively propitious when he began considering running for president in 1947, his campaign had virtually collapsed by the following summer. The American political and media establishment's anticommunist campaign had shifted into full gear.

The House Un-American Activities Committee hearings into "Communist influence" in Hollywood grabbed headlines day after day in the autumn of 1947; ultimately, the "Hollywood Ten" were convicted and sentenced in April 1948; throughout that year the Communist Party leadership in New York City faced prosecution under the Smith Act, which outlawed conspiring to advocate forcible overthrow of the government; in August 1948 congressional hearings (presided over by Richard Nixon) began into accusations that former State Department official Alger Hiss had spied for the Soviet Union; the following summer, indicating the general climate, a right-wing mob broke up a Paul Robeson concert in Peekskill, New York.

Even while drawing fairly sharp conclusions about *Death of a Salesman*'s failings, one always has to bear in mind the conditions in the teeth of which Miller wrote the play; the unfavorable atmosphere goes a considerable distance toward explaining some of its more obvious weaknesses.

The piece, Miller's best-known work, treats the final hours in the life of an aging salesman, Willy Loman. In the course of one day Loman quarrels repeatedly with his older son, Biff, an idler, who has returned home after spending time out West; gets fired by his firm after more than 30 years of backbreaking effort on its behalf; continues to borrow money from an old friend to cover up the fact that he has not been earning anything from his sales work; conjures up the presence of his dead brother and other memories of a happier past; recalls as well the traumatic moment when Biff, a teenager, discovered him in a hotel room with another woman; and, finally, because he is worth more dead than alive (thanks to an insurance policy), kills himself at the wheel of his automobile. In an epilogue, his neighbor defends Willy's memory, "Nobody dast blame this man. A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory."

Death of a Salesman was an instant success, provoking rapturous praise from the New York press, Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times* being the most prominent at the time, and guaranteed Miller's stature as an important American writer.

Is this praise deserved?

The play has achieved a reputation as a critique of American capitalist society or at least its moral and social standards, and audiences and readers have seen it in that light for decades. In one of his essays, the playwright notes that a right-wing periodical called the play "a time bomb expertly placed under the edifice of Americanism." Nor has this merely been some fraud perpetrated on the public. Miller's legitimate hostility to aspects of American life comes through in *Death of a Salesman*, in places quite eloquently.

His antagonism in particular toward the get-rich-quick, glad-handing salesman's dream of success, a valueless, pointless, soul-destroying dream, retains its validity. Echoing Dale Carnegie (*How to Win Friends and Influence People*, the salesman's bible), Loman tells his sons, "Be liked and you'll never want."

The play opens at a moment, however, when he is beset by misgivings. Willy senses he has been on the wrong path all his life, and searches throughout the play for the right one. Biff comes to the conclusion that the pursuit of success itself is the source of the problem. "I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you!" he tells his father. "I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that?" Whether this is a satisfying alternative to delusions of grandeur remains an open question.

In any event, some of the play's most effective scenes, in my view, are those that take place outside the family, between Willy and Charley, his neighbor, for example, or Willy and his boss, Howard. (In the Dustin Hoffman-Volker Schlöndorff 1985 version, Charles Durning as Charley and Jon Polito as Howard turn in two of the strongest performances.)

Here Miller seems on firm, objective ground. Particularly in the latter scene something of the cruelty of American business life comes across. As his boss casually dismisses his request to be relieved of going out on the road any longer and transferred to the New York office, Loman bursts out, "You mustn't tell me you've got people to see—I put thirty-four years into this firm, Howard, and now I can't pay my insurance! You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away—a man is not a piece of fruit." These are moments that have enduring value.

In the end, however, wasn't the American traveling salesman—shallow, crude and philistine—something of an easy target? (Weren't *many* of Miller's subjects somewhat undemanding targets?) After Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis (*Babbitt*, *Main Street* and *Elmer Gantry*—whose protagonist spends time on the road as a traveling salesman), Sherwood Anderson and others, was Miller breaking any terribly new ground in this general area?

The genuinely telling moments in *Death of a Salesman* are all too infrequent. The spectator is meant to sympathize with Loman without looking too deeply at his life. Loman's relationship to Biff is the play's weakest feature, with Miller at his least convincing and most schematic. The notion that Biff's adult life has been derailed by the discovery that his father had a girlfriend in Boston is simply puerile. How is this discovery connected to the play's principal theme, that Loman has imbibed and made his own a false view of success and failure in life? This critical scene seems entirely to lack what Lukács called "dramatic necessity."

If, as the play suggests, Loman has deluded himself and his family about every aspect of life, including marital fidelity, then this one lesson in reality should have set Biff on the *right course*, not sent him off the deep end. His son should have thanked him for at least one honest experience! Something of Miller's own rather conventional, petty bourgeois outlook comes across here.

Despite the undeniable moments of truth, at the center of *Death of a Salesman* is a profound ambiguity, which must reflect, in the end, the playwright's own ambiguous feelings about American society and the American dream. What precisely is the playwright's attitude toward Loman and what should ours be? Tom Driver, writing in the *Tulane Drama Review* in 1957, argued that in the play "at one moment [Loman is] the pathetic object of our pity and the next is being defended as a hero of tragic dimensions."

Loman is a rather unpleasant figure throughout much of the play, a boastful blowhard, a bully, a coward. He gains our sympathy in his boss's office and again when his sons desert him in a Manhattan restaurant, only to lose it once more by his foolish ranting in the play's final moments. "I am not a dime a dozen! I am Willy Loman, and you are Biff Loman!"

Miller wants it both ways. He makes Loman hateful, but he can't resist having him touch the spectator's heartstrings too. So we have his wife Linda famously declare, "I don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person." This is one of the play's most oft-quoted speeches and taken to reflect one of its central themes.

It is a speech, however, that needs to be criticized and rejected. Attention mustn't be paid to *Loman*, in this sentimental fashion, but to *the circumstances* that made him into such a largely detestable, self-deluded figure. His tragedy is not that he can't make money as a salesman any longer, or that his eldest son thinks he's a fake, but that he has thoroughly accepted, even in his dreams, the ideology of a way of life that is killing him and the rest of his family. His tragedy is that he lies to himself until the end of his life. Why should we celebrate and honor him? We should remain angry at his behavior, not "forgiving." The maudlin final scene, in the graveyard, the "Requiem," is a capitulation by Miller, despite Biff's half-hearted comments. What one takes away from the scene is Charley's eulogizing the salesman as a quasi-heroic figure, a dreamer.

In the end, Miller's analysis of American society falls far short. Loman's tragedy is that he listened to those who "inhabit the peaks of broadcasting and advertising offices," Miller wrote in one essay, and their "thundering command to succeed," and within that framework considered himself "a failure."

But is that Loman's tragedy, that he fails, or thinks he has? Miller, of course, stacks the deck. Loman no longer can make a living as a salesman and ultimately loses his position altogether, he alienates his eldest son, his mind and his body may be going. His defeats and deterioration sadden us, we confuse them with what ought to be the tragic essence of his life.

How much more profound is Welles' *Citizen Kane*, in which the protagonist succeeds *brilliantly* and, as his reward, endures only moral and mental anguish. More than that, Welles' film exposes the spiritual emptiness in America, the waste of talent and energy and the essential meaninglessness of a life like Kane's, devoted to the accumulation of wealth and celebrity. Hardly anything is more punishing than success in America, a social process Miller was to witness first-hand less than a decade later when he married the most famous film actress in the world.

The popularity of Miller's drama with audiences was due in part to the fact that it did not demand that they look closely at the lives of the successful. Spectators could return home comforted to a certain extent by a life that was "tragic" in the light of abject failure. This helps make *Death of a Salesman* something of an ersatz tragedy. The drama was perhaps already an anachronism by the time it was written and staged. It refers to moods more bound up with the Depression, or Miller's conception of it. America was about to "take off" in 1949, the American salesman was entering a golden age. The play hardly speaks to the "success story," with all its devastating moral and social consequences, that was about to unfold in the economic boom.

After all, if Willy Loman had simply hung on a few more years perhaps he could have made a bundle selling Chevrolets or kitchen appliances. Even within the framework of the play, one might reasonably ask: what if Loman's sales figures remained as high as ever? What if he were a younger, healthier man? What if one of his sons struck it rich in some line of work or other? How much of the play's tragic core would then remain?

The playwright is simply not on to the more troubling undercurrents in American life; he remains largely on the surface. And, inevitably, half-attached to the world he depicts. Noel Coward, a creator of drawing room comedies for the most part, was unsurprisingly hostile to *Death of a Salesman*, but his remark that the play "is a glorification of mediocrity" was not entirely off the mark.

This, it seems to me, provides a further and related hint as to Miller's success in postwar America. On the one hand, he criticized certain tendencies in American society (selfishness, mediocrity, cowardice), sometimes sharply; on the other, he offered "understanding" that amounted, in the end, to a form of approval or at least acquiescence. With unerring instinct the critics and the cultural establishment responded with enthusiasm.

There is a marked regression from Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (and perhaps Fitzgerald and Richard Wright in the first half of *Native Son*) to *Death of a Salesman*. The best American artistic work did not hold itself back from the terrible social reality. Dreiser would burst into tears walking down the street, looking at the faces of people he met. Where is that quality in Miller, of bottomless compassion and implacable, unanswerable analysis? Nowhere to be found.

Again, this cannot be simply a personal failing. What was it in the social environment that precluded the element of "getting to the bottom of things"? One feels the lack of inspiration, the compromise with mediocrity. Miller writes about the "the heart and spirit of the average man," but Henry Popkin argues persuasively that his characters, who "possess as little imagination" as any ever presented on stage, "inhabit the dead center of dullness as they sit and wait for the voice of doom."

By 1949 the general shape of the postwar world had begun to emerge. The pressures on left-wing writers were vast and intense, and Miller, it must be said, stood up to them far better than most. But he could not go unscathed. One always senses, even as he takes a principled stand, that the playwright is well aware of the ideological and social limits beyond which he cannot go. The right-wing, patriotic policies pursued by the American Stalinists without a doubt played a role in this.

Only a relative handful of artists and intellectuals, probing beneath the surface of postwar life, recognized that the unresolved contradictions of capitalism would reemerge with explosive force.

Arthur Miller did not belong, in any event, to that species. He was a much more moderate individual. The dreariness of postwar America did not frighten him, he had known dreariness. He accepted it with good grace.

One might make the case that, in the final analysis, Miller's special role was to become the registrar and chronicler of drab social and political prospects—all the while holding out for maintaining a good conscience, doing good works, not cheating on one's wife, etc.

The horror of Hiroshima, the Cold War, McCarthyism could not be treated fully within the left-liberal framework, it would have led to despair. The only way within this framework not to give in to despair was to hold back, *to censor oneself*.

Of course the painters, the Abstract Expressionists (Pollock, Rothko, etc.), gave vent to their revulsion and horror, but as mutes, screaming on canvas. One cannot place pure pain and mental dissolution on a stage. What was a dramatist to do? This very difficult situation, a tightrope walk, called for someone with intelligence, but not overly penetrating; with left-wing views, but not too far to the left; with talent as a writer, but not gifted

with genius; with sympathy for the “common man,” i.e., above all, the lower middle class, the more mediocre social layers. Arthur Miller found himself fulfilling these requirements.

Necessity in Events

One never derives any sense of a necessary historical and social process from Miller’s plays. Again, it is tempting to seek at least a partial explanation in his own family’s experience in the financial crash. Social events arrive in his plays inexplicably and rather arbitrarily. *The Crucible* was intended at least in part as a response to the anticommunist witch-hunting of the 1950s, and, in the mechanisms and mentality it exposes, it has a certain value. One would find it nearly impossible to argue, however, that the piece illuminates in any way the set of conditions in America that made the “red scare” possible. The sanctimoniousness and self-aggrandizement of its central character, John Proctor, stands in direct proportion to the play’s historical or social abstractness.

Considerations of concrete historical problems, bound up with the dynamics of conflicting social interests, barely make themselves felt in Miller’s work, except in the vaguest sense (a tendency that was no doubt encouraged as well by the Stalinist Popular Frontism). Vagueness seems to be the operative word. Writing of Miller’s essay, “On Social Plays,” critic Gerald Weales, in a generally sympathetic essay, pointed out that “there is a kind of vagueness about the essay, as there is about so much of Miller’s critical writing.”

It is remarkable, and speaks to the difficulties of the times, that in the aforementioned essay—published in 1955—the playwright makes virtually no analysis of contemporary “social life,” presumably the subject of the “social plays” whose writing and staging he seeks to defend. Miller confines himself to generalities about a general state of human “frustration” at the inability “to live a human life,” the individual’s failure to discover “a means of connecting himself to society except in the form of a truce with it” and certain rather clichéd observations about the nature of the modern industrial state, capitalist or “communist,” in the age of the nuclear bomb and automation.

The vagueness extends to his dramatic writing as well. Mary McCarthy complained that “Willy [Loman] is a capitalized Human Being without being anyone, a suffering animal who commands a helpless pity.” And Popkin argued that as Miller’s characterizations “reach for universality, they run the risk of being so general that they are, in some respects, nebulous.” What is the Lomans’ ethnicity, for example? Various indicators suggest a lower middle class Jewish family. Then why does his brother remember being driven in a wagon across “all the Western states”? How did Loman end up in Brooklyn? Miller, for his own reasons, preferred not to make the family Jewish, but their “Every Family” status further weakens the piece.

This nebulosity only deepened within the stagnant, conformist atmosphere of the 1950s. Miller too experienced the general “rush inward” that bedeviled American artistic work. One aspect of America’s official ideology that Miller had hardly challenged in any of his pieces, its intense individualism, comes more and more to the fore. His pieces become little more than a series of individual morality plays.

A View From the Bridge is a poor work from nearly any point of view. The story of a Brooklyn longshoreman, driven by jealousy and possible repressed homosexual longing, to turn in a pair of illegal immigrants, is unconvincing as a picture of working class life and unserious as a moral-social critique. The knowledge that this misbegotten play was intended as a reply both to Kazan’s infamous act of “naming names” and the latter’s defense of his informing in *On the Waterfront* merely reveals how little Miller understood, or allowed himself to understand, of postwar American society.

Eddie Carbone’s suppressed feelings for his niece and rage at (and perhaps desire for) the newcomer who seems to have won her heart have little or nothing to do with the complex political situation existing in the US in the early 1950s.

It is extraordinary, in fact, that neither *The Crucible*, *A View From the Bridge* nor *On the Waterfront*—the first two, of course, morally far superior to the last—shed the slightest light on the concrete-historical situation in the US, the driving forces of the anticommunist witch-hunt or the roles played by the various social actors.

HUAC

While the height of the McCarthyite period had passed, Miller was still to face threats and harassment from the red-baiters in Washington. In 1954 he was refused a passport he needed to attend a performance of *The Crucible* in Belgium on the grounds that his presence abroad “would not be in the national interest.”

The playwright was summoned to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in June 1956 on entirely spurious grounds, “The Unauthorized Use of United States Passports.” Singer Paul Robeson was obliged to appear in the same round of hearings. When asked whether he had suggested that black Americans would never go to war against the Soviet Union, Robeson replied, “Listen to me, I said it was unthinkable that my people would take arms in the name of an Eastland [the racist senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi] to go against anybody, and gentlemen, I still say that.”

Miller acquitted himself honorably before the six-man House committee, if not with the same defiance as Robeson exhibited. In response to a question about the Smith Act, the playwright expressed his opposition to “anyone being penalized for advocating anything.” In the same vein, asked if a Communist who was a poet should be able to advocate the overthrow of the government, he replied, “I would say that a man should have the right to write a poem on just about anything.... I am opposed to the laying down of any limits upon the freedom of literature.”

When committee counsel Richard Arens demanded that Miller reveal who had attended “Communist Party meetings” with him, the dramatist refused with dignity. Finally, one of the congressmen on the panel inquired as to whether Miller considered himself “more or less a dupe” for having joined Communist-influenced organizations. Something essential about Miller comes across in his honest, straightforward reply: “I wouldn’t say so because I was an adult, I wasn’t a child. I was looking for the world that would be perfect. I think it necessary that I do that, if I were to develop myself as a writer. I am not ashamed of this. I accept my life. That is what I have done. I have learned a great deal.”

Miller was eventually convicted of contempt of Congress for refusing to name names and handed a suspended sentence. The conviction was overturned by the Supreme Court in 1956.

After the Fall

A period of nine years separates *A View From the Bridge* from the staging of *After the Fall* and *Incident at Vichy* in 1964. During that time, in addition to his difficulties with HUAC, Miller was divorced from his first wife, married movie star Marilyn Monroe and then divorced her. Monroe committed suicide one year later in 1962. Miller’s depiction of Monroe in *After the Fall*, for the most part a travesty of a play, was poorly received by critics and the public at large. Its unflattering portrait was viewed as uncharitable, an instance of speaking ill of the dead.

After the Fall is a pretentious and cheaply despairing work. Its overall straining for significance can be gauged by the fact that the set of the play, which was directed by none other than Elia Kazan (Miller and he had more or less made up), was dominated by the presence of a concentration camp tower.

The play takes place in the mind of Quentin, a New York lawyer, who recalls various experiences with his three wives in particular. Monroe appears as Maggie, a self-destructive and “ingenuous whore,” in Martin Gottfried’s words. The play, as Gottfried writes, “begins and ends ... with the imperative to take care, not only about

everyone but about someone. In short, oneness.” It’s all rather banal. Quentin doubts whether he can love. Miller attempts to link this individual coldness and failing with the world-historical catastrophe of the Holocaust. Quentin cannot mourn for his dead parents, he attempts to strangle Maggie in one scene. The play rejects the “fantasy of innocence.” Quentin feels like “an accomplice” in the shadow of the concentration camp.

Gerald Weales explains, “The guilt that Quentin assumes is something very like original sin: an acceptance that he—and all men—are evil. Or that they have evil in them—the capacity to kill.” Holga, Quentin’s third wife, says that “no one they didn’t kill can be innocent again.”

In 1947 Miller told an interviewer that his writing evolved from settings and dramatic situations “which involve real questions of right and wrong.” He meant it sincerely, but this type of conventional moralizing inevitably proves a very limited and inadequate guide to the complexities of modern life. Miller’s failure to make any serious analysis of social life and history brought him to this unattractive and untenable position in *After the Fall*. *Incident at Vichy* raises similar concerns. One confronts here the demoralization of the liberal intelligentsia, its “overwhelmedness,” in the face of the traumas of the mid-twentieth century.

After the Fall also suffers from a type of false self-criticism that abounds in the modern theater. The character, generally rooted in autobiography, beats his breast and proclaims, “I’m a swine! I’m a swine!” precisely as a means of avoiding the most troubling questions posed by his life situation. The problem with Miller’s characterization of Monroe is not chiefly that he is unkind to her. He had the right, after all, to portray her as he thought she was. But the “self-criticism” Quentin/Miller offers—that he fooled himself into thinking he could be her savior (“this cheap benefactor”) and then abandoned her in the end—misses the point, at least in relation to Miller’s own life and condition.

The Miller-Monroe coupling, in real life, was not a long-lived or happy affair, although it began idyllically enough. Monroe, Miller discovered, was a deeply unhappy and insecure woman; in addition, she was addicted to barbiturates. Her film roles, as a “dumb blonde,” a “joke,” in her own words, deeply frustrated and depressed her.

Things went from bad to worse. In the last phase of their relationship, during the 1960 filming of *The Misfits* (which Gottfried describes as being about three men trying to get into bed with Marilyn Monroe ... each one of them Arthur Miller), Miller “could only watch as she swallowed her pills, and, if she became anxious, keep her company through the night, carefully avoiding, he said, anything that might irritate her. When he ventured into the bedroom, she would scream at him to get out. Oftentimes she wouldn’t fall asleep until six o’clock in the morning, shortly before she was supposed to be ready for work.”

In *After the Fall*, Quentin/Miller is appalled by Maggie/Monroe’s neurotic behavior (the character is a popular singer in the play) and the extent of her self-destructive tendencies. One is tempted to ask: what did Miller expect? That he had so little insight into what the fearsome machinery of the entertainment business could do to the vulnerable human personality is a measure of Miller’s own limited grasp of American reality. Moreover, why did this supposed critic of the American dream fail to shine a light on his own obvious fascination with celebrity? To have truly subjected his own fantasies about movie stars, “sex symbols” and the rest to a critical analysis, that might have made a promising starting-point for a drama.

Miller’s last play to receive significant attention, *The Price*, was staged in 1968. The drama centers on the relationship of two brothers, one of whom stayed at home with his depressed father after the latter’s business went bankrupt and the other who became a glamorous and successful doctor. The play, less pompous and more genuinely self-critical than his previous effort, is not without interest. It resonates with the experience of Miller and his brother Kermit and their father, who went into a deep depression after the collapse of his enterprise. It is, nonetheless, a slight piece.

Miller's later pieces, such as *The American Clock* (1980), *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* (1991) and *Broken Glass* (1994), reveal that the playwright maintained his limited artistic virtues to the end of his life.

Arthur Miller will be remembered as a serious figure, but the rebirth of the American theater will have to take place on a far more audacious basis, socially and artistically, than that provided by his work.

"Remembering Arthur Miller" by Phil Mitchinson

Phil Mitchinson reviews a new book *Remembering Arthur Miller* and interviews one of the contributors, the well known director David Thacker who worked with the American playwright on numerous occasions and was the artistic director of the famous Young Vic theatre in London. Miller's courageous stand against McCarthyism is well known but perhaps less generally recognised is how important an influence politics in general played in his life and writings.

Arthur Miller was perhaps best known for his marriage to Marilyn Monroe. This brought him a degree of celebrity not normally associated with playwrights in our age. It would be a shame indeed if this were to be his epitaph. He should be remembered instead as a great writer – perhaps even as America's Shakespeare.

An integral part of that great writing was that Miller was a very political man. The FBI opened its file on Miller as far back as 1938. His most overtly political act was his appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee of Senator Joe McCarthy where he steadfastly refused to name names. This was an act of tremendous courage in itself in an era when even General George Marshall was denounced as a Communist. Many lives were ruined, some even lost. Miller exposed this in his play *The Crucible*. He shed light on the darkest side of the American Dream, a theme looked at from many different angles in his works.

There is, in fact, a link between Miller's appearance at the McCarthy witch-hunt and his famous marriage. "I knew perfectly well why they had subpoenaed me, it was because I was engaged to Marilyn Monroe" Richard Eyre remembers him saying. "Once I became famous as her possible husband, this was a great possibility for publicity. When I got to Washington... my lawyer received a message from the chairman saying that if it could be arranged that he could have a picture, a photograph taken with Marilyn, he would cancel the whole hearing. I mean the cynicism of this thing was so total, it was asphyxiating."

"Arthur Miller's political ideas can be understood as the best elements of socialism," David Thacker, a contributor to the book, explained to me, "above all the idea of freedom," that denied by the Stalinist tyrannies as much as by capitalist dictatorships whether open or hidden behind the façade of democracy. This meant a struggle against oppression in general, and in particular [the book records the time he spent campaigning quietly for individuals under attack] for the freedom to think, to believe; the freedom to gain control over one's life.

All Miller's plays are intensely political. They are not diatribes; politics and ideology are not rammed down one's throat. They are political because they are concerned with humanity and with society. Roy Hattersley, another contributor to the book, once wrote that Thatcher should see Miller's plays. At the time Thatcher and co were announcing that there was 'no such thing as society', spurring on the individualistic, egotistical morality of the 1980s. This was anathema to a man like Miller, for whom the theatre brought people together to better understand themselves as individuals and as social beings, as the editor of the book, Christopher Bigsby, explains in his introduction.

What concerned Miller was the dialectical interaction between individuals and society. Both the impact of society on the lives of individuals – the oppression of chains or of dreams and illusions – and also the effect an individual's actions can have on the whole of society. This interaction means it must be possible for people to act to change themselves, and also to change the world around them. Such optimism is inherently revolutionary.

The ability of individuals to change things is an important theme in many of Miller's plays. Often they fail, or do not try as they should, but it is our duty to try. We can succeed. This is the purpose of Miller's theatre: to think, to move, to change the world for the better.

Miller was archetypally American, yet his characters are universally recognisable, not least because Miller was the first to place working class characters at the front of the stage. Productions of his plays are always taking place somewhere in the world. His *Death of a Salesman*, perhaps his most powerful treatment of the American Dream, was a great success even in China.

For a long time his plays were more popular outside of the US than they were at home. The Young Vic theatre in London, for example, staged many of his works over the years, to the extent that, in the words of the former artistic director David Thacker, he became their "resident playwright."

David explained to me the close connection between the Young Vic and the American playwright:

"Part of the *raison d'être* of the Young Vic was to perform for those not used to the theatre, those who might find it forbidding or alienating. For example young people, and working class people who are led to believe that 'the theatre is not for them', or else is boring, dull, and doesn't connect with their lives.

"If performed well Miller's plays are powerful enough to overcome these prejudices and misapprehensions and reach a broad audience.

"The power of the plays lies in three key factors. Firstly, they are language based, they deal with ideas, they are intellectually stimulating and challenging. At the same time the words are poetry." (Miller's precision in writing led Dustin Hoffman, another contributor to the book, to describe his characters' speeches as 'arias'.— PM)

"Secondly they are political, they deal with the interconnections between human beings, the impact of an individual's actions on society and vice versa, and that dialectical interaction means we have the power to change - ourselves, our relationships, our society and the whole world. That optimism, the potential of humanity, of ordinary working people, leads to the notion that it is our responsibility to make those changes, a duty that cannot be ducked.

"Thirdly they are emotionally powerful. The audience doesn't just think, they feel, laugh and cry. They evoke an empathy which is central to the desire to bring about political change. One can empathise because the character can be recognised and the story can be followed. Arthur said to me once, "if you told the story to a guy on a train he'd get it."

Arthur Miller died on February 10, 2005. Those who knew him remember him for more than his marriage to Marilyn.

Remembering Arthur Miller is a fascinating insight into the life and ideas of arguably America's greatest playwright. Appropriately it consists of anecdotes about the interrelationships between people. Stories about opening nights and rehearsals mingle with those about planting trees, and building furniture. His skill as a raconteur – he was above all a storyteller – is combined with his ability to put those he worked with at ease. We see glimpses of his political ideas and his literary skills. Most of all what we see is his humanity.

Before reading *Remembering Arthur Miller* I met the director David Thacker for a conversation. I asked David, who worked closely with Miller on a number of occasions, to tell me a little about the first time they met and how they came to work together.

"The first time I got to meet Arthur Miller, and work with him, was when I wanted to put on *An Enemy of the People*. This was originally an Ibsen play, but it had been completely reworked by Arthur who had written his

version back in the McCarthy era, before he wrote *The Crucible*. In Ibsen's play a doctor in a small Norwegian town, dependent on its famous spa water which draws in the tourists, discovers that the water is, in fact, poisonous. He believes everyone will celebrate his discovery and laud him for it. Instead, the vested interests in the town pull together to repress the facts. The doctor cannot believe it. The mayor of the town is his brother; the press has always seemed quite radical; but between them they all decide that it would not be in 'the community interest' to let this story get out, because their economy would collapse. So the doctor becomes 'the enemy of the people'. He goes public, making a great speech on the theme 'Tell the truth'. In reality, Ibsen's version is reactionary, its philosophy makes it impossible to do. The doctor is a kind of Nietzschean superman. But Miller changes the perspective completely. In Ibsen's version the doctor exclaims 'the majority is never right,' in Miller's version this becomes 'the majority is never right until it does right.' This was two playwrights shaking hands over a century. Miller turns the play into something neither could have written.

“Now, this play had never been performed in England before. Miller was nervous about the prospect until he found out that Tom Wilkinson was to play the lead role, then he agreed to let us do it.

“There were several problems with the production, firstly the idea of performing the play in England, but setting it in Norway while the characters spoke with American accents. It just didn't seem right. This was not just a matter of accents, but the language itself. I called Arthur on the phone, and while he was initially surprised by the idea that there would be a problem with the language, he suggested we make the changes we found necessary and let him know if we encountered any difficulties.

“We took the text of Miller's play and Ibsen's version and compared the two. Some of the changes Miller had made, we decided, may have been mistaken. In particular, we wanted to reintroduce a speech from Ibsen omitted in Miller's play. Again we discussed it on the phone, his response was 'well, try it.' We developed a relationship in this way, over the telephone. He was a great help with casting, for example. We took the play to the West End where it was a great success.

“Next I asked for the rights to put on *Two Way Mirror* – two two-handers. Again Arthur was concerned about the quality of the actors to be involved. He, or his agent, had heard of them – Helen Mirren and Bob Peck – so he gave us the rights.

“Arthur came over during the second week of rehearsals, while *Enemy of the People* was on. I sat next to him in the theatre. The production had already gained notoriety. Roy Hattersley wrote about it in *The Guardian*. I think it would go down well today. The 'Tell the Truth' speech would be particularly appropriate, we are so used to being lied to. At the time, of course, the poisoned water wasn't just a metaphor; people were becoming increasingly concerned about the state of the water supply, that was when people started drinking bottled water.

“At one point in the play Arthur turned to me and said 'that woman is fantastic.' He was talking about my wife – Margo Leicester. That naturally endeared him to me, and at the same time I was relieved that he had liked our production of his play. He wanted to meet the actors. The scene that followed was like the photo of Chekhov with the cast of *The Seagull* all sat at his feet. This was in *The Playhouse* theatre in the West End. Arthur was a very charismatic man, sexy; he had a kind of magnetism. He could talk about anything. He became my moral compass, the man I would call to talk about Bush or whatever was going on in the world.

“He wanted to know if he could come to rehearsals. I was supposed to just carry on like normal. Arthur came along and sat in the corner of the room. I brought him to the front. At that stage we were engaged in an exercise on articulating the subtext, that is where the actors say out loud what they are thinking when they deliver lines. He found this fascinating, and kept coming back for four or five days. I suggested he might come back at the end of the process. To be honest, sometimes the middle of rehearsals is quite a boring stage. He came back for the last week.

“Then I directed *The Price*, a four-hander not done since it was written in the sixties. Naturally, therefore, Miller was concerned again about how it would go. So he came along to the last week of rehearsals, which frightened the actors somewhat. We did a run through. The play is set in an attic, with furniture all over the place, which the brothers in the play are selling off because their father had gone bust in 1929. The Depression inevitably had a big effect on Miller, whose own family went from being fairly well off to losing everything. When he saw the room we were rehearsing in he said 'this is just like the attic.'

“Arthur, and his wife Inge (now sadly dead) came along throughout our preparations. Modest as ever he wouldn't sit at the front. By now we were on first name terms. I had broken the play up into five-minute units and I asked him to step up and give his opinions. Then began the most amazing three days. We worked closely together and he was an inspiration. He was the complete opposite of those playwrights who can be defined as mystifying. Miller was all about clarification, he knew exactly what he was trying to say and mean, so he would always give straight answers. His characters were living people to him. His straight talking wasn't confined to the play and its direction, but applied to the actors and the acting too. He was the most frank man I have ever seen. He commanded enormous respect. This was for a combination of reasons, not least his politics. Actors are inevitably influenced by, and drawn towards, ideas. Here was a man who had stood up to McCarthy, and that was worthy of enormous admiration. He had earned the respect he received.

“Every heartbeat of the man was full of goodness, of integrity. He was a very funny man, witty and fun to be with. Often heroes can turn out to be rather disappointing in the flesh, we all have a tendency to romanticise people, I suppose. But Miller did not disappoint. He could be difficult too. For example, he had to be convinced to employ a secretary to answer his correspondence; the trouble was he did not understand the importance, the high regard in which he was held.

“He was completely frank, but not destructively so. When he was already 75 years old he explained that this was because 'life was too short.' On seeing Bob Peck rehearsing one role he thought the acting was making the character look manipulative, which wasn't what he meant. 'Don't be more significant than the lines are,' he told him. That always reminds me of those lines from Hamlet:

“suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.”

“For Miller the theatre wasn't there simply to entertain the gin and tonic sipping set. It had more purpose than this. It should make people think, feel, and act, in order to bring about change, in their lives, their relationships, their society.”

Works

Stage plays

- No Villain (1936)
- They Too Arise (1937, based on *No Villain*)
- Honors at Dawn (1938, based on *They Too Arise*)
- *The Grass Still Grows* (1938, based on *They Too Arise*)
- *The Great Disobedience* (1938)

- *Listen My Children* (1939, with Norman Rosten)
- *The Golden Years* (1940)
- *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1940)
- *The Half-Bridge* (1943)
- *All My Sons* (1947)
- *Death of a Salesman* (1949)
- *An Enemy of the People* (1950, based on Henrik Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People*)
- *The Crucible* (1953)
- *A View from the Bridge* (1955)
- *A Memory of Two Mondays* (1955)
- *After the Fall* (1964)
- *Incident at Vichy* (1964)
- *The Price* (1968)
- *The Reason Why* (1970)
- *Fame* (one-act, 1970; revised for television 1978)
- *The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972)
- *The Archbishop's Ceiling* (1977)
- *The American Clock* (1980)
- *Playing for Time* (television play, 1980)
- *Elegy for a Lady* (short play, 1982, first part of *Two Way Mirror*)
- *Some Kind of Love Story* (short play, 1982, second part of *Two Way Mirror*)
- *I Think About You a Great Deal* (1986)
- *Playing for Time* (stage version, 1985)
- *I Can't Remember Anything* (1987, collected in *Danger: Memory!*)
- *Clara* (1987, collected in *Danger: Memory!*)
- *The Last Yankee* (1991)
- *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* (1991)
- *Broken Glass* (1994)
- *Mr Peter's Connections* (1998)
- *Resurrection Blues* (2002)
- *Finishing the Picture* (2004)

Radio plays

- *The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber Who Was a Man* (1941)
- *Joel Chandler Harris* (1941)
- *Captain Paul* (1941)
- *The Battle of the Ovens* (1942)
- *Thunder from the Mountains* (1942)
- *I Was Married in Bataan* (1942)
- *The Four Freedoms* (1942)
- *That They May Win* (1943)
- *Listen for the Sound of Wings* (1943)
- *Bernardine* (1944)
- *I Love You* (1944)
- *Grandpa and the Statue* (1944)
- *The Philippines Never Surrendered* (1944)
- *The Guardsman* (1944, based on *Ferenc Molnár's* play)
- *The Story of Gus* (1947)

Screenplays

- All My Sons (1948)
- The Hook (1947)
- Let's Make Love (1960)
- The Misfits (1961)
- Everybody Wins (1984)
- Death of a Salesman (1985)
- The Crucible (1995)
- *Mr. Peters' Connections* (1998)

Assorted fiction

- Focus (novel, 1945)
- "The Misfits" (novella, 1957)
- *I Don't Need You Anymore* (short stories, 1967)
- "Homely Girl" (short story, 1992, published in UK as "Plain Girl: A Life" 1995)
- "The Performance" (short story)
- *Presence: Stories* (short stories, 2007)

Non-fiction

- *Situation Normal* (1944) is based on his experiences researching the war correspondence of Ernie Pyle.
- *In Russia* (1969), the first of three books created with his photographer wife Inge Morath, offers Miller's impressions of Russia and Russian society.
- *In the Country* (1977), with photographs by Morath and text by Miller, provides insight into how Miller spent his time in Roxbury, Connecticut and profiles of his various neighbors.
- *Chinese Encounters* (1979) is a travel journal with photographs by Morath. It depicts the Chinese society in the state of flux which followed the end of the Cultural Revolution. Miller discusses the hardships of many writers, professors, and artists as they try to regain the sense of freedom and place they lost during Mao Zedong's regime.
- *Salesman in Beijing* (1984) details Miller's experiences with the 1983 Beijing People's Theatre production of *Death of a Salesman*. He describes the idiosyncrasies, understandings, and insights encountered in directing a Chinese cast in a decidedly American play.
- *Timebends: A Life*, Methuen London (1987) ISBN 0-413-41480-9. Like *Death of a Salesman*, the book follows the structure of memory itself, each passage linked to and triggered by the one before.

Collections

- Kushner, Tony, ed. *Arthur Miller, Collected Plays 1944–1961* (Library of America, 2006) ISBN 978-1-931082-91-4.
- Martin, Robert A. (ed.), "The theater essays of Arthur Miller", foreword by Arthur Miller. NY: Viking Press, 1978 ISBN 0-14-004903-7.
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Unit V

Amartya Sen

Amartya Kumar Sen (born 3 November 1933) is an Indian economist and philosopher who since 1972 has taught and worked in the United Kingdom and the United States. He has made contributions to welfare economics, social choice theory, economic and social justice, economic theories of famines, and indexes of the measure of well-being of citizens of developing countries. He was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998 for his work in welfare economics.

He is currently the Thomas W. Lamont University Professor and Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University. He serves as the chancellor of Nalanda University. He is also a senior fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows, a distinguished fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, an honorary fellow of Darwin College, Cambridge and a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he served as Master from 1998 to 2004. He is also known for being one of the strongest champions of rationalism, secularism, and egalitarianism in India, and has condemned the ghettoization of Ambedkar as a Dalit leader.

Early Life and Education

Sen was born in a Bengali Vaidya family in Manikganj, Bangladesh, to Ashutosh Sen and Amita Sen. Rabindranath Tagore gave Amartya Sen his name (Bengali অমর্ত্য *ômorto*, lit. "immortal"). Sen's family was from Wari and Manikganj, Dhaka, both in present-day Bangladesh. His father Ashutosh Sen was a professor of chemistry at Dhaka University who moved with his family to West Bengal in 1945 and worked at various government institutions, including the West Bengal Public Service Commission (of which he was the chairman), and the Union Public Service Commission. Sen's mother Amita Sen was the daughter of Kshiti Mohan Sen, a well-known scholar of ancient and medieval India and close associate of Rabindranath Tagore. He served as the Vice Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University for some years.

Sen began his high-school education at St Gregory's School in Dhaka in 1940. From fall 1941, Sen studied at Visva-Bharati University school. He later went to Presidency College, Kolkata, where he earned a B.A. in Economics, with a minor in Mathematics. In 1953, he moved to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he earned a second B.A. in Economics in 1955. He was elected President of the Cambridge Majlis. While Sen was officially a Ph.D. student at Cambridge (though he had finished his research in 1955-6), he was offered the position of Professor and Head of the Economics Department of the newly created Jadavpur University in Calcutta. He served in that position, starting the new Economics Department, during 1956 to 1958.

Meanwhile, Sen was elected to a Prize Fellowship at Trinity College, which gave him four years of freedom to do anything he liked; he made the radical decision to study philosophy. That proved to be of immense help to his later research. Sen explained: "The broadening of my studies into philosophy was important for me not just because some of my main areas of interest in economics relate quite closely to philosophical disciplines (for example, social choice theory makes intense use of mathematical logic and also draws on moral philosophy, and so does the study of inequality and deprivation), but also because I found philosophical studies very rewarding on their own". His interest in philosophy, however, dates back to his college days at Presidency, where he read books on philosophy and debated philosophical themes.

To Sen, Cambridge was like a battlefield. There were major debates between supporters of Keynesian economics on the one hand, and the "neo-classical" economists skeptical of Keynes, on the other. Sen was lucky to have close relations with economists on both sides of the divide. Meanwhile, thanks to its good "practice" of democratic and tolerant social choice, Sen's own college, Trinity College, was somewhat removed from the discord. However, because of a lack of enthusiasm for social choice theory in both Trinity and Cambridge, Sen had to choose a different subject for his Ph.D. thesis, which was on "The Choice of Techniques" in 1959, though the work had been completed much earlier (except for some valuable advice from his adjunct supervisor in India, Professor A. K. Dasgupta, given to Sen while teaching and revising his work at Jadavpur) under the supervision of the "brilliant but vigorously intolerant" post-Keynesian, Joan Robinson. Quentin Skinner notes that Sen was a member of the secret society Cambridge Apostles during his time at Cambridge.

Professorships

Sen, the Welfare Economist and Nobel Laureate began his career both as a teacher and a research scholar in the Department of Economics, Jadavpur University. Between 1960 and 1961, Sen was a visiting Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States, where he got to know Paul Samuelson, Robert Solow, Franco Modigliani, and Norbert Wiener. He was also a visiting Professor at UC-Berkeley and Cornell. He taught as Professor of Economics between 1963 and 1971 at the Delhi School of Economics (where he completed his *magnum opus* Collective Choice and Social Welfare by 1969). This is a period considered to be a Golden Period in the history of DSE. In 1972, he joined the London School of Economics as a Professor of Economics where he taught until 1977. From 1977 to 1986 he taught at the University of Oxford, where he was first a Professor of Economics and Fellow of Nuffield College, and then the Drummond Professor of Political Economy and a Fellow of All Souls College from 1980. In 1987, he joined Harvard as the Thomas W. Lamont University Professor of Economics. In 1998 he was appointed as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. In January 2004, Sen returned to Harvard. He also established the Eva Colorni Trust at the former London Guildhall University in the name of his deceased wife.

Membership and Associations

He has served as president of the Econometric Society (1984), the International Economic Association (1986–1989), the Indian Economic Association (1989) and the American Economic Association (1994). He has also served as President of the Development Studies Association and the Human Development and Capabilities Association.

He serves as the Chair of the International Advisory Board of the Center for Human and Economic Development Studies at Peking University in China.

Research

Sen's papers in the late 1960s and early 1970s helped develop the theory of social choice, which first came to prominence in the work by the American economist Kenneth Arrow, who, while working at the RAND Corporation, had most famously shown that all voting rules, be they majority rule or two thirds-majority or status quo, must inevitably conflict with some basic democratic norm. Sen's contribution to the literature was to show under what conditions Arrow's impossibility theorem would indeed come to pass as well as to extend and enrich the theory of social choice, informed by his interests in history of economic thought and philosophy.

In 1981, Sen published *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (1981), a book in which he argued that famine occurs not only from a lack of food, but from inequalities built into mechanisms for distributing food. Sen also argued that the Bengal famine was caused by an urban economic boom that raised food prices, thereby causing millions of rural workers to starve to death when their wages did not keep up.

Sen's interest in famine stemmed from personal experience. As a nine-year-old boy, he witnessed the Bengal famine of 1943, in which three million people perished. This staggering loss of life was unnecessary, Sen later concluded. He presents data that there was an adequate food supply in Bengal at the time, but particular groups of people including rural landless labourers and urban service providers like haircutters did not have the means to buy food as its price rose rapidly due to factors that include British military acquisition, panic buying, hoarding, and price gouging, all connected to the war in the region. In *Poverty and Famines*, Sen revealed that in many cases of famine, food supplies were not significantly reduced. In Bengal, for example, food production, while down on the previous year, was higher than in previous non-famine years. Thus, Sen points to a number of social and economic factors, such as declining wages, unemployment, rising food prices, and poor food-distribution, which led to starvation. His capabilities approach focuses on positive freedom, a person's actual

ability to be or do something, rather than on negative freedom approaches, which are common in economics and simply focuses on non-interference. In the Bengal famine, rural laborers' negative freedom to buy food was not affected. However, they still starved because they were not positively free to do anything, they did not have the functioning of nourishment, nor the capability to escape morbidity.

In addition to his important work on the causes of famines, Sen's work in the field of development economics has had considerable influence in the formulation of the "Human Development Report", published by the United Nations Development Programme. This annual publication that ranks countries on a variety of economic and social indicators owes much to the contributions by Sen among other social choice theorists in the area of economic measurement of poverty and inequality.

Sen's revolutionary contribution to development economics and social indicators is the concept of "capability" developed in his article "Equality of What". He argues that governments should be measured against the concrete capabilities of their citizens. This is because top-down development will always trump human rights as long as the definition of terms remains in doubt (is a "right" something that must be provided or something that simply cannot be taken away?). For instance, in the United States citizens have a hypothetical "right" to vote. To Sen, this concept is fairly empty. In order for citizens to have a capacity to vote, they first must have "functionings". These "functionings" can range from the very broad, such as the availability of education, to the very specific, such as transportation to the polls. Only when such barriers are removed can the citizen truly be said to act out of personal choice. It is up to the individual society to make the list of minimum capabilities guaranteed by that society. For an example of the "capabilities approach" in practice, see Martha Nussbaum's Women and Human Development.

He wrote a controversial article in The New York Review of Books entitled "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing" (see Missing women of Asia), analyzing the mortality impact of unequal rights between the genders in the developing world, particularly Asia. Other studies, including one by Emily Oster, had argued that this is an overestimation, though Oster has since then recanted her conclusions.

Welfare economics seeks to evaluate economic policies in terms of their effects on the well-being of the community. Sen, who devoted his career to such issues, was called the "conscience of his profession". His influential monograph *Collective Choice and Social Welfare* (1970), which addressed problems related to individual rights (including formulation of the liberal paradox), justice and equity, majority rule, and the availability of information about individual conditions, inspired researchers to turn their attention to issues of basic welfare. Sen devised methods of measuring poverty that yielded useful information for improving economic conditions for the poor. For instance, his theoretical work on inequality provided an explanation for why there are fewer women than men in India and China despite the fact that in the West and in poor but medically unbiased countries, women have lower mortality rates at all ages, live longer, and make a slight majority of the population. Sen claimed that this skewed ratio results from the better health treatment and childhood opportunities afforded boys in those countries, as well as sex-selective abortions.

Governments and international organizations handling food crises were influenced by Sen's work. His views encouraged policy makers to pay attention not only to alleviating immediate suffering but also to finding ways to replace the lost income of the poor—for example through public works—and to maintain stable prices for food. A vigorous defender of political freedom, Sen believed that famines do not occur in functioning democracies because their leaders must be more responsive to the demands of the citizens. In order for economic growth to be achieved, he argued, social reforms—such as improvements in education and public health—must precede economic reform.

In 2009, Sen published a new book called *The Idea of Justice*. Based on his previous work in welfare economics and social choice theory, but also on his philosophical thoughts, he presented his own theory of justice that he meant to be an alternative to the influential modern theories of justice of John Rawls or John Harsanyi. In opposition to Rawls but also earlier justice theoreticians Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau or David

Hume, and inspired by the philosophical works of Adam Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft, Sen developed a theory that is both comparative and realizations-oriented (instead of being transcendental and institutional). However, he still regards institutions and processes as being important. As an alternative to Rawls's veil of ignorance, Sen chose the thought experiment of an impartial spectator as the basis of his theory of justice. He also stressed the importance of public discussion (understanding democracy in the sense of John Stuart Mill) and a focus on people's capabilities (an approach that he had co-developed), including the notion of universal human rights, in evaluating various states with regard to justice.

Perceptions: In Comparisons

Sen has been called "the Conscience of the profession" and "the Mother Teresa of Economics" for his work on famine, human development theory, welfare economics, the underlying mechanisms of poverty, gender inequality, and political liberalism. However, he denies the comparison to Mother Teresa, saying that he has never tried to follow a lifestyle of dedicated self-sacrifice.

Amartya Sen also added his voice to the campaign against the anti-gay Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.

India: University Mentor for Growth and Revival

Nalanda International University Project

In May 2007, he was appointed as chairman of Nalanda Mentor Group to examine the framework of international cooperation, and proposed structure of partnership, which would govern the establishment of Nalanda International University Project as an international centre of education seeking to revive the ancient center of higher learning which was present in India from the 5th century to 1197.

On 19 July 2012, Sen was named the first chancellor of the proposed Nalanda University (NU). Teaching began in August 2014.

Personal life and Beliefs

Sen has been married three times. His first wife was Nabaneeta Dev Sen, an Indian writer and scholar, by whom he had two daughters: Antara, a journalist and publisher, and Nandana, a Bollywood actress. Their marriage broke up shortly after they moved to London in 1971. Later on, Sen married his second wife, Eva Colorni, who died from stomach cancer in 1985. He has two children by Eva, a daughter Indrani, who is a journalist in New York, and a son Kabir, a hip hop artist, MC, and music teacher at Shady Hill School. In 1991, Sen married Emma Georgina Rothschild, who serves as the Jeremy and Jane Knowles Professor of History at Harvard University.

The Sens have a house in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which is the base from which they teach during the academic year. They also have a home in Cambridge, England, where Sen is a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Rothschild is a Fellow of Magdalene College. He usually spends his winter holidays at his home in Santiniketan in West Bengal, India, where he used to go on long bike rides until recently. Asked how he relaxes, he replies: "I read a lot and like arguing with people."

Sen is an atheist and holds that this can be associated with Hinduism of the atheist schools, like Lokayata. In an interview for the magazine *California*, which is published by the University of California, Berkeley, he noted:

“ In some ways people had got used to the idea that India was spiritual and religion-oriented. That gave a leg up to the religious interpretation of India, despite the fact that

Sanskrit had a larger atheistic literature than what exists in any other classical language. Madhava Acharya, the remarkable 14th century philosopher, wrote this rather great book called *Sarvadarshansamgraha*, which discussed all the religious schools of thought within the Hindu structure. The first chapter is on the philosophy of Lokayata – a very strong presentation of the argument in favor of atheism and materialism.

Academic Achievements, Awards and Honours

Sen has received over 90 honorary degrees from universities around the world.

- 1954 He received the Adam Smith Prize.
- 1981: He was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- 1982: He was awarded honorary fellowship by the Institute of Social Studies.
- 1998: He received the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his work in welfare economics.
- 1999: He received the Bharat Ratna "the highest civilian award in India" by the President of India.
- 1999: He was offered the honorary citizenship of Bangladesh by Sheikh Hasina in recognition of his achievements in winning the Nobel Prize, and given that his ancestral origins were in what has become the modern state of Bangladesh
- 2000: He was awarded the order of Companion of Honour, UK.
- 2000: He received Leontief Prize for his outstanding contribution to economic theory from the Global Development and Environment Institute.
- 2000: He was awarded the Eisenhower Medal for Leadership and Service USA;
- 2000: He was the 351st Commencement Speaker of Harvard University.
- 2002: He received the International Humanist Award from the International Humanist and Ethical Union.
- 2003: He was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Indian Chamber of Commerce.
- He is awarded the Life Time Achievement award by Bangkok-based United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)
- 2005: Honorary degree, University of Pavia
- 2010: He was chosen to deliver the Demos Annual Lecture 2010
- 2011: The National Humanities Medal
- 2012: Sash in a special category Order of the Aztec Eagle
- 2013: He was made a Commander of the French Legion of Honour
- 2013: The 25 Greatest Global Living Legends In India by NDTV
- 2014: He has been selected as one of the top 100 thinkers who have defined our century, a list prepared by The New Republic.

Amartya Sen's Capability Approach by Thomas Wells

The Capability Approach is defined by its choice of focus upon the moral significance of individuals' capability of achieving the kind of lives they have reason to value. This distinguishes it from more established approaches to ethical evaluation, such as utilitarianism or resourcism, which focus exclusively on subjective well-being or the availability of means to the good life, respectively. A person's capability to live a good life is defined in terms of the set of valuable 'beings and doings' like being in good health or having loving relationships with others to which they have real access.

The Capability Approach was first articulated by the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen in the 1980s, and remains most closely associated with him. It has been employed extensively in the context of human development, for example, by the United Nations Development Programme, as a broader, deeper alternative to narrowly economic metrics such as growth in GDP per capita. Here 'poverty' is understood as deprivation in the capability to live a good life, and 'development' is understood as capability expansion.

Within academic philosophy the novel focus of Capability Approach has attracted a number of scholars. It is seen to be relevant for the moral evaluation of social arrangements beyond the development context, for example, for considering gender justice. It is also seen as providing foundations for normative theorising, such as a capability theory of justice that would include an explicit 'metric' (that specifies which capabilities are valuable) and 'rule' (that specifies how the capabilities are to be distributed). The philosopher Martha Nussbaum has provided the most influential version of such a capability theory of justice, deriving from the requirements of human dignity a list of central capabilities to be incorporated into national constitutions and guaranteed to all up to a certain threshold.

This article focuses on the philosophical aspects of the Capability Approach and its foundations in the work of Amartya Sen. It discusses the development and structure of Sen's account, how it relates to other ethical approaches, and its main contributions and criticisms. It also outlines various capability theories developed within the Capability Approach, with particular attention to that of Martha Nussbaum.

The Development of Sen's Capability Approach

a. Sen's Background

Amartya Sen had an extensive background in development economics, social choice theory (for which he received the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics), and philosophy before developing the Capability Approach during the 1980s. This background can be pertinent to understanding and assessing Sen's Capability Approach because of the complementarity between Sen's contributions to these different fields. Sen's most influential and comprehensive account of his Capability Approach, *Development as Freedom* (Sen 1999), helpfully synthesizes in an accessible way many of these particular, and often quite technical, contributions.

Sen first introduced the concept of capability in his Tanner Lectures on *Equality of What?* (Sen 1979) and went on to elaborate it in subsequent publications during the 1980s and 1990s. Sen notes that his approach has strong conceptual connections with Aristotle's understanding of human flourishing (this was the initial foundation for Nussbaum's alternative Capability Theory); with Adam Smith, and with Karl Marx. Marx discussed the importance of functionings and capability for human well-being. For example, Sen often cites Smith's analysis of relative poverty in *The Wealth of Nation* in terms of how a country's wealth and different cultural norms affected which material goods were understood to be a 'necessity'. Sen also cites Marx's foundational concern with "replacing the domination of circumstances and chance over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstances".

b. Sen's Concerns

The Capability Approach attempts to address various concerns that Sen had about contemporary approaches to the evaluation of well-being, namely:

(1) Individuals can differ greatly in their abilities to convert the same resources into valuable functionings ('beings' and 'doings'). For example, those with physical disabilities may need specific goods to achieve mobility, and pregnant women have specific nutritional requirements to achieve good health. *Therefore, evaluation that focuses only on means, without considering what particular people can do with them, is insufficient.*

(2) People can internalize the harshness of their circumstances so that they do not desire what they can never expect to achieve. This is the phenomenon of 'adaptive preferences' in which people who are objectively very sick may, for example, still declare, and believe, that their health is fine. *Therefore, evaluation that focuses only on subjective mental metrics is insufficient without considering whether that matches with what a neutral observer would perceive as their objective circumstances.*

(3) Whether or not people take up the options they have, the fact that they do have valuable options is significant. For example, even if the nutritional state of people who are fasting and starving is the same, the fact that fasting is a choice not to eat should be recognized. *Therefore evaluation must be sensitive to both actual achievements ('functionings') and effective freedom ('capability').*

(4) Reality is complicated and evaluation should reflect that complexity rather than take a short-cut by excluding all sorts of information from consideration in advance. For example, although it may seem obvious that happiness matters for the evaluation of how well people are doing, it is not all obvious that it should be the *only* aspect that ever matters and so nothing else should be considered. *Therefore, evaluation of how well people are doing must seek to be as open-minded as possible.* (Note: This leads to the deliberate 'under-theorization' of the Capability Approach that has been the source of some criticism, and it motivated the development of Nussbaum's alternative Capability Theory.)

Sen's Critiques of Utilitarianism and Resourcism

An important part of Sen's argument for the Capability Approach relates to his critique of alternative philosophical and economics accounts. In particular, he argues that, whatever their particular strengths, none of them provide an analysis of well-being that is suitable as a general concept; they are all focused on the wrong particular things (whether utility, liberty, commodities, or primary goods), and they are too narrowly focused (they exclude too many important aspects from evaluation). Sen's criticisms of economic utilitarianism and John Rawls' primary goods are particularly important in the evolution of his account and its reception.

a. Utilitarianism

Economics has a branch explicitly concerned with ethical analysis ('Welfare Economics'). Sen's systematic criticism of the form of utilitarianism behind welfare economics identifies and rejects each of its three pillars: act consequentialism, welfarism, and sum-ranking.

i. Act-Consequentialism

According to act consequentialism, actions should be assessed only in terms of the goodness or badness of their consequences. This excludes any consideration of the morality of the *process* by which consequences are brought about, for example, whether it respects principles of fairness or individual agency. Sen argues instead for a 'comprehensive consequentialism' which integrates the moral significance of both consequences and principles. For example, it matters not only whether people have an equal capability to live a long life, but how that equality is achieved. Under the same circumstances women generally live longer than men, for largely biological reasons. If the only thing that mattered was achieving equality in the capability to live a long life this fact suggests that health care provision should be biased in favor of men. However, as Sen argues, trying to achieve equality in this way would override important moral claims of fairness which should be included in a comprehensive evaluation.

ii. Welfarism

Welfarism is the view that goodness should be assessed only in terms of subjective utility. Sen argues that welfarism exhibits both 'valuational neglect' and 'physical condition neglect'. First, although welfarism is centrally concerned with how people *feel* about their lives, it is only concerned with psychological states, not with people's reflective valuations. Second, because it is concerned only with feelings it neglects information about physical health, though this would seem obviously relevant to assessing well-being. Not only does subjective welfare not reliably track people's actual interests or even their urgent needs, it is also vulnerable to what Sen calls 'adaptive preferences'. People can become so normalized to their conditions of material deprivation and social injustice that they may claim to be entirely satisfied. As Sen puts it,

Our mental reactions to what we actually get and what we can sensibly expect to get may frequently involve compromises with a harsh reality. The destitute thrown into beggary, the vulnerable landless labourer precariously surviving at the edge of subsistence, the overworked domestic servant working round the clock, the subdued and subjugated housewife reconciled to her role and her fate, all tend to come to terms with their respective predicaments. The deprivations are suppressed and muffled in the scale of utilities (reflected by desire-fulfilment and happiness) by the necessity of endurance in uneventful survival. (Sen 1985, 21-22)

iii. Sum Ranking

Sum-ranking focuses on maximizing the total amount of welfare in a society without regard for how it is distributed, although this is generally felt to be important by the individuals concerned. Sen argues, together with liberal philosophers such as Bernard Williams and John Rawls, that sum-ranking does not take seriously the distinction between persons. Sen also points out that individuals differ in their ability to convert resources such as income into welfare. For example, a disabled person may need expensive medical and transport equipment to achieve the same level of welfare. A society that tried to maximize the total amount of welfare would distribute resources so that the marginal increase in welfare from giving an extra dollar to any person would be the same. Resources would therefore be distributed away from the sick and disabled to people who are more efficient converters of resources into utility.

b. Resourcism

Resourcism is defined by its neutrality about what constitutes the good life. It therefore assesses how well people are doing in terms of their possession of the general purpose resources necessary for the construction of any particular good life. Sen's criticism of John Rawls' influential account of the fair distribution of primary goods stands in for a criticism of resourceist approaches in general. Sen's central argument is that resources should not be the exclusive focus of concern for a fairness-based theory of justice, even if, like Rawls's primary goods, they are deliberately chosen for their general usefulness to a good life. The reason is that this focus excludes consideration of the variability in individuals' actual abilities to convert resources into valuable outcomes. In other words, two people with the same vision of the good life and the same bundle of resources may not be equally able to achieve that life, and so resourceists' neutrality about the use of resources is not as fair as they believe it is. More specifically, Sen disputes Rawls' argument that the principles of justice should be worked out first for the 'normal' case, in terms of a social contract conceived as a rational scheme for mutually advantageous cooperation between people equally able to contribute to society, and only later extended to 'hard' cases, such as of disability. Sen believes such cases are far from abnormal and excluding them at the beginning risks building a structure that excludes them permanently. The general problem is that such accounts 'fetishize' resources as the embodiment of advantage, rather than focusing on the relationship between resources and people. Nevertheless Sen acknowledges that although the distribution of resources should not be the direct concern in evaluating how well people are doing, it is very relevant to considerations of procedural fairness.

Core Concepts and Structure of Sen's Capability Approach

a. Functionings and Capability

When evaluating well-being, Sen argues, the most important thing is to consider what people are actually able to be and do. The commodities or wealth people have or their mental reactions (utility) are an inappropriate focus because they provide only limited or indirect information about how well a life is going. Sen illustrates his point with the example of a standard bicycle. This has the characteristics of 'transportation' but whether it will actually provide transportation will depend on the characteristics of those who try to use it. It might be considered a generally useful tool for most people to extend their mobility, but it obviously will not do that for a person without legs. Even if that person, by some quirk, finds the bicycle delightful, we should nevertheless be

able to note within our evaluative system that she still lacks transportation. Nor does this mental reaction show that the same person would not appreciate transportation if it were really available to her.

The Capability Approach focuses directly on the quality of life that individuals are actually able to achieve. This quality of life is analyzed in terms of the core concepts of 'functionings' and 'capability'.

- *Functionings* are states of 'being and doing' such as being well-nourished, having shelter. They should be distinguished from the commodities employed to achieve them (as 'bicycling' is distinguishable from 'possessing a bike').
- *Capability* refers to the set of valuable functionings that a person has effective access to. Thus, a person's capability represents the effective freedom of an individual to choose between different functioning combinations – between different kinds of life – that she has reason to value. (In later work, Sen refers to 'capabilities' in the plural (or even 'freedoms') instead of a single capability set, and this is also common in the wider capability literature. This allows analysis to focus on sets of functionings related to particular aspects of life, for example, the capabilities of literacy, health, or political freedom.)

An individual's capability set is the set of valuable functionings that an individual has real access to. Achieved functionings are those they actually select. For example, an individual's capability set may include access to different functionings relating to mobility, such as walking, bicycling, taking a public bus, and so on. The functioning they actually select to get to work may be the public bus. Utility is considered both an output and a functioning. Utility is an output because what people choose to do and to be naturally has an effect on their sense of subjective well-being (for example, the pleasure of bicycling to work on a sunny day). However the Capability Approach also considers subjective well-being – feeling happy – as a valuable functioning in its own right and incorporates it into the capability framework.

b. Valuation: Which Functionings Matter for the Good Life?

Sen argues that the correct focus for evaluating how well off people are is their capability to live a life we have reason to value, not their resource wealth or subjective well-being. But in order to begin to *evaluate* how people are performing in terms of capability, we first need to determine which functionings matter for the good life and how much, or at least we need to specify a valuation procedure for determining this.

One way of addressing the problem is to specify a list of the constituents of the flourishing life, and do this on philosophical grounds (Martha Nussbaum does this for her Capability Theory of Justice). Sen rejects this approach because he argues that it denies the relevance of the values people may come to have and the role of democracy (Sen 2004b). Philosophers and social scientists may provide helpful ideas and arguments, but the legitimate source of decisions about the nature of the life we have reason to value must be the people concerned. Sen therefore proposes a social choice exercise requiring both public reasoning and democratic procedures of decision-making.

One reason that social scientists and philosophers are so keen to specify a list is that it can be used as an index: by ranking all the different constituents of the flourishing life with respect to each other it would allow easier evaluation of how well people are doing. Sen's social choice exercise is unlikely to produce collective agreement on a complete ranking of different functionings, if only because of what Rawls called the 'fact of reasonable disagreement'. But Sen argues that substantial action-guiding agreement is possible. First, different valuational perspectives may 'intersect' to reach similar judgments about some issues, though by way of different arguments. Second, such agreements may be extended by introducing 'ranges' of weights rather than cardinal numbers. For example, if there are four conflicting views about the relative weight to be attached to literacy vis-à-vis health, of $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{5}$, that contains an implicit agreement that the relative weight on

education should not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$, nor fall below $\frac{1}{5}$, so having one unit of literacy and two of health would be better than having two units of literacy and one of health.

Sen does suggest that in many cases a sub-set of crucially important capabilities associated with basic needs may be relatively easily identified and agreed upon as urgent moral and political priorities. These ‘basic capabilities’, such as education, health, nutrition, and shelter up to minimally adequate levels, do not exhaust the resources of the capability approach, only the easy agreement on what counts as being scandalously deprived. They may be particularly helpful in assessing the extent and nature of poverty in developing countries. However, taking a basic capability route has implications for how the exercise of evaluating individuals’ capability can proceed, since it can only evaluate how well people’s lives are going in terms of the basics.

c. Evaluation: What Capability do People Have to Live a Good Life?

Evaluating capability is a second order exercise concerned with mapping the set of valuable functionings people have real access to. Since it takes the value of functionings as given, its conclusions will reflect any ambiguity in the valuation stage.

Assessing capability is more informationally demanding than other accounts of advantage since it not only takes a much broader view of what well-being achievement consists in but also tries to assess the freedom people actually have to choose high quality options. This is not a purely procedural matter of adding up the *number* of options available, since the option to purchase a tenth brand of washing powder has a rather different significance than the option to vote in democratic elections. For example, Sen argues that the eradication of malaria from an area enhances the capability of individuals living there even though it doesn’t increase the number of options those individuals have (since they don’t have the ‘option’ to live in a malarial area anymore). Because the value of a capability set represents a person’s effective freedom to live a valuable life in terms of the *value* of the functionings available to that individual, when the available functionings are improved, so is the person’s effective freedom.

The capability approach in principle allows a very wide range of dimensions of advantage to be positively evaluated (‘what capabilities does this person have?’). This allows an open diagnostic approach to what is going well or badly in people’s lives that can be used to reveal unexpected shortfalls or successes in different dimensions, without aggregating them all together into one number. The informational focus can be tightened depending on the purpose of the evaluation exercise and relevant valuational and informational constraints. For example, if the approach is limited to considering ‘basic capabilities’ then the assessment is limited to a narrower range of dimensions and attempts to assess deprivation – the shortfall from the minimal thresholds of those capabilities – which will exclude evaluation of how well the lives of those above the threshold are going.

As well as being concerned with how well people’s lives are going, the Capability Approach can be used to examine the underlying determinants of the relationship between people and commodities, including the following (Sen 1999, 70-71):

- (1) *Individual physiology*, such as the variations associated with illnesses, disability, age, and gender. In order to achieve the same functionings, people may have particular needs for non-standard commodities – such as prosthetics for a disability – or they may need more of the standard commodities – such as additional food in the case of intestinal parasites. Note that some of these disadvantages, such as blindness, may not be fully ‘correctable’ even with tailored assistance.
- (2) *Local environment diversities*, such as climate, epidemiology, and pollution. These can impose particular costs such as more or less expensive heating or clothing requirements.

- (3) *Variations in social conditions*, such as the provision of public services such as education and security, and the nature of community relationships, such as across class or ethnic divisions.
- (4) *Differences in relational perspectives*. Conventions and customs determine the commodity requirements of expected standards of behaviour and consumption, so that relative income poverty in a rich community may translate into absolute poverty in the space of capability. For example, local requirements of ‘the ability to appear in public without shame’ in terms of acceptable clothing may vary widely.
- (5) *Distribution within the family* – distributional rules within a family determining, for example, the allocation of food and health-care between children and adults, males and females.

The diagnosis of capability failures, or significant interpersonal variations in capability, directs attention to the relevant causal pathways responsible. Note that many of these interpersonal variations will also influence individuals’ abilities to access resources to begin with. For example, the physically handicapped often have more expensive requirements to achieve the same capabilities, such as mobility, while at the same time they also have greater difficulty earning income in the first place.

Applying Sen’s Capability Approach

The concept of a capability has a global-local character in that its definition abstracts from particular circumstances, but its realization depends on specific local requirements. For example, the same capability to be well-nourished can be compared for different people although it may require different amounts and kinds of food depending on one’s age, state of health, and so on. This makes the Capability Approach applicable across political, economic, and cultural borders. For example, Sen points out that being relatively income poor in a wealthy society can entail *absolute poverty* in some important capabilities, because they may require more resources to achieve. For example, the capability for employment may require more years of education in a richer society

Many capabilities will have underlying requirements that vary strongly with social circumstances (although others, such as adequate nourishment, may vary less). For example, the ‘ability to appear in public without shame’ seems a capability that people might generally be said to have reason to value, but its requirements vary significantly according to cultural norms from society to society and for different groups within each society (such as by gender, class, and ethnicity). Presently in Saudi Arabia, for example, women must have the company of a close male relative to appear in public, and require a chauffeur and private car to move between private spaces (since they are not permitted to use public transport or drive a car themselves). Strictly speaking the Capability Approach leaves open whether such ‘expensive’ capabilities, if considered important enough to be guaranteed by society as a matter of justice, should be met by making more resources available to those who need them (subsidized cars and chauffeurs), or by revising the relevant social norms. The Capability Approach only identifies such capability failures and diagnoses their causes. However, if there is general agreement in the first place that such capabilities should be equally guaranteed for all, there is a clear basis for criticizing clearly unjust social norms as the source of relative deprivation and thus as inconsistent with the spirit of such a guarantee.

The capability approach takes a multi-dimensional approach to evaluation. Often it may seem that people are generally well-off, yet a closer analysis reveals that this ‘all-things-considered’ judgement conceals surprising shortfalls in particular capabilities, for example, the sporting icon who can’t read. Capability analysis rejects the presumption that unusual achievement in some dimensions compensates for shortfalls in others. From a justice perspective, the capability approach’s relevance here is to argue that if people are falling short on a particular capability that has been collectively agreed to be a significant one, then justice would require addressing the shortfall itself if at all possible, rather than offering compensation in some other form, such as increased income.

Capability evaluation is informationally demanding and its precision is limited by the level of agreement about which functionings are valuable. However, Sen has shown that even where only elementary evaluation of quite basic capabilities is possible (for example, life-expectancy or literacy outcomes), this can still provide much more, and more relevant, action-guiding information than the standard alternatives. In particular, by making perspicuous contrasts between successes and failures the capability approach can direct political and public attention to neglected dimensions of human well-being. For example, countries with similar levels of wealth can have dramatically different levels of aggregate achievement - and inequality - on such non-controversially important dimensions as longevity and literacy. And, *vice versa*, countries with very small economies can sometimes score as highly on these dimensions as the richest. This demonstrates both the limitations of relying exclusively on economic metrics for evaluating development, and the fact that national wealth does not pose a rigid constraint on such achievements (that GNP is not destiny). Such analyses are easily politicized in the form of the pointed question, *Why can't we do as well as them?*

Criticisms of Sen's Capability Approach

a. Illiberalism

Liberal critics of Sen often identify the focus of the Capability Approach - 'the ability to achieve the kind of lives we have reason to value' - as problematic because it appears to impose an external valuation of the good life, whatever people may actually value. Rawls, for example, notes that the reason for liberals to focus on the fair allocation of general purpose resources rather than achievement is that this best respects each individual's fundamental right to pursue their own conception of the good life. This relates to Rawls' conception of justice as political rather than metaphysical: it is not the task of justice to assess people's achievements, but rather to ensure the fairness of the conditions of participation in a society. Justice should be neutral with regard to judging different people's conceptions of the good. But this neutrality seems incompatible with the Capability Approach's concern with assessing people's achievements, which would seem to require a much more substantive view of what counts as a good life than one needs for assessing general purpose resources. Rawls suggests that this constitutes the privileging of a particular (non-political) comprehensive conception of rational advantage or the good.

In replying to this criticism, Sen particularly points to the heterogeneity (variability) in people's abilities to convert the same bundle of resources into valuable functionings. Theories of justice that focus on the distribution of means implicitly assume that they will provide the same effective freedom to live the life one has reason to value to all, but this excludes relevant information about the relationship between particular people and resources. Even if one abstracts from existing social inequalities or the results of personal choices ('option luck'), as many liberal theories of justice do, one will still find a substantial and pervasive variation in the abilities of different members of a society to utilize the same resources - whether of specific goods like education or general purpose goods like income. That means that even if it happened that everyone had the same conception of the good, and the same bundle of resources, the fact of heterogeneity would mean that people would have differential real capability to pursue the life they had reason to value. Therefore, Sen argues, a theory of justice based on fairness should be directly and deeply concerned with the effective freedom - capability - of actual people to achieve the lives they have reason to value.

b. Under-Theorisation

Both capability theorists and external critics express concern that the content and structure of Sen's Capability Approach is under-theorised and this makes it unsuitable as a theory of justice. Sen does not say which capabilities are important or how they are to be distributed: he argues that those are political decisions for the society itself to decide. Many philosophers have argued that without an objectively justified list of valuable capabilities the nature of the life 'we have reason to want' is unclear and so it is hard to identify the goal that a just society should be aiming towards, to assess how well a society is doing, or to criticize particular shortfalls.

Different capability theorists have taken different approaches to the valuation of capabilities, from procedural accounts to ones based on substantive understandings of human nature. There are related concerns about the institutional structure of the Capability Approach, for example, brought by the Rawlsian social justice theorist, Thomas Pogge (Pogge 2002). How should capabilities be weighted against each other and non-capability concerns? For example, should some basic capabilities be prioritized as more urgent? What does the Capability Approach imply for interpersonal equality? How should capability enhancement be paid for? How much responsibility should individuals take for the results of their own choices? What should be done about non-remediable deprivations, such as blindness?

Sen's main response to such criticisms has been to admit that the Capability Approach is not a theory of justice but rather an approach to the evaluation of effective freedom.

c. Individualism

Sen's emphasis on individual effective freedom as the focal concern of the Capability Approach has been criticized as excessively individualistic. There are several components to this family of criticisms. Some communitarians see Sen's account as lacking interest in, and even sometimes overtly hostile to, communal values and ways of life because of an excessive focus on individuals. Charles Gore, for example, has argued that Sen's approach only considers states of affairs and social arrangements in terms of how good or bad they are for an individual's well-being and freedom (Gore 1997). But this excludes consideration of certain other goods which individuals may have reason to value which are 'irreducibly social' because they cannot be reduced to properties of individuals, such as a shared language, set of moral norms, or political structure. A related criticism argues that Sen's emphasis on individual freedom is vague and fails to consider how one individual's freedom may affect others. Martha Nussbaum, for example, points out that a just society requires balancing and even limiting certain freedoms, such as regarding the expression of racist views, and in order to do so must make commitments about which freedoms are good or bad, important or trivial (Nussbaum 2003). Others have noted that 'freedom' though broad, is a poor way of conceptualizing certain inter-personal goods such as friendship, respect, and care. A third line of critique takes issue with Sen's 'thin' agency based picture of persons as too abstract and rationalistic. It is said to be founded too closely in Sen's personal dialectical relationship between economics and philosophy, and not enough in the perspectives and methods of anthropology, sociology, or psychology (see, for example, Giri 2000; Gasper 2002). As a result Sen's account is said to have a poor grasp, for example, of the centrality and complexity of *personal* growth and development.

With regard to 'irreducibly social goods' like culture, Sen argues that they not only enter into the analysis instrumentally (such as in the requirements for appearing in public without shame) but also as part of the lives people have reason to value. Nevertheless Sen is clear in his view that the value of social goods is only derivative upon the reflective choices of those concerned (see, for example, Sen 2004a). So if people on reflection don't value such social goods as the traditional religious institutions of their society or continuing to speak a minority language then that should trump the 'right' of those institutions to continue. With regard to freedom, Sen distinguishes the ability to choose between different options from the value of those options. These two together make up effective freedom or capability. Simple freedom to choose may be vulnerable to the objection that it is compatible with invidious freedoms, but the Capability Approach is concerned with people's ability to live a life they have reason to value, which incorporates an ethical evaluation of the content of their options. It is not concerned only with increasing people's freedom-as-power. Finally, Sen's Capability Approach is particularly concerned with grasping the dimensions of human well-being and advantage missing from standard approaches. This relates to its concern with tracing the causal pathways of specific deprivations, with how exactly different people are able or unable to convert resources into valuable functionings. Although this remains somewhat abstractly presented in the formal structure of the Capability Approach, Sen's analysis of, for example, adaptive preferences and intra-household distribution do go at least some way to a situated and sociological analysis.

d. Information Gaps

Sen's Capability Approach is founded on the idea that much more information about the quality of human lives can and should be taken into account in evaluating them. The Human Development Index developed by Amartya Sen and the economist Mahbub ul Haq in 1990 for the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Reports is the most influential capability metric currently used. However it has been criticized for its crudeness. It contains only three dimensions – longevity, literacy (mean years of schooling), and Gross National Income per capita – which are weighted equally. The Capability Approach is supposed to be interested in assessing how people fare on many dimensions of life including some which seem very difficult to obtain information about, such as people's real choice sets or such complicated capabilities as the ability to appear in public without shame or to form relationships with others. It also requires detailed information on the real inter-personal variations in translating commodities into functionings. It is not clear however that such informational ambitions could ever be realized. Furthermore even the effort of trying to collect such detailed information about people's lives and their 'real' disabilities can be seen as invasive.

Sen was concerned about the crudeness of the Human Development Index (HDI) from the start, but was won over by Mahbub ul Haq's argument for the rhetorical significance of a composite index of human well-being that could compete directly with the crude GDP per capita numbers that have been so influential in development thinking. Thus the HDI does not fully reflect the scope or methodology of the Capability Approach. Nevertheless it has succeeded in demonstrating that capability related information can be used systematically as a credible supplement to economic metrics. Sen accepts that some information about capabilities is easier to obtain than others. Firstly, he argues that we already have quite extensive information about some basic capabilities even for many quite poor countries, such as about health, that can and should be systematically assessed. There is therefore no need to limit our assessment to economic metrics which firstly count the wrong things (means) and secondly also come with significant measurement error despite their apparent numerical precision. Secondly, he argues that if researchers accept the capability space as the new priority for evaluation that will motivate the development of new data collection priorities and methods. As a result more information will become available about how people are faring on the currently 'missing dimensions' of the lives we have reason to value, for example, relating to employment or gender equality in domestic arrangements. Nevertheless, the Capability Approach is not concerned with information collection for its own sake, but rather with the appropriate use of information for assessment. It is therefore not committed to, nor does its effective use require, building a perfect information collection and assessment bureaucracy.

Theorising the Capability Approach

A number of philosophers sympathetic to Sen's foundational concerns have nevertheless been dissatisfied with the vagueness and under-elaboration of the theoretical structure of his Capability Approach (although these features seem to be quite deliberate on Sen's part). A number of theoretical accounts have been developed that seek to elaborate the Capability Approach more systematically and to address these philosophers' particular concerns. Some theoretical accounts are primarily concerned with operationalising the evaluative dimension of the Capability Approach: the assessment of quality of life, well-being and human development. Others focus on developing a capability based 'Theory of Justice' in the spirit of its concerns. This section provides a brief outline of some of these.

a. Generating Lists for Empirical Research in the Social Sciences (Ingrid Robeyns)

Ingrid Robeyns argues that attempting to develop a single all-purpose list of capabilities would be incompatible with Sen's concern with a general framework of evaluation. Instead she proposes a procedural approach to the selection of capabilities for particular purposes, such as the evaluation of gender inequality in terms of capabilities (Robeyns 2003). She claims that valuational procedures that meet her criteria provide epistemic, academic, and political legitimacy for empirically evaluating capability. Her five criteria are:

- (1) *Explicit formulation.* All proposed list elements should be explicit, so they can be discussed and debated.
- (2) *Methodological justification.* The method of generating the list should be made explicit so it can be scrutinized.
- (3) *Sensitivity to context.* The level of abstraction of the list should be appropriate to its purposes, whether for philosophical, legal, political, or social discussion.
- (4) *Different levels of generality.* If the list is intended for empirical application or public policy then it should be drawn up in two distinct stages, first an ideal stage and then a pragmatic one that reflects perhaps temporary feasibility constraints on information and resources.
- (5) *Exhaustion and non-reduction.* The list should include all important elements and those elements should not be reducible to others (though they may overlap).

b. A Participatory Approach to Evaluating Capability Expansion (Sabina Alkire)

Sabina Alkire has developed a philosophically grounded framework for the participatory valuation and evaluation of development projects in terms of capability enhancement (Alkire 2005). This allows her to go beyond standard cost-benefit analyses of development projects in financial terms to investigate which capabilities that the people concerned have reason to value are enhanced and by how much.

Alkire's approach has 2 stages of evaluation: i) a theoretical one-off stage in which 'philosophers' employ practical reason to reflexively identify the basic spheres or categories of value, and ii) a local participatory phase in which members of a social group deliberate, with the aid of a facilitator, about what their needs are and what, and how, they would like to do about them (with the basic categories employed as prompts to ensure that all main dimensions of value are discussed). For the first, philosophical, stage Alkire proposes an adaptation of the practical reasoning approach of John Finnis to identify the basic dimensions of human well-being by asking iteratively, 'why do I/others do what we do?' until one comes to recognize the basic reasons for which no further reasoned justification can be given. This method is intended to yield substantive and objective descriptions of the fundamental, non-hierarchically ordered, dimensions of human flourishing, while allowing the content and relative importance of these dimensions to be specified in a participatory process according to a particular group's historical, cultural, and personal values. The intrinsically important dimensions identified by this method are: *Life; Knowledge; Play; Aesthetic experience; Sociability; Practical reasonableness; Religion.*

One of the advantages Alkire claims for her approach is its ability to elicit what the people whose lives are the subject of development projects really consider valuable, which may sometimes surprise external planners and observers. Her use of the participatory approach for assessing NGO fieldwork in Pakistan showed, for example, that even the very poor can and do reasonably value other things than material well-being, such as religion and social participation.

c. Justice as Equal Capability of Democratic Citizenship (Elizabeth Anderson)

Elizabeth Anderson has proposed a partial theory of justice based on equal capability of democratic citizenship (Anderson 1999). Anderson takes equality in social relationships as the focus for her egalitarian theory of justice and argues that one should analyze the requirements of such equality in terms of the social conditions supporting it as a capability. Although Anderson's primary concern is for equality in the particular dimension of democratic citizenship, she suggests that this has extensive egalitarian implications for the nature of the society as a whole, because other capabilities - such as relating to health, education, personal autonomy and self-respect, and economic fairness - are required as supporting conditions to realize truly equal citizenship. She argues that, "Negatively, people are entitled to whatever capabilities are necessary to enable them to avoid or

escape entanglement in oppressive social relationships. Positively, they are entitled to whatever capabilities are necessary for functioning as an equal citizen in a democratic state (Anderson 1999, 317).”

d. Capability as Freedom from Domination (John Alexander)

John Alexander has proposed a capability theory based on a Republican understanding of the importance of freedom as non-domination (Alexander 2008). He argues that the Capability Approach’s concern with people’s ‘real freedom’ sets it outside and against the standard liberal egalitarian theory of justice framework which understands freedom as the absence of constraints. But he argues that the Capability Approach should go further to elaborate this commitment to real freedom in Republican terms. In this perspective it is not only important that one be able to achieve certain functionings, such as mobility, but whether one’s achievement of these are conditional on the favor or goodwill of other people or are independently guaranteed by one’s own rights and powers. Capability is standardly understood as mapping one’s range of choices over valuable functionings regardless of their *content*. For example, the ability of a physically disabled but socially well-connected person to travel outside whenever she wants by arranging the help of friends, family and voluntary organizations. In addition the Republican perspective requires that her capability for mobility should be independent of *context*. For example, in the form of a guaranteed legal right to government assistance on demand, or by the provision of her own specially adapted self-drive vehicle. Otherwise she may be said to be still deprived since her capability is not completely free.

Domination should also be integrated into capability evaluation because it will often be a *cause* of capability deprivation. It is no coincidence that the people who are most capability deprived are often the poorest and weakest in society, and as a result also vulnerable to yet further exploitation. This emphasis on freedom from domination also gives a strong normative orientation to the Capability Approach’s evaluation of the causes of capability failure: some causes are simply unacceptable, such as social norms restricting women’s freedom of movement and employment, and should be removed rather than mitigated.

Martha Nussbaum’s Capability Theory of Justice

This section outlines Martha Nussbaum’s work on the Capability Approach: its structure, criticisms, and relationship to Amartya Sen’s work.

a. Structure and Development of Nussbaum’s Capability Theory

Martha Nussbaum has developed the most systematic, extensive, and influential capability theory of justice to date. Nussbaum aims to provide a partial theory of justice (one that doesn’t exhaust the requirements of justice) based on *dignity*, a *list of fundamental capabilities*, and a *threshold*.

Nussbaum’s list of The Central Human Capabilities (Reproduced from *Creating Capabilities* 2011, 33-4)

1. *Life*. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one’s life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. *Bodily Health*. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. *Bodily Integrity*. Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

4. *Senses, Imagination, and Thought.* Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a “truly human” way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one’s own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one’s mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid non-beneficial pain.

5. *Emotions.* Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one’s emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)

6. *Practical Reason.* Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)

7. *Affiliation.*

A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech.)

B. Having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.

8. *Other Species.* Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. *Play.* Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. *Control Over One’s Environment.*

A. *Political.* Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one’s life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. *Material.* Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason, and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

In her early contributions to the capability approach, Nussbaum justified the composition of her list by explicitly Aristotelian argument about the perfectionist requirements of the truly human life (Nussbaum 1988). In the mid-1990s however she converted the structure of her account to a Rawlsian style ‘politically liberal’ account. This means that she now presents her list as a proposal that is neutral with respect to particular conceptions of the good, but can be endorsed by many different groups in a society through an overlapping consensus. However the list components themselves remain almost identical and retain a distinctively Aristotelian cast.

Nussbaum’s account is motivated by a concept of human dignity (in contrast to Sen’s emphasis on freedom), which she links to flourishing in the Aristotelian sense. She argues that her list of 10 fundamental capabilities follow from the requirements of dignity and have been tested and adapted over the course of an extensive cross-

cultural dialogue she has carried out, particularly in India (as related in her book, *Women and Human Development*, 2001). The threshold is a 'sufficientarian' principle that specifies the minimum requirements of justice: everyone must be entitled to each capability at least to this degree by their governments and relevant international institutions. Access to these capabilities is required by human dignity, Nussbaum argues, but this does not mean that a life lacking in any of these, whether from external deprivation or individual choice, is a less than human life. Choice and deprivation are different however. If someone lacks access to these capabilities, for example, to be well-nourished (bodily health), that reflects a failure by society to respect her human dignity. If someone chooses not to take up her opportunities to certain capabilities, for example, to adopt an ascetic life-style and fast for religious reasons at the expense of her bodily health, respecting that choice is also an aspect of respecting her dignity.

Nussbaum suggests that her list, together with the precise location of the threshold, should be democratically debated and incorporated into national constitutional guarantees, international human rights legislation and international development policy. In keeping with its commitment to political liberalism, the components of Nussbaum's list have a 'thick-vague' character in that while they have a universal claim to be of central importance to any human life, their definition is vague enough to allow their specification in multiple ways that reflect the values, histories, and special circumstances of particular political societies. For example, freedom of speech may be defined differently in law in the USA and Germany, because of their different histories, without endangering the fundamental capability. Nevertheless, because each capability is equally centrally important and a shortfall in any area is significant in itself, the scope for governments to make trade-offs between them, for example, on the basis of quantitative cost-benefit analysis, is limited.

b. Criticisms of Nussbaum's Theory

Nussbaum's capability theory of justice received quite intense criticism. Some have questioned the epistemological basis of her approach, finding it rather suspicious that after all her years of cross-cultural discussion her list remains basically the same rather 'intellectualized' Aristotelian one she had suggested in the first place (Okin 2003), and suggest that it rather reflects the values of a typical 21st century American liberal than a set of timeless universal values or a contemporary global overlapping consensus (Stewart 2001). Others have argued that her legal-moral-philosophical orientation is elitist and over-optimistic about what constitutions and governments are like and are capable of (Menon 2002); is over-specified and paternalistic yet still misses out important capabilities and is inappropriate for many uses, such as quality of life measurement or development fieldwork (Alkire 2005, 35-45).

In response to such criticisms, Nussbaum has defended the contents of her list as having cross-cultural credibility, but also emphasised that she is not trying to impose a definitive capability theory on everyone. She makes a clear and explicit distinction between the dimensions of *justification* (why her theory is best) and *implementation* (its more humble meta-status as an object for democratic deliberation and decision by those concerned) (Nussbaum 2004).

c. Sen and Nussbaum

Nussbaum and Sen collaborated in the late 1980s and early 1990s and since they are the most high-profile writers in the Capability Approach their accounts are often elided, despite significant differences. When they are distinguished, Nussbaum's account is often seen as the more 'philosophical' because she has developed the Capability Approach in a more orthodox philosophical way, for example, by focusing on theoretical rigor, coherence and completeness. As a result, Sen's approach is sometimes perceived merely as a predecessor to Nussbaum's more developed second generation account, and therefore of primarily historical interest to understanding the Capability Approach rather than a parallel account in its own right.

The accounts of Sen and Nussbaum differ significantly in ways that relate to their different concerns and backgrounds. In particular:

- Nussbaum is concerned to produce a philosophically coherent *normative* (partial) theory of justice; Sen is concerned with producing a general framework for *evaluating* the quality of lives people can lead that can incorporate the very diverse concerns and dimensions that may be applicable.
- While Sen's approach is founded on enhancing individual freedom, Nussbaum's theory is founded on respecting human dignity.
- Sen's comprehensive consequentialism makes room for incorporating empirical information about feasibility and instrumental relationships between capabilities when considering policies; Nussbaum largely rejects such instrumental analysis because she is wary of its 'Utilitarian associations'.
- Sen's Capability Approach in its normative 'developmental' aspect, is mainly concerned with practical incremental improvements; Nussbaum's approach is rather more utopian in that it demands the full implementation of minimal justice (achievement of the minimum thresholds of all fundamental capabilities) for all, and this is specified so demandingly that no country yet meets it (though she has suggested that Finland may be close).

Amartya Sen on Himself

I was born in a University campus and seem to have lived all my life in one campus or another. My family is from Dhaka - now the capital of Bangladesh. My ancestral home in Wari in "old Dhaka" is not far from the University campus in Ramna. My father Ashutosh Sen taught chemistry at Dhaka University. I was, however, born in Santiniketan, on the campus of Rabindranath Tagore's Visva-Bharati (both a school and a college), where my maternal grandfather (Kshiti Mohan Sen) used to teach Sanskrit as well as ancient and medieval Indian culture, and where my mother (Amita Sen), like me later, had been a student. After Santiniketan, I studied at Presidency College in Calcutta and then at Trinity College in Cambridge, and I have taught at universities in both these cities, and also at Delhi University, the London School of Economics, Oxford University, and Harvard University, and on a visiting basis, at M.I.T., Stanford, Berkeley, and Cornell. I have not had any serious non-academic job.

My planned field of study varied a good deal in my younger years, and between the ages of three and seventeen, I seriously flirted, in turn, with Sanskrit, mathematics, and physics, before settling for the eccentric charms of economics. But the idea that I should be a teacher and a researcher of some sort did not vary over the years. I am used to thinking of the word "academic" as meaning "sound," rather than the more old-fashioned dictionary meaning: "unpractical," "theoretical," or "conjectural."

During three childhood years (between the ages of 3 and 6) I was in Mandalay in Burma, where my father was a visiting professor. But much of my childhood was, in fact, spent in Dhaka, and I began my formal education there, at St. Gregory's School. However, I soon moved to Santiniketan, and it was mainly in Tagore's school that my educational attitudes were formed. This was a co-educational school, with many progressive features. The emphasis was on fostering curiosity rather than competitive excellence, and any kind of interest in examination performance and grades was severely discouraged. ("She is quite a serious thinker," I remember one of my teachers telling me about a fellow student, "even though her grades are very good.") Since I was, I have to confess, a reasonably good student, I had to do my best to efface that stigma.

The curriculum of the school did not neglect India's cultural, analytical and scientific heritage, but was very involved also with the rest of the world. Indeed, it was astonishingly open to influences from all over the world, including the West, but also other non-Western cultures, such as East and South-East Asia (including China, Japan, Indonesia, Korea), West Asia, and Africa. I remember being quite struck by Rabindranath Tagore's approach to cultural diversity in the world (well reflected in our curriculum), which he had expressed in a letter to a friend: "Whatever we understand and enjoy in human products instantly becomes ours, wherever they

might have their origin... Let me feel with unalloyed gladness that all the great glories of man are mine."

Identity and Violence

I loved that breadth, and also the fact that in interpreting Indian civilization itself, its cultural diversity was much emphasized. By pointing to the extensive heterogeneity in India's cultural background and richly diverse history, Tagore argued that the "idea of India" itself militated against a culturally separatist view, "against the intense consciousness of the separateness of one's own people from others." Tagore and his school constantly resisted the narrowly communal identities of Hindus or Muslims or others, and he was, I suppose, fortunate that he died - in 1941 - just before the communal killings fomented by sectarian politics engulfed India through much of the 1940s. Some of my own disturbing memories as I was entering my teenage years in India in the mid-1940s relate to the massive identity shift that followed divisive politics. People's identities as Indians, as Asians, or as members of the human race, seemed to give way - quite suddenly - to sectarian identification with Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh communities. The broadly Indian of January was rapidly and unquestioningly transformed into the narrowly Hindu or finely Muslim of March. The carnage that followed had much to do with unreasoned herd behaviour by which people, as it were, "discovered" their new divisive and belligerent identities, and failed to take note of the diversity that makes Indian culture so powerfully mixed. The same people were suddenly different.

I had to observe, as a young child, some of that mindless violence. One afternoon in Dhaka, a man came through the gate screaming pitifully and bleeding profusely. The wounded person, who had been knifed on the back, was a Muslim daily labourer, called Kader Mia. He had come for some work in a neighbouring house - for a tiny reward - and had been knifed on the street by some communal thugs in our largely Hindu area. As he was being taken to the hospital by my father, he went on saying that his wife had told him not to go into a hostile area during the communal riots. But he had to go out in search of work and earning because his family had nothing to eat. The penalty of that economic unfreedom turned out to be death, which occurred later on in the hospital. The experience was devastating for me, and suddenly made me aware of the dangers of narrowly defined identities, and also of the divisiveness that can lie buried in communitarian politics. It also alerted me to the remarkable fact that economic unfreedom, in the form of extreme poverty, can make a person a helpless prey in the violation of other kinds of freedom: Kader Mia need not have come to a hostile area in search of income in those troubled times if his family could have managed without it.

Calcutta and Its Debates

By the time I arrived in Calcutta to study at Presidency College, I had a fairly formed attitude on cultural identity (including an understanding of its inescapable plurality as well as the need for unobstructed absorption rather than sectarian denial). I still had to confront the competing loyalties of rival political attitudes: for example, possible conflicts between substantive equity, on the one hand, and universal tolerance, on the other, which simultaneously appealed to me. On this more presently.

The educational excellence of Presidency College was captivating. My interest in economics was amply rewarded by quite outstanding teaching. I was particularly influenced by the teaching of Bhabatosh Datta and Tapas Majumdar, but there were other great teachers as well, such as Dhires Bhattacharya. I also had the great fortune of having wonderful classmates, particularly the remarkable Sukhamoy Chakravarty (more on him presently), but also many others, including Mrinal Datta Chaudhuri (who was also at Santiniketan, earlier) and Jati Sengupta. I was close also to several students of history, such as Barun De, Partha Gupta and Benoy Chaudhuri. (Presidency College had a great school of history as well, led by a most inspiring teacher in the form of Sushobhan Sarkar.) My intellectual horizon was radically broadened.

The student community of Presidency College was also politically most active. Though I could not develop enough enthusiasm to join any political party, the quality of sympathy and egalitarian commitment of the "left" appealed to me greatly (as it did to most of my fellow students as well, in that oddly elitist college). The kind of rudimentary thinking that had got me involved, while at Santiniketan, in running evening schools (for illiterate

rural children in the neighbouring villages) seemed now to be badly in need of systematic political broadening and social enlargement.

I was at Presidency College during 1951 to 1953. The memory of the Bengal famine of 1943, in which between two and three million people had died, and which I had watched from Santiniketan, was still quite fresh in my mind. I had been struck by its thoroughly class-dependent character. (I knew of no one in my school or among my friends and relations whose family had experienced the slightest problem during the entire famine; it was not a famine that afflicted even the lower middle classes - only people much further down the economic ladder, such as landless rural labourers.) Calcutta itself, despite its immensely rich intellectual and cultural life, provided many constant reminders of the proximity of unbearable economic misery, and not even an elite college could ignore its continuous and close presence.

And yet, despite the high moral and ethical quality of social commiseration, political dedication and a deep commitment to equity, there was something rather disturbing about standard leftwing politics of that time: in particular, its scepticism of process-oriented political thinking, including democratic procedures that permit pluralism. The major institutions of democracy got no more credit than what could be portioned out to what was seen as "bourgeois democracy," on the deficiencies of which the critics were most vocal. The power of money in many democratic practices was rightly identified, but the alternatives - including the terrible abuses of non-oppositional politics - did not receive serious critical scrutiny. There was also a tendency to see political tolerance as a kind of "weakness of will" that may deflect well-meaning leaders from promoting "the social good," without let or hindrance.

Given my political conviction on the constructive role of opposition and my commitment to general tolerance and pluralism, there was a bit of a dilemma to be faced in coordinating those beliefs with the form of left-wing activism that characterized the mainstream of student politics in the-then Calcutta. What was at stake, it seemed to me, in political toleration was not just the liberal political arguments that had so clearly emerged in post-Enlightenment Europe and America, but also the traditional values of tolerance of plurality which had been championed over the centuries in many different cultures - not least in India. Indeed, as Ashoka had put it in the third century B.C.: "For he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect." To see political tolerance merely as a "Western liberal" inclination seemed to me to be a serious mistake.

Even though these issues were quite disturbing, they also forced me to face some foundational disputes then and there, which I might have otherwise neglected. Indeed, we were constantly debating these competing political demands. As a matter of fact, as I look back at the fields of academic work in which I have felt most involved throughout my life (and which were specifically cited by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in making their award), they were already among the concerns that were agitating me most in my undergraduate days in Calcutta. These encompassed welfare economics, economic inequality and poverty, on the one hand (including the most extreme manifestation of poverty in the form of famines), and the scope and possibility of rational, tolerant and democratic social choice, on the other (including voting procedures and the protection of liberty and minority rights). My involvement with the fields of research identified in the Nobel statement had, in fact, developed much before I managed to do any formal work in these areas.

It was not long after Kenneth Arrow's path-breaking study of social choice, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, was published in New York in 1951, that my brilliant co-student Sukhamoy Chakravarty drew my attention to the book and to Arrow's stunning "impossibility theorem" (this must have been in the early months of 1952). Sukhamoy too was broadly attracted by the left, but also worried about political authoritarianism, and we discussed the implications of Arrow's demonstration that no non-dictatorial social choice mechanism may yield consistent social decisions. Did it really give any excuse for authoritarianism (of the left, or of the right)? I particularly remember one long afternoon in the College Street Coffee House, with Sukhamoy explaining his own reading of the ramifications of the formal results, sitting next to a window, with his deeply intelligent face

glowing in the mild winter sun of Calcutta (a haunting memory that would invade me again and again when he died suddenly of a heart attack a few years ago).

Cambridge as a Battleground

In 1953, I moved from Calcutta to Cambridge, to study at Trinity College. Though I had already obtained a B.A. from Calcutta University (with economics major and mathematics minor), Cambridge enrolled me for another B.A. (in pure economics) to be quickly done in two years (this was fair enough since I was still in my late teens when I arrived at Cambridge). The style of economics at the-then Cambridge was much less mathematical than in Calcutta. Also, it was generally less concerned with some of the foundational issues that had agitated me earlier. I had, however, some wonderful fellow students (including Samuel Brittan, Mahbub ul Haq, Rehman Sobhan, Michael Nicholson, Lal Jayawardena, Luigi Pasinetti, Pierangelo Garegnani, Charles Feinstein, among others) who were quite involved with foundational assessment of the ends and means of economics as a discipline.

However, the major debates in political economy in Cambridge were rather firmly geared to the pros and cons of Keynesian economics and the diverse contributions of Keynes's followers at Cambridge (Richard Kahn, Nicholas Kaldor, Joan Robinson, among them), on the one hand, and of "neo-classical" economists sceptical of Keynes, on the other (including, in different ways, Dennis Robertson, Harry Johnson, Peter Bauer, Michael Farrell, among others). I was lucky to have close relations with economists on both sides of the divide. The debates centred on macroeconomics dealing with economic aggregates for the economy as a whole, but later moved to capital theory, with the neo-Keynesians dead set against any use of "aggregate capital" in economic modelling (some of my fellow students, including Pasinetti and Garegnani, made substantial contributions to this debate).

Even though there were a number of fine teachers who did not get very involved in these intense fights between different schools of thought (such as Richard Stone, Brian Reddaway, Robin Matthews, Kenneth Berrill, Aubrey Silberston, Robin Marris), the political lines were, in general, very firmly - and rather bizarrely - drawn. In an obvious sense, the Keynesians were to the "left" of the neo-classicists, but this was very much in the spirit of "this far but no further". Also, there was no way in which the different economists could be nicely ordered in just one dimension. Maurice Dobb, who was an astute Marxist economist, was often thought by Keynesians and neo-Keynesians to be "quite soft" on "neo-classical" economics. He was one of the few who, to my delight, took welfare economics seriously (and indeed taught a regular course on it), just as the intensely "neo-classical" A.C. Pigou had done (while continuing to debate Keynes in macroeconomics). Not surprisingly, when the Marxist Dobb defeated Kaldor in an election to the Faculty Board, Kaldor declared it to be a victory of the perfidious neo-classical economics in disguise ("marginal utility theory has won," Kaldor told Sraffa that evening, in commenting on the electoral success of a Marxist economist!)

However, Kaldor was, in fact, much the most tolerant of the neo-Keynesians at Cambridge. If Richard Kahn was in general the most bellicose, the stern reproach that I received often for not being quite true to the new orthodoxy of neo-Keynesianism came mostly from my thesis supervisor - the totally brilliant but vigorously intolerant Joan Robinson.

In this desert of constant feuding, my own college, Trinity, was a bit of an oasis. I suppose I was lucky to be there, but it was not entirely luck, since I had chosen to apply to Trinity after noticing, in the handbook of Cambridge University, that three remarkable economists of *very different* political views coexisted there. The Marxist Maurice Dobb and the conservative neo-classicist Dennis Robertson did joint seminars, and Trinity also had Piero Sraffa, a model of scepticism of nearly all the standard schools of thought. I had the good fortune of working with all of them and learning greatly from each.

The peaceful - indeed warm - co-existence of Dobb, Robertson and Sraffa was quite remarkable, given the feuding in the rest of the University. Sraffa told me, later on, a nice anecdote about Dobb's joining of Trinity, on the invitation of Robertson. When asked by Robertson whether he would like to teach at Trinity, Dobb said yes

enthusiastically, but he suffered later from a deep sense of guilt in not having given Robertson "the full facts. " So he wrote a letter to Robertson apologizing for not having mentioned earlier that he was a member of the Communist Party, supplemented by the statement - I think a rather "English" statement - that he would understand perfectly if in view of that Robertson were to decide that he, Dobb, was not a fit person to teach Trinity undergraduates. Robertson wrote a one-sentence reply: "Dear Dobb, so long as you give us a fortnight's notice before blowing up the Chapel, it will be all right."

So there did exist, to some extent, a nice "practice" of democratic and tolerant social choice at Trinity, my own college. But I fear I could not get anyone in Trinity, or in Cambridge, very excited in the "theory" of social choice. I had to choose quite a different subject for my research thesis, after completing my B.A. The thesis was on "the choice of techniques," which interested Joan Robinson as well as Maurice Dobb.

Philosophy and Economics

At the end of the first year of research, I was bumptious enough to think that I had some results that would make a thesis, and so I applied to go to India on a two-years leave from Cambridge, since I could not - given the regulation then in force - submit my Ph.D. thesis for a degree until I had been registered for research for three years. I was excitedly impatient in wanting to find out what was going on back at home, and when leave was granted to me, I flew off immediately to Calcutta. Cambridge University insisted on my having a "supervisor" in India, and I had the good fortune of having the great economic methodologist, A.K. Dasgupta, who was then teaching in Benares. With him I had frequent - and always enlightening - conversations on everything under the sun (occasionally on my thesis as well).

In Calcutta, I was also appointed to a chair in economics at the newly created Jadavpur University, where I was asked to set up a new department of economics. Since I was not yet even 23, this caused a predictable - and entirely understandable - storm of protest. But I enjoyed the opportunity and the challenge (even though several graffitis on the University walls displayed the "new professor" as having been just snatched from the cradle). Jadavpur was quite an exciting place intellectually (my colleagues included Paramesh Ray, Mrinal Datta Chaudhuri, Anita Banerji, Ajit Dasgupta, and others in the economics department). The University also had, among other luminaries, the immensely innovative historian, Ranajit Guha, who later initiated the "subaltern studies" - a highly influential school of colonial and post-colonial history. I particularly enjoyed getting back to some of the foundational issues that I had to neglect somewhat at Cambridge.

While my thesis was quietly "maturing" with the mere passage of time (to be worthy of the 3-year rule), I took the liberty of submitting it for a competitive Prize Fellowship at Trinity College. Since, luckily, I also got elected, I then had to choose between continuing in Calcutta and going back to Cambridge. I split the time, and returned to Cambridge somewhat earlier than I had planned. The Prize Fellowship gave me four years of freedom to do anything I liked (no questions asked), and I took the radical decision of studying philosophy in that period. I had always been interested in logic and in epistemology, but soon got involved in moral and political philosophy as well (they related closely to my older concerns about democracy and equity).

The broadening of my studies into philosophy was important for me not just because some of my main areas of interest in economics relate quite closely to philosophical disciplines (for example, social choice theory makes intense use of mathematical logic and also draws on moral philosophy, and so does the study of inequality and deprivation), but also because I found philosophical studies very rewarding on their own. Indeed, I went on to write a number of papers in philosophy, particularly in epistemology, ethics and political philosophy. While I am interested both in economics and in philosophy, the union of my interests in the two fields far exceeds their intersection. When, many years later, I had the privilege of working with some major philosophers (such as John Rawls, Isaiah Berlin, Bernard Williams, Ronald Dworkin, Derek Parfit, Thomas Scanlon, Robert Nozick, and others), I felt very grateful to Trinity for having given me the opportunity as well as the courage to get into exacting philosophy.

Delhi School of Economics

During 1960-61, I visited M.I.T., on leave from Trinity College, and found it a great relief to get away from the rather sterile debates that the contending armies were fighting in Cambridge. I benefited greatly from many conversations with Paul Samuelson, Robert Solow, Franco Modigliani, Norbert Wiener, and others that made M.I.T. such an inspiring place. A summer visit to Stanford added to my sense of breadth of economics as a subject. In 1963, I decided to leave Cambridge altogether, and went to Delhi, as Professor of Economics at the Delhi School of Economics and at the University of Delhi. I taught in Delhi until 1971. In many ways this was the most intellectually challenging period of my academic life. Under the leadership of K.N. Raj, a remarkable applied economist who was already in Delhi, we made an attempt to build an advanced school of economics there. The Delhi School was already a good centre for economic study (drawing on the work of V.K.R.V. Rao, B.N. Ganguli, P.N. Dhar, Khaleq Naqvi, Dharm Narain, and many others, in addition to Raj), and a number of new economists joined, including Sukhamoy Chakravarty, Jagdish Bhagwati, A.L. Nagar, Manmohan Singh, Mrinal Datta Chaudhuri, Dharma Kumar, Raj Krishna, Ajit Biswas, K.L. Krishna, Suresh Tendulkar, and others. (Delhi School of Economics also had some leading social anthropologists, such as M.N. Srinivas, Andre Beteille, Baviskar, Veena Das, and major historians such as Tapan Ray Chaudhuri, whose work enriched the social sciences in general.) By the time I left Delhi in 1971 to join the London School of Economics, we had jointly succeeded in making the Delhi School the pre-eminent centre of education in economics and the social sciences, in India.

Regarding research, I plunged myself full steam into social choice theory in the dynamic intellectual atmosphere of Delhi University. My interest in the subject was consolidated during a one-year visit to Berkeley in 1964-65, where I not only had the chance to study and teach some social choice theory, but also had the unique opportunity of observing some practical social choice in the form of student activism in the "free speech movement." An initial difficulty in pursuing social choice at the Delhi School was that while I had the freedom to do what I liked, I did not, at first, have anyone who was interested in the subject as a formal discipline. The solution, of course, was to have students take an interest in the subject. This happened with a bang with the arrival of a brilliant student, Prasanta Pattanaik, who did a splendid thesis on voting theory, and later on, also did joint work with me (adding substantially to the reach of what I was trying to do). Gradually, a sizeable and technically excellent group of economists interested in social choice theory emerged at the Delhi School.

Social choice theory related importantly to a more widespread interest in aggregation in economic assessment and policy making (related to poverty, inequality, unemployment, real national income, living standards). There was a great reason for satisfaction in the fact that a number of leading social choice theorists (in addition to Prasanta Pattanaik) emanated from the Delhi School, including Kaushik Basu and Rajat Deb (who also studied with me at the London School of Economics after I moved there), and Bhaskar Dutta and Manimay Sengupta, among others. There were other students who were primarily working in other areas (this applies to Basu as well), but whose work and interests were influenced by the strong current of social choice theory at the Delhi School (Nanak Kakwani is a good example of this).

In my book, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, published in 1970, I made an effort to take an overall view of social choice theory. There were a number of analytical findings to report, but despite the presence of many "trees" (in the form of particular technical results), I could not help looking anxiously for the forest. I had to come back again to the old general question that had moved me so much in my teenage years at Presidency College: Is reasonable social choice at all possible given the differences between one person's preferences (including interests and judgments) and another's (indeed, as Horace noted a long time ago, there may be "as many preferences as there are people")?

The work underlying *Collective Choice and Social Welfare* was mostly completed in Delhi, but I was much helped in giving it a final shape by a joint course on "social justice" I taught at Harvard with Kenneth Arrow and John Rawls, both of whom were wonderfully helpful in giving me their assessments and suggestions. The joint course was, in fact, quite a success both in getting many important issues discussed, and also in involving a remarkable circle of participants (who were sitting in as "auditors"), drawn from the established economists and

philosophers in the Harvard region. (It was also quite well-known outside the campus: I was asked by a neighbour in a plane journey to San Francisco whether, as a teacher at Harvard, I had heard of an "apparently interesting" course taught by "Kenneth Arrow, John Rawls, and some unknown guy.")

There was another course I taught jointly, with Stephen Marglin and Prasanta Pattanaik (who too had come to Harvard), which was concerned with development as well as Policy making. This nicely supplemented my involvements in pure social choice theory (in fact, Marglin and Pattanaik were both very interested in examining the connection between social choice theory and other areas in economics).

From Delhi to London and Oxford

I left Delhi, in 1971, shortly after *Collective Choice and Social Welfare* was published in 1970. My wife, Nabaneeta Dev, with whom I have two children (Antara and Nandana), had constant trouble with her health in Delhi (mainly from asthma). London might have suited her better, but, as it happens, the marriage broke up shortly after we went to London.

Nabaneeta is a remarkably successful poet, literary critic and writer of novels and short stories (one of the most celebrated authors in contemporary Bengali literature), which she has combined, since our divorce, with being a University Professor at Jadavpur University in Calcutta. I learned many things from her, including the appreciation of poetry from an "internal" perspective. She had worked earlier on the distinctive style and composition of epic poetry, including the Sanskrit epics (particularly the *Ramayana*), and this I had got very involved in. Nabaneeta's parents were very well-known poets as well, and she seems to have borne her celebrity status - and the great many recognitions that have come her way - with unaffected approachability and warmth. She had visits from an unending stream of literary fans, and I understand, still does. (On one occasion, arrived a poet with a hundred new poems, with the declared intention of reading them aloud to her, to get her critical judgement, but since she was out, he said that he would instead settle for reading them to me. When I pleaded that I lacked literary sophistication, I was assured by the determined poet: "That is just right; I would like to know how the common man may react to my poetry." The common man, I am proud to say, reacted with appropriate dignity and self-control.)

When we moved to London, I was also going through some serious medical problems. In early 1952, at the age of 18 (when I was an undergraduate at Presidency College), I had cancer of the mouth, and it had been dealt with by a severe dose of radiation in a rather primitive Calcutta hospital. This was only seven years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the long-run effects of radiation were not much understood. The dose of radiation I got may have cured the cancer, but it also killed the bones in my hard palate. By 1971, it appeared that I had either a recurrence of the cancer, or a severe case of bone necrosis. The first thing I had to do on returning to England was to have a serious operation, without knowing whether it would be merely plastic surgery to compensate for the necrosis (a long and complicated operation in the mouth, but no real threat to survival), or much more demanding, a fresh round of efforts at cancer eradication.

After the long operation (it had lasted nearly seven hours) when I woke up from the heavy anaesthesia, it was four o'clock in the morning. As a person with much impatience, I wanted to know what the surgeon had found. The nurse on duty said she was not allowed to tell me anything: "You must wait for the doctors to come at nine." This created some tension (I wanted to know what had emerged), which the nurse noticed. I could see that she was itching to tell me something: indeed (as I would know later) to tell me that no recurrence of cancer had been detected in the frozen-section biopsy that had been performed, and that the long operation was mainly one of reconstruction of the palate to compensate for the necrosis. She ultimately gave in, and chose an interesting form of communication, which I found quite striking (as well as kind). "You know," she said, "they were *praising* you very much!" It then dawned on me that not having cancer can be a subject for praise. Indeed lulled by praise, I went quietly back to my post-operative sleep. In later years, when I would try to work on judging the goodness of a society by the quality of health of the people, her endorsement of my praiseworthiness for being cancer-free would serve as a good reference point!

The intellectual atmosphere at the LSE in particular and in London in general was most gratifying, with a dazzling array of historians, economists, sociologists and others. It was wonderful to have the opportunity of seeing Eric Hobsbawm (the great historian) and his wife Marlene very frequently and to interact regularly with Frank and Dorothy Hahn, Terence and Dorinda Gorman, and many others. Our small neighbourhood in London (Bartholomew estate, within the Kentish Town) itself offered wonderful company of intellectual and artistic creativity and political involvement. Even after I took an Oxford job (Professor of Economics, 1977-80, Drummond Professor of Political Economy, 1980-87) later on, I could not be budged from living in London.

As I settled down at the London School of Economics in 1971, I resumed my work on social choice theory. Again, I had excellent students at LSE, and later on at Oxford. In addition to Kaushik Basu and Rajat Deb (who had come from Dehli), other students such as Siddiq Osmani, Ben Fine, Ravi Kanbur, Carl Hamilton, John Wriglesworth, David Kelsey, Yasumi Matsumoto, Jonathan Riley, produced distinguished Ph.D. theses on a variety of economic and social choice problems. It made me very proud that many of the results that became standard in social choice theory and welfare economics had first emerged in these Ph.D. theses.

I was also fortunate to have colleagues who were working on serious social choice problems, including Peter Hammond, Charles Blackorby, Kotaro Suzumura, Geoffrey Heal, Gracieda Chichilnisky, Ken Binmore, Wulf Gaertner, Eric Maskin, John Muellbauer, Kevin Roberts, Susan Hurley, at LSE or Oxford, or neighbouring British universities. (I also learned greatly from conversations with economists who were in other fields, but whose works were of great interest to me, including Sudhir Anand, Tony Atkinson, Christopher Bliss, Meghnad Desai, Terence Gorman, Frank Hahn, David Hendry, Richard Layard, James Mirrlees, John Muellbauer, Steve Nickel, among others.) I also had the opportunity of collaboration with social choice theorists elsewhere, such as Claude d'Aspremont and Louis Gevers in Belgium, Koichi Hamada and Ken-ichi Inada in Japan (joined later by Suzumura when he returned there), and many others in America, Canada, Israel, Australia, Russia, and elsewhere). There were many new formal results and informal understandings that emerged in these works, and the gloom of "impossibility results" ceased to be the only prominent theme in the field. The 1970s were probably the golden years of social choice theory across the world. Personally, I had the sense of having a ball.

From Social Choice to Inequality and Poverty

The constructive possibilities that the new literature on social choice produced directed us immediately to making use of available statistics for a variety of economic and social appraisals: measuring economic inequality, judging poverty, evaluating projects, analyzing unemployment, investigating the principles and implications of liberty and rights, assessing gender inequality, and so on. My work on inequality was much inspired and stimulated by that of Tony Atkinson. I also worked for a while with Partha Dasgupta and David Starrett on measuring inequality (after having worked with Dasgupta and Stephen Marglin on project evaluation), and later, more extensively, with Sudhir Anand and James Foster.

My own interests gradually shifted from the pure theory of social choice to more "practical" problems. But I could not have taken them on without having some confidence that the practical exercises to be undertaken were also foundationally secure (rather than implicitly harbouring incongruities and impossibilities that could be exposed on deeper analytical probing). The progress of the pure theory of social choice with an expanded informational base was, in this sense, quite crucial for my applied work as well.

In the reorientation of my research, I benefited greatly from discussions with my wife, Eva Colorni, with whom I lived from 1973 onwards. Her critical standards were extremely exacting, but she also wanted to encourage me to work on issues of practical moment. Her personal background involved a fine mixture of theory and practice, with an Italian Jewish father (Eugenio Colorni was an academic philosopher and a hero of the Italian resistance who was killed by the fascists in Rome shortly before the Americans got there), a Berlinite Jewish mother (Ursula Hirschman was herself a writer and the brother of the great development economist, Albert Hirschman), and a stepfather who as a statesman had been a prime mover in uniting Europe (Altiero Spinelli was the founder of the "European Federalist movement," wrote its "Manifesto" from prison in 1941, and officially established the new movement, in the company of Eugenio Colorni, in Milan in 1943). Eva herself

had studied law, philosophy and economics (in Pavia and in Delhi), and lectured at the City of London Polytechnic (now London Guildhall University). She was deeply humane (with a great passion for social justice) as well as fiercely rational (taking no theory for granted, subjecting each to reasoned assessment and scrutiny). She exercised a great influence on the standards and reach that I attempted to achieve in my work (often without adequate success).

Eva was very supportive of my attempt to use a broadened framework of social choice theory in a variety of applied problems: to assess poverty; to evaluate inequality; to clarify the nature of relative deprivation; to develop distribution-adjusted national income measures; to clarify the penalty of unemployment; to analyze violations of personal liberties and basic rights; and to characterize gender disparities and women's relative disadvantage. The results were mostly published in journals in the 1970s and early 1980s, but gathered together in two collections of articles (*Choice, Welfare and Measurement and Resources, Values and Development*, published, respectively, in 1982 and 1984).

The work on gender inequality was initially confined to analyzing available statistics on the male-female differential in India (I had a joint paper with Jocelyn Kynch on "Indian Women: Well-being and Survival" in 1982), but gradually moved to international comparisons (*Commodities and Capabilities*, 1985) and also to some general theory ("Gender and Cooperative Conflict," 1990). The theory drew both on empirical analysis of published statistics across the world, but also of data I freshly collected in India in the spring of 1983, in collaboration with Sunil Sengupta, comparing boys and girls from birth to age 5. (We weighed and studied every child in two largish villages in West Bengal; I developed some expertise in weighing protesting children, and felt quite proud of my accomplishment when, one day, my research assistant phoned me with a request to take over from her the job of weighing a child "who bites every hand within the reach of her teeth." I developed some vanity in being able to meet the challenge at the "biting end" of social choice research.)

Poverty, Famines and Deprivation

From the mid-1970s, I also started work on the causation and prevention of famines. This was initially done for the World Employment Programme of the International Labour Organization, for which my 1981 book *Poverty and Famines* was written. (Louis Emmerij who led the programme took much personal interest in the work I was trying to do on famines.) I attempted to see famines as broad "economic" problems (concentrating on how people can buy food, or otherwise get entitled to it), rather than in terms of the grossly undifferentiated picture of aggregate food supply for the economy as a whole. The work was carried on later (from the middle of 1980s) under the auspices of the World Institute of Development Economics Research (WIDER) in Helsinki, which was imaginatively directed by Lal Jayawardena (an old friend who, as I noted earlier, had also been a contemporary of mine at Cambridge in the 1950s). Siddiq Osmani, my ex-student, ably led the programme on hunger and deprivation at WIDER. I also worked closely with Martha Nussbaum on the cultural side of the programme, during 1987-89.

By the mid-1980s, I was collaborating extensively with Jean Drèze, a young Belgian economist of extraordinary skill and remarkable dedication. My understanding of hunger and deprivation owes a great deal to his insights and investigations, and so does my recent work on development, which has been mostly done jointly with him. Indeed, my collaboration with Jean has been extremely fruitful for me, not only because I have learned so much from his, imaginative initiatives and insistent thoroughness, but also because it is hard to beat an arrangement for joint work whereby Jean does most of the work whereas I get a lot of the credit.

While these were intensely practical matters, I also got more and more involved in trying to understand the nature of individual advantage in terms of the substantive freedoms that different persons respectively enjoy, in the form of the capability to achieve valuable things. If my work in social choice theory was initially motivated by a desire to overcome Arrow's pessimistic picture by going beyond his limited informational base, my work on social justice based on individual freedoms and capabilities was similarly motivated by an aspiration to learn from, but go beyond, John Rawls's elegant theory of justice, through a broader use of available information. My

intellectual life has been much influenced by the contributions as well as the wonderful helpfulness of both Arrow and Rawls.

Harvard and Beyond

In the late 1980s, I had reason to move again from where I was. My wife, Eva, developed a difficult kind of cancer (of the stomach), and died quite suddenly in 1985. We had young children (Indrani and Kabir - then 10 and 8 respectively), and I wanted to take them away to another country, where they would not miss their mother constantly. The liveliness of America appealed to us as an alternative location, and I took the children with me to "taste" the prospects in the American universities that made me an offer.

Indrani and Kabir rapidly became familiar with several campuses (Stanford, Berkeley, Yale, Princeton, Harvard, UCLA, University of Texas at Austin, among them), even though their knowledge of America outside academia remained rather limited. (They particularly enjoyed visiting their grand uncle and aunt, Albert and Sarah Hirschman, at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton; as a Trustee of the Institute, visits to Princeton were also very pleasurable occasions for me.) I guess I was, to some extent, imposing my preference for the academic climate on the children, by confining the choice to universities only, but I did not really know what else to do. However, I must confess that I worried a little when I overheard my son Kabir, then nine years old, responding to a friendly American's question during a plane journey as to whether he knew Washington, D.C.. "Is that city," I heard Kabir say, "closer to Palo Alto or to New Haven?"

We jointly chose Harvard, and it worked out extremely well. My colleagues in economics and philosophy were just superb, some of whom I knew well from earlier on (including John Rawls and Tim Scanlon in philosophy, and Zvi Griliches, Dale Jorgenson, Janos Kornai, Stephen Marglin in economics), but there were also others whom I came to know after arriving at Harvard. I greatly enjoyed teaching regular joint courses with Robert Nozick and Eric Maskin, and also on occasions, with John Rawls and Thomas Scanlon (in philosophy) and with Jerry Green, Stephen Marglin and David Bloom (in economics). I could learn also from academics in many other fields as well, not least at the Society of Fellows where I served as a Senior Fellow for nearly a decade. Also, I was again blessed with wonderful students in economics, philosophy, public health and government, who did excellent theses, including Andreas Papandreou (who moved with me from Oxford to Harvard, and did a major book on externality and the environment), Tony Laden (who, among many other things, clarified the game-theoretic structure of Rawlsian theory of justice), Stephan Klasen (whose work on gender inequality in survival is possibly the most definitive work in this area), Felicia Knaul (who worked on street children and the economic and social challenges they face), Jennifer Ruger (who substantially advance the understanding of health as a public policy concern), and indeed many others with whom I greatly enjoyed working.

The social choice problems that had bothered me earlier on were by now more analyzed and understood, and I did have, I thought, some understanding of the demands of fairness, liberty and equality. To get firmer understanding of all this, it was necessary to pursue further the search for an adequate characterization of individual advantage. This had been the subject of my Tanner Lectures on Human Values at Stanford in 1979 (published as a paper, "Equality of What?" in 1980) and in a more empirical form, in a second set of Tanner Lectures at Cambridge in 1985 (published in 1987 as a volume of essays, edited by Geoffrey Hawthorne, with contributions by Bernard Williams, Ravi Kanbur, John Muellbauer, and Keith Hart). The approach explored sees individual advantage not merely as opulence or utility, but primarily in terms of the lives people manage to live and the freedom they have to choose the kind of life they have reason to value. The basic idea here is to pay attention to the actual "capabilities" that people end up having. The capabilities depend both on our physical and mental characteristics as well as on social opportunities and influences (and can thus serve as the basis not only of assessment of personal advantage but also of efficiency and equity of social policies). I was trying to explore this approach since my Tanner Lectures in 1979; there was a reasonably ambitious attempt at linking theory to empirical exercises in my book *Commodities and Capabilities*, published in 1985. In my first few years at Harvard, I was much concerned with developing this perspective further.

The idea of capabilities has strong Aristotelian connections, which I came to understand more fully with the

help of Martha Nussbaum, a scholar with a remarkably extensive command over classical philosophy as well as contemporary ethics and literary studies. I learned a great deal from her, and we also collaborated in a number of studies during 1987-89, including in a collection of essays that pursued this approach in terms of philosophical as well as economic reasoning (*Quality of Life* was published in 1993, but the essays were from a conference at WIDER in Helsinki in 1988).

During my Harvard years up to about 1991, I was much involved in analyzing the overall implications of this perspective on welfare economics and political philosophy (this is reported in my book, *Inequality Reexamined*, published in 1992). But it was also very nice to get involved in some new problems, including the characterization of rationality, the demands of objectivity, and the relation between facts and values. I used the old technique of offering courses on them (sometimes jointly with Robert Nozick) and through that learning as much as I taught. I started taking an interest also in health equity (and in public health in particular, in close collaboration with Sudhir Anand), a challenging field of application for concepts of equity and justice. Harvard's ample strength in an immense variety of subjects gives one scope for much freedom in the choice of work and of colleagues to talk to, and the high quality of the students was a total delight as well. My work on inequality in terms of variables other than incomes was also helped by the collaboration of Angus Deaton and James Foster.

It was during my early years at Harvard that my old friend, Mahbub ul Haq, who had been a fellow student at Cambridge (and along with his wife, Bani, a very old and close friend), returned back into my life in a big way. Mahbub's professional life had taken him from Cambridge to Yale, then back to his native Pakistan, with intermediate years at the World Bank. In 1989 he was put in charge, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), of the newly planned "Human Development Reports." Mahbub insisted that I work with him to help develop a broader informational approach to the assessment of development. This I did with great delight, partly because of the exciting nature of the work, but also because of the opportunity of working closely with such an old and wonderful friend. Human Development Reports seem to have received a good deal of attention in international circles, and Mahbub was very successful in broadening the informational basis of the assessment of development. His sudden death in 1998 has robbed the world of one of the leading practical reasoners in the world of contemporary economics.

India and Bangladesh

What about India? While I have worked abroad since 1971, I have constantly retained close connections with Indian universities, I have, of course, a special relation with Delhi University, where I have been an honorary professor since leaving my full-time job there in 1971, and I use this excuse to subject Delhi students to lectures whenever I get a chance. For various reasons - personal as well as academic - the peripatetic life seems to suit me, in this respect. After my student days in Cambridge in 1953-56, I guess I have never been away from India for more than six months at a time. This - combined with my remaining exclusively an Indian citizen - gives me, I think, some entitlement to speak on Indian public affairs, and this remains a constant involvement.

It is also very engaging - and a delight - to go back to Bangladesh as often as I can, which is not only my old home, but also where some of my closest friends and collaborators live and work. This includes Rehman Sobhan to whom I have been very close from my student days (he remains as sceptical of formal economics and its reach as he was in the early 1950s), and also Anisur Rehman (who is even more sceptical), Kamal Hossain, Jamal Islam, Mushairaf Hussain, among many others, who are all in Bangladesh.

When the Nobel award came my way, it also gave me an opportunity to do something immediate and practical about my old obsessions, including literacy, basic health care and gender equity, aimed specifically at India and Bangladesh. The Pratichi Trust, which I have set up with the help of some of the prize money, is, of course, a small effort compared with the magnitude of these problems. But it is nice to re-experience something of the old excitement of running evening schools, more than fifty years ago, in villages near Santiniketan.

From Campus to Campus

As far as my principal location is concerned, now that my children have grown up, I could seize the opportunity to move back to my old Cambridge college, Trinity. I accepted the offer of becoming Master of the College from January 1998 (though I have not cut my connections with Harvard altogether). The reasoning was not independent of the fact that Trinity is not only my old college where my academic life really began, but it also happens to be next door to King's, where my wife, Emma Rothschild, is a Fellow, and Director of the Centre for History and Economics. Her forthcoming book on Adam Smith also takes on the hard task of reinterpreting the European Enlightenment. It so happens that one principal character in this study is Condorcet, who was also one of the originators of social choice theory, which is very pleasing (and rather useful as well).

Emma too is a convinced academic (a historian and an economist), and both her parents had long connections with Cambridge and with the University. Between my four children, and the two of us, the universities that the Sen family has encountered include Calcutta University, Cambridge University, Jadavpur University, Delhi University, L.S.E., Oxford University, Harvard University, M.I.T., University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University, Cornell University, Smith College, Wesleyan University, among others. Perhaps one day we can jointly write an illustrated guide to the universities.

I end this essay where I began - at a university campus. It is not quite the same at 65 as it was at 5. But it is not so bad even at an older age (especially, as Maurice Chevalier has observed, "considering the alternative"). Nor are university campuses quite as far removed from life as is often presumed. Robert Goheen has remarked, "if you feel that you have both feet planted on level ground, then the university has failed you." Right on. But then who wants to be planted on ground? There are places to go.

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Edward Said

Edward Wadie Said (1 November 1935 – 25 September 2003) was a Palestinian American literary theorist and public intellectual who helped found the critical-theory field of postcolonialism. Born in Jerusalem in Mandatory Palestine to Palestinian parents resident in Egypt, he was an American citizen through his father. Said spent his childhood in Jerusalem and Cairo, where he attended elite British and American schools. Subsequently he left for the United States, where he obtained a bachelor's degree from Princeton and a doctorate in English literature from Harvard. Said then joined the faculty of Columbia University in 1963, where he became professor of English and comparative literature in 1991.

As a cultural critic, Said is best known for the 1978 book Orientalism. In it, he analyses the cultural representations that are the basis of Orientalism, a term he redefined to refer to the West's patronizing perceptions and depictions of Middle Eastern, Asian and North African societies—"the East". He contended that Orientalist scholarship was, and remains, inextricably tied to the imperialist societies that produced it, which makes much of the work inherently political, servile to power, and thus intellectually suspect. *Orientalism* is based upon Said's knowledge of colonial literature, literary theory, and poststructuralism. Said's works proved influential in the humanities, especially in literary theory, and had a transformative impact on Middle Eastern studies, whose practitioners began to study *how* they examine, describe, and define Middle Eastern cultures. Said vigorously discussed and debated the cultural subjects comprised by Orientalism, especially as applied to history and area studies; nonetheless, some mainstream academics disagreed with the theory, most notably Bernard Lewis.

As a public intellectual, Said discussed culture, literature, music and contemporary politics. Drawing from his family experiences as Palestinian Christians in the Middle East around the time Israel was established in 1948, Said argued for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Further, he was an advocate for equal political and human rights for Palestinians in Israel, and urged the U.S. to pressure Israel to grant and respect these rights. Said was described by journalist Robert Fisk as the Palestinian people's "most powerful political voice". Nevertheless, he also criticized the Arab and Muslim regimes who acted against the interests of their peoples. Intellectually active until the last months of his life, he died of leukemia in late 2003.

Biography

Early Life

Edward Said was born on 1 November 1935 to Hilda and Wadie Said, a businessman, in Jerusalem in the British Mandate of Palestine. Edward's father was a Palestinian who soldiered in the U.S. Army component of General John J. Pershing's Allied Expeditionary Force in World War I. Wadie Said and his family were granted U.S. citizenship due to his military service, after he moved to Cleveland before returning to Palestine in 1920. Edward's mother Hilda, who was born in Nazareth, had a Palestinian father and a Lebanese mother. After the war, in 1919, Wadie Said moved to Cairo and established a stationery business with a cousin. Although his parents and family were Protestant Christians, Edward was an agnostic.

At School

Said described his childhood as lived "between worlds", the worlds of Cairo and Jerusalem, until he was twelve. In 1947, he attended the Anglican St. George's School, Jerusalem, about which experience he said:

With an unexceptionally Arab family name like "Said", connected to an improbably British first name (my mother much admired Prince of Wales [Edward VIII] in 1935, the year of my birth), I was an uncomfortably anomalous student all through my early years: a Palestinian going to school in Egypt, with an English first name, an American passport, and no certain identity, at all. To make matters worse, Arabic, my native language, and English, my school language, were inextricably mixed: I have never known which was my first language, and have felt fully at home in neither, although I dream in both. Every time I speak an English sentence, I find myself echoing it in Arabic, and vice versa.

In the late 1940s, the latter school days of Said included attendance at the Egyptian branch of Victoria College (VC), where one classmate was Omar Sharif whom he remembered as a sadistic and physically abusive head boy; other classmates included King Hussein of Jordan, and Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and Saudi Arabian boys whose academic careers progressed to their becoming ministers, prime ministers, and leading businessmen of and in their respective countries. In that colonial time, the VC school educated select Arab and Levantine lads to become the Anglicized ruling-class, who, in due course, were to rule their respective countries, upon British decolonization. Victoria College was the last school Said attended before being sent to the U.S.:

The moment one became a student at VC, one was given the student handbook, a series of regulations governing every aspect of school life—the kind of uniform we were to wear, what equipment was needed for sports, the dates of school holidays, bus schedules, and so on. But the school's first rule, emblazoned on the opening page of the handbook, read: "English is the language of the school; students caught speaking any other language will be punished." Yet, there were no native speakers of English among the students. Whereas the masters were all British, we were a motley crew of Arabs of various kinds, Armenians, Greeks, Italians, Jews, and Turks, each of whom had a native language that the school had explicitly outlawed. Yet all, or nearly all, of us spoke Arabic—many spoke Arabic and French—and so we were able to take refuge in a common language, in defiance of what we perceived as an unjust colonial stricture.

U.S. Education

Said proved a troublesome student; he was expelled from Victoria College in 1951 and ended up in Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts, a socially elite, college-prep boarding-school where he endured a miserable year of feeling out of place. Nonetheless, he excelled academically and achieved the rank of either first (valedictorian) or second (salutarian) in a class of 160 students. In retrospect, Said said that having been sent away to a place so far from the Middle East was a parental decision much influenced by "the prospects of deracinated people, like us, being so uncertain that it would be best to send me as far away as possible". He

obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Princeton (1957), and then a Master of Arts degree (1960) and a Doctor of Philosophy degree (1964), in English Literature, from Harvard.

Academic Career

In 1963, Said joined Columbia University as a member of the faculties of the department of English and of the department of comparative literature, where he taught and worked until 2003 (he became professor there in 1991). In 1974, he was Visiting Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard College; in 1975–76 he was a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Science, at Stanford University; in 1977, he was the Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, and subsequently was the Old Dominion Foundation Professor in the Humanities; and, in 1979, he was Visiting Professor of Humanities at Johns Hopkins University. After receiving tenure at Columbia, Said would also go on to teach at Yale University.

Said served as president of the Modern Language Association; as editor of the *Arab Studies Quarterly* in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; on the executive board of International PEN; in the American Academy of Arts and Letters; in the Royal Society of Literature; in the Council of Foreign Relations; and he was a member of the American Philosophical Society.

Claims of Biographical Dishonesty

Justus Weiner, an American lawyer and resident scholar at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs think-tank, claimed that Said had been dishonest about his childhood. In the article "My Beautiful Old House and Other Fabrications by Edward Said", published in Commentary magazine in 1999, Weiner claimed Said lied that "I was born in Jerusalem, and spent most of my formative years there; and, after 1948, when my entire family became refugees, in Egypt". Despite having acknowledged that Said was born in Jerusalem (Palestine), Weiner reported that Said's birth certificate lists a Cairo (Egypt) residential address for the Said family; that the boy Edward did not live his formative, boyhood years in Jerusalem with his family, but in Cairo; and that he had not been a full-time student at the St. George's School in Jerusalem, because the school's register of students contained no record of his matriculation to the school.

Weiner's article, described by The Guardian as a "fierce assault...in a small right-wing periodical", was vehemently criticised by journalists and historians who defended Said's account. Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair wrote that Weiner had deliberately falsified the biographic record in order to attack Said. They pointed to Haig Boyadjian, who said he had explicitly told Weiner that he had been Said's classmate at St. George's, a fact omitted by Weiner. Christopher Hitchens described Weiner's article as a work of "extraordinary spite and mendacity" and reported that schoolmates and instructors confirmed that Said had been at the St. George Academy. Historian Amos Elon accused Weiner of waging a "personal smear campaign" against Said. Elon said Weiner failed to disprove that in the winter of 1947–48, in light of the Arab–Israeli War, the Said family left Jerusalem for Cairo. "[Said] and his family sought refuge from the war outside Palestine, as did hundreds of thousands of other Palestinians at the time. The fact remains," Elon wrote, "that shortly afterward, the family's property in Jerusalem was confiscated. Said and his family became political refugees as the result of the Israeli government's refusal to allow them to return to the country of their birth."

In retort, Weiner accused Elon of intellectual dishonesty and Hitchens of having made himself "a poster boy for Palestine". To Hitchens's critique that he had not even interviewed Said, Weiner replied that three years of research had made it unnecessary to interview the man about his childhood in British Palestine, and said, in connection to Said's school days in the Middle East: "The evidence became so overwhelming. It was no longer an issue of discrepancies. It was a chasm. There was no point in calling him up and saying, 'You're a liar, you're a fraud' ". Said himself said that Weiner's article was the third such attack to be published in *Commentary*, and

that the perspective of the authors only produced "calumny and falsehood" and that the article's credibility was "undercut by dozens of mistakes of fact".

Literary Criticism

Said's first book, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (1966), expanded on his doctoral dissertation. In *Edward Said: Criticism and Society* (2010), Abdirahman Hussein said that the novella Heart of Darkness (1899), by Joseph Conrad, was the book that proved foundational to Said's entire career and project. Afterwards, Said redacted ideas gleaned from the works of the 17th-century philosopher Giambattista Vico, and other intellectuals, in the book *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1974), about the theoretical bases of literary criticism. Said's further bibliographic production featured books such as *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983), *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature: Yeats and Decolonization* (1988), Culture and Imperialism (1993), *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (1994), *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004), and *On Late Style* (2006).

Like his postmodern intellectual mentors, the poststructuralist philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, Said was fascinated by how the people of the Western world perceive the peoples of and the things from a different culture, and by the effects of society, politics, and power upon literature; thus is Edward W. Said a founding intellectual of post-colonial criticism. Although the critique of Orientalism is his especially important cultural contribution, it was the critical interpretations of Conrad, Jane Austen, Rudyard Kipling, W. B. Yeats and other writers that established his intellectual reputation.

Orientalism

Said is most famous for the description and analyses of Orientalism as the source of the inaccurate cultural representations that are the foundation of Western thought towards the Middle East, of how The West perceives and represents The East. The thesis of Orientalism is the existence of a "subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against Arabo-Islamic peoples and their culture", which derives from Western culture's long tradition of false and romanticized images of Asia, in general, and the Middle East, in particular. That such perceptions, and the consequent cultural representations, have served, and continue to serve, as implicit justifications for the colonial and imperialist ambitions of the European powers and of the United States. Likewise, Said also criticized and denounced the political and the cultural malpractices of the régimes of the ruling Arab élites who have internalized the false, romanticized representations of Arabic culture that were conceived and established by Anglo-American Orientalists:

So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Moslems and Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Moslem life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Arab world. What we have, instead, is a series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression.

In *Orientalism*, Said argued that much Western study of Islamic civilization was political intellectualism meant for European self-affirmation, rather than for objective intellectual enquiry and academic study of Eastern cultures. Hence, Orientalism functioned as a method of practical, cultural discrimination applied as a means of imperialist domination, producing the claim that the Western Orientalist knows more about the Orient than do the Orientals. Said argues that the history of European colonial rule, and of the consequent political domination of the civilizations of the East, distorts the writing of even the most knowledgeable, well-meaning, and culturally sympathetic Western Orientalists; thus was the term "Orientalism" rendered into a pejorative word:

I doubt if it is controversial, for example, to say that an Englishman in India, or Egypt, in the later nineteenth century, took an interest in those countries, which was never far from their status, in his mind, as British

colonies. To say this may seem quite different from saying that all academic knowledge about India and Egypt is somehow tinged and impressed with, violated by, the gross political fact—and yet *that is what I am saying* in this study of Orientalism.

Orientalism concluded that Western writing about the Orient depicts it as an irrational, weak, and feminised Other, an existential condition contrasted with the rational, strong, and masculine West. This binary relation derives from the European psychological need to create a difference of cultural inequality between West and East; that cultural difference is attributed to immutable cultural "essences" inherent to Oriental peoples and things. *Orientalism* has exerted great intellectual influence upon the academic fields of literary theory and cultural studies, human geography and history, and Oriental studies.

Response to Orientalism

Orientalism (1978) provoked much theoretic criticism of the work and its thesis as well as personal controversy about Edward Said, the author and the man.

The criticism by Orientalists such as Albert Hourani, Robert Graham Irwin, Ibn Warraq, Nikki Keddie, Bernard Lewis, and Kanan Makiya, addressed what the historian Nikki Keddie said were "some unfortunate consequences" of *Orientalism* upon the perception and the status of their scholarship.

In *Approaches to the History of the Middle East*, the historian Keddie said that, as critical theory, Said's work on Orientalism had:

unfortunate consequences ... I think that there has been a tendency in the Middle East [studies] field to adopt the word "Orientalism" as a generalized swear-word, essentially referring to people who take the "wrong" position on the Arab–Israeli dispute, or to people who are judged "too conservative". It has nothing to do with whether they are good or not good in their disciplines. So, "Orientalism", for many people, is a word that substitutes for thought, and enables people to dismiss certain scholars and their works. I think that is too bad. It may not have been what Edward Said meant, at all, but the term has become a kind of slogan.

Moreover, the Anglo-American Orientalist Bernard Lewis was especially at odds with the thesis of *Orientalism*, wherein Said identified Lewis as:

... a perfect exemplification [of an] Establishment Orientalist [whose work] purports to be objective, liberal scholarship, but is, in reality, very close to being propaganda *against* his subject material. For sheer heedless anti-intellectualism, unrestrained or unencumbered by the slightest trace of critical self-consciousness, no one, in my experience, has achieved the sublime confidence of Bernard Lewis, whose almost purely political exploits require more time to mention than they are worth. In a series of articles, and one particularly weak book—*The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (1982)—Lewis has been busy responding to my argument, insisting that the Western quest for knowledge about other societies is unique, that it is motivated by pure curiosity, and that, in contrast, Muslims neither were able nor interested in getting knowledge about Europe, as if knowledge about Europe were the only acceptable criterion for true knowledge.

Lewis's arguments are presented as emanating exclusively from the scholar's apolitical impartiality, whereas, at the same time, he has become an authority drawn on for anti-Islamic, anti-Arab, Zionist, and Cold War crusades, all of them underwritten by a zealotry, covered with a veneer of urbanity, that has very little in common with the "science" and learning Lewis purports to be upholding.

Lewis replied to Said's characterizations, of his (Lewis's) works as political propaganda, and of him (Lewis) as an anti-intellectual, with essays critical of Said the academic, and of his works; Lewis later was joined in his criticisms of Said by the academics Maxime Rodinson, Jacques Berque, Malcolm Kerr, Aijaz Ahmad, and

William Montgomery Watt who said that *Orientalism* (1978) is a flawed account of Western scholarship about "The Orient".

Said felt the consequences of being a politically-militant, public intellectual in 1985: per Said, the Jewish Defense League compared Said to a Nazi because of his anti-Zionism; an arsonist set afire his office at Columbia University; he and his family were repeatedly targeted with death threats.

Influence

Edward Said was a charismatic public intellectual and something of an "intellectual superstar" in America. His field of inquiry included literary theory and comparative literature, history and political commentary, cultural criticism and music criticism, and other fields. *Orientalism* proved to be an intellectual document central to the field of post-colonial studies, its thesis being considered as historically factual, true, and accurate for the pertinent periods studied, and especially regarding the cultural representations of "Orientals" and "The Orient" presented in the mass communications media of the West. Nonetheless, Said's supporters acknowledged that concerning the German Orientalist scholarship, the scope of *Orientalism* is limited; yet, in the magazine article "Orientalism Reconsidered" (1985), Said said that no-one opponent provided a substantive rationale for claiming that the dearth of discussion about German Orientalism necessarily limits the scholarly value and practical application of the book's thesis. Moreover, in the Afterword to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, Said presented follow-up refutations of the criticisms that Bernard Lewis registered against the first edition (1978) of the book.

Moreover, his critics and supporters acknowledge the transformative influence of *Orientalism* upon scholarship in the humanities—the former say that is an intellectually limiting influence upon scholars, whilst the latter say that it is an intellectually liberating influence upon scholars. Post-colonial studies, of which Said was an intellectual founder, and a scholarly reference, is a thriving field of intellectual enquiry that seeks to explain the post-colonial world, its peoples, and their discontents. Hence the continued investigational validity and analytical efficacy of the critical propositions presented in *Orientalism* (1978), especially in the field of Middle Eastern studies.

The scholarship of Said remains critically pertinent to and intellectually relevant in the fields of literary criticism and cultural studies, notably upon scholars studying India, such as Gyan Prakash ("Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography", 1990), Nicholas Dirks (*Castes of Mind*, 2001), and Ronald Inden (*Imagining India*, 1990); and upon literary theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha (*Nation and Narration*, 1990), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (*In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, 1987), and Hamid Dabashi (*Iran: A People Interrupted*, 2007).

Elsewhere, in and about Eastern Europe, Milica Bakić-Hayden developed the concept of Nesting Orientalisms (1992), based upon and derived from the ideas of the historian Larry Wolff (*Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, 1994) and upon the ideas that Said presented in *Orientalism* (1978). In turn, the Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova (*Imagining the Balkans*, 1997) presented her ethnologic concept of Nesting Balkanisms (*Ethnologia Balkanica*, 1997), which is theoretically related to and derived from Milica Bakić-Hayden's concept of Nesting Orientalisms.

Politics

Pro-Palestinian Activism

Said became politically active in 1967, to counter the perceived stereotyped misrepresentations with which the U.S. news media explained the Arab–Israeli wars; reportage which he felt was divorced from the historical realities of the Middle East, in general, and Palestine and Israel, in particular. His "The Arab Portrayed" (1968)

was an essay wherein he described the images of the Arab, as presented in journalism and some types of scholarship, which he feels are meant to evade the specific discussion of the historical and cultural realities of the peoples who are the Middle East. Since then, he participated in political and diplomatic efforts for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

From 1977 until 1991, Said was an independent member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC). In 1988, he was a proponent of the two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (1948), and voted for the establishment of the State of Palestine at a meeting of the Palestinian National Council meeting in Algiers. In 1993, Said quit his membership of the PNC to protest the politics that led to the signing of the Oslo Accords, because he thought the accord terms unacceptable, and because they had been rejected by the Madrid Conference of 1991. Especially troublesome to Said was his belief that Yasir Arafat had betrayed the right of return of the Palestinian refugees to return to their houses and properties in the Green Line territories of pre-1967 Israel; and that Arafat ignored the growing political threat of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories established since the conquest of Palestine in 1967. By 1995, in response to Said's political criticisms, the Palestinian Authority banned the sale of Said's books; however, relations improved when Said publicly praised Yasir Arafat for rejecting Prime Minister Ehud Barak's offers at the Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David (2000) in the U.S.

In the essay "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims" (1979), Edward Said argued in favour of the political legitimacy and philosophical authenticity of the Zionist claims and right to a Jewish homeland; and for the right of national self-determination of the Palestinian people. Said's books on the matters of Israel and Palestine include *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994), and *The End of the Peace Process* (2000). In 1998, for the BBC, Said made *In Search of Palestine* (1998), a documentary film about Palestine past and Palestine present. With his son, Said returned to Palestine to confront "Israeli injustice". Despite the social and cultural prestige that BBC cinema products usually enjoyed, *In Search of Palestine* was not broadcast by the television companies of the U.S.

In 2003, Haidar Abdel-Shafi, Ibrahim Dakak, Mustafa Barghouti, and Edward Said established the third-party political organization *Al-Mubadara* (the Palestinian National Initiative), headed by Barghouti, to be a reformist and democratic alternative to the usual two-party politics of Palestine, as an alternative to the respectively extremist politics of the social-democratic Fatah and the Islamist Hamas.

Stone-throwing Incident

On 3 July 2000, while travelling as a tourist in the Middle East with his son, Said was photographed throwing a stone across the Blue Line Lebanese–Israeli border. In the U.S., that image elicited much conservative political criticism that Said's action demonstrated an inherent, personal sympathy with terrorism, thus the *Commentary* magazine journalist Edward Alexander labelled Said as the "Professor of Terror". According to Said, there was not much to the incident: "Mr. Said said he was having a stone-throwing contest with his son and called it a 'symbolic gesture of joy' at the end of Israel's occupation of Lebanon...It was a pebble; there was nobody there. The guardhouse was at least half a mile away. However, the As-Safir newspaper reported that a local Lebanese resident said that Said was less than ten metres (ca. 30 ft.) from the IDF soldiers manning the two-storey guardhouse when he aimed and threw the stone over the border fence; the stone struck the barbed wire atop the border fence. Despite the political fracas among conservative Columbia University students and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith International (Sons of the Covenant), the University Provost defended Said's action as an academic's freedom of expression: "To my knowledge, the stone was directed at no-one; no law was broken; no indictment was made; no criminal or civil action has been taken against Professor Said".

Nevertheless, Said endured repercussions, such as the cancellation of an invitation to give a lecture to the Freud Society, in Austria, in February 2001. The President of the Freud Society justified withdrawing the invitation from Said by explaining that "the political situation in the Middle East, and its consequences" had rendered an

accusation of anti-Semitism a very serious matter, and that any such accusation "has become more dangerous" in the politics of Austria; the Freud Society thus cancelled their invitation to Said in order to "avoid an internal clash" of opinions, about him, that might ideologically divide the Freud Society.

Criticism of U.S. Foreign Politics

In the revised edition of Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World (1997), Said criticized the Orientalist bias of the Western news media's reportage about the Middle East and Islam, especially the tendency towards editorializing "speculations about the latest conspiracy to blow up buildings, sabotage commercial airliners, and poison water supplies". He referred to the military involvement of the U.S. in the Kosovo War (1998–99) as an imperialist action and described the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act as the political license that predisposed the U.S. to invade Iraq in 2003. He claimed that the continual support of Israel by successive U.S. presidential governments, as actions meant to perpetuate regional political instability in the Middle East. He criticized the 2003 invasion of Iraq in mid-2003, and, in the Egyptian Al-Ahram Weekly newspaper, said that the U.S. war against Iraq was a politically ill-conceived military enterprise:

My strong opinion, though I don't have any proof, in the classical sense of the word, is that they want to change the entire Middle East, and the Arab world, perhaps terminate some countries, destroy the so-called terrorist groups they dislike, and install régimes friendly to the United States. I think this is a dream that has very little basis in reality. The knowledge they have of the Middle East, to judge from the people who advise them, is, to say the least, out of date and widely speculative.

In January 2006, anthropologist David Price obtained 147 pages of the 283-page political dossier that the FBI had compiled on Edward Said, which indicated that he had been spied upon since 1971, four years since he had become a public intellectual active in the politics to the U.S.

Music

Said was an accomplished pianist. He worked as the music critic for *The Nation* magazine, and wrote four books about music: *Musical Elaborations* (1991), *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* (2002, with Daniel Barenboim), *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (2006), and *Music at the Limits* (2007). In the latter book he spoke of finding musical reflections of his literary and historical ideas in bold compositions and strong performances.

In 1999, Said and Daniel Barenboim founded the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which is composed of young Israeli, Palestinian, and Arab musicians. They also established The Barenboim–Said Foundation in Seville, to develop education-through-music projects. Besides managing the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, the Barenboim–Said Foundation assists with the administration of the Academy of Orchestral Studies, the Musical Education in Palestine Project, and the Early Childhood Musical Education Project, in Seville. Composer Mohammed Fairouz acknowledged the influence of Edward Said upon his works: compositionally, the *First Symphony* thematically alludes to the essay "Homage to a Belly-Dancer" (1990); and a piano sonata titled *Reflections on Exile* (1984), which thematically refers to the emotions inherent to the eponymous subject.

Awards

Besides honors, memberships, and postings to prestigious organizations world-wide, Edward Said was awarded some twenty honorary university degrees in the course of his professional life as an academic, critic, and Man of Letters. Among the honors bestowed to him was the Bowdoin Prize by Harvard University. He twice received the Lionel Trilling Book Award; the first occasion was the inaugural bestowing of said literary award in 1976, for *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1974). He also received the Wellek Prize of the American Comparative Literature Association, and was awarded the inaugural Spinoza Lens Prize. In 2001, Said was

awarded the Lannan Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement. In 2002, he received the Prince of Asturias Award for Concord, and was the first U.S. citizen to receive the Sultan Owais Prize. The autobiography *Out of Place* (1999) was bestowed three awards, the 1999 New Yorker Book Award for Non-Fiction; the 2000 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Non-Fiction; and the Morton Dauwen Zabel Award in Literature.

Death and Legacy

On 25 September 2003, after enduring a twelve-year sickness with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, Said died aged 67 in New York City. He was survived by his wife, Mariam, his son, Wadie, and his daughter, Najla, an actress, playwright, and a founder of Nibras, the Arab-American theatre troupe.

Eulogies included Alexander Cockburn, "A Mighty and Passionate Heart"; Seamus Deane, "A Late Style of Humanism"; Christopher Hitchens, "A Valediction for Edward Said"; Tony Judt, "The Rootless Cosmopolitan"; Michael Wood, "On Edward Said"; and Tariq Ali, "Remembering Edward Said (1935–2003)". In November 2004, in Palestine, Birzeit University renamed their music school the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music.

Tributes

Verso Books published *Waiting for the Barbarians: A Tribute to Edward W. Said* (2008), edited by Müge Gürsoy Sökmen and Başak Ertür; the essayists include Akeel Bilgrami, Rashid Khalidi, and Elias Khoury. Routledge published *Edward Said: The Charisma of Criticism* (2010), by Harold Aram Veesser, a critical biography. The University of California Press published *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representations* (2010), edited by Adel Iskandar and Hakem Rustom, and featuring contributions about Said's intellectual legacy by Joseph Massad, Ilan Pappé, Ella Shohat, Ghada Karmi, Noam Chomsky, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Daniel Barenboim, among others.

Academic establishments such as Columbia University, the University of Warwick, Princeton University, the University of Adelaide, the American University of Cairo, and the Palestine Center have instituted annual series of lectures about the subjects, topics, and themes that Edward Said discussed in his works; notable among the speakers have been Daniel Barenboim, Noam Chomsky, Robert Fisk, and Cornel West.

In Berlin the Barenboim-Said Academy was established in 2012. Following the philosophy of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, young music students from the Arab World and Israel will study music and humanities. Construction next to the Berlin State Opera started in May, 2014. Studies are set to commence in the fall of 2015.

Orientalism (book)

Orientalism (1978), by Edward Said, is a foundational text for the academic field of Post-colonial Studies. In it, Said analyzes the cultural representations that are the basis of Orientalism, a term he redefined to refer to the West's patronizing perceptions and depictions of Middle Eastern, Asian and North African societies—"the East". He contended that Orientalist scholarship was, and remains, inextricably tied to the imperialist societies that produced it, which makes much of the work inherently political, servile to power, and thus intellectually suspect. Said further denounces the social, economic, and cultural practices of the ruling Arab elites who, Said claims, as imperial satraps, have internalized the romanticized "Arabic Culture" created by British and American Orientalists. Grounding much of this thesis in his knowledge of colonial literature such as the fiction of Conrad, and in the post-structuralist theory of Foucault, Derrida and others, Said's *Orientalism* and following works proved influential in literary theory and criticism, and continue to influence several other fields in the humanities. *Orientalism* affected Middle Eastern studies, transforming the way practitioners of the discipline describe and examine the Middle East. Said came to discuss and vigorously debate the issue of Orientalism with

scholars in the fields of history and area studies, many of whom disagreed with his thesis, most famously Bernard Lewis. Said later wrote a 1995 "Afterword," and a 2003 "Preface," responding to some existing criticisms.

Overview

Said also criticized and denounced the political and the cultural malpractices of the régimes of the ruling Arab élites who have internalized the false, romanticized representations of Arabic culture that were conceived and established by Anglo-American Orientalists:

So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Moslems and Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Moslem life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Arab world. What we have, instead, is a series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression.

Orientalism had an impact on the fields of literary theory, cultural studies and human geography, and to a lesser extent on those of history and oriental studies. Taking his cue from the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, and from earlier critics of western Orientalism such as A. L. Tibawi, Anouar Abdel-Malek, Maxime Rodinson, and Richard William Southern, Said argued that Western writings on the Orient, and the perceptions of the East purveyed in them, are suspect, and cannot be taken at face value. Said argues that the history of European colonial rule, and of the consequent political domination of the civilizations of the East, distorts the writing of even the most knowledgeable, well-meaning, and culturally sympathetic Western Orientalists; thus was the term "Orientalism" rendered into a pejorative word:

I doubt if it is controversial, for example, to say that an Englishman in India, or Egypt, in the later nineteenth century, took an interest in those countries, which was never far from their status, in his mind, as British colonies. To say this may seem quite different from saying that all academic knowledge about India and Egypt is somehow tinged and impressed with, violated by, the gross political fact—and yet *that is what I am saying* in this study of Orientalism.

Said argued that the West had dominated the East for more than 2,000 years, since the composition of *The Persians* by Aeschylus. Europe had dominated Asia politically so completely for so long that even the most outwardly objective Western texts on the East were permeated with a bias that even most Western scholars could not recognize. His contention was not only that the West has conquered the East politically but also that Western scholars have appropriated the exploration and interpretation of the Orient's languages, history and culture for themselves. They have written Asia's past and constructed its modern identities from a perspective that takes Europe as the norm, from which the "exotic", "inscrutable" Orient deviates.

It reinforces preconceived archetypes, constructed with literary texts and historical records that often are of limited understanding of the facts of life in the Middle East, that envision all "Eastern" societies as fundamentally similar to one another. In 1978, when the book was first published, with memories of the Yom Kippur war and the OPEC crisis still fresh, Said argued that these attitudes still permeated the Western media and academia.

Influence

Orientalism proved to be an intellectual document central to the field of post-colonial studies, its thesis being considered as historically factual, true, and accurate for the pertinent periods studied, and especially regarding the cultural representations of "Orientals" and "The Orient" presented in the mass communications media of the West. Nonetheless, Said's supporters acknowledged that concerning the German Orientalist scholarship, the

scope of *Orientalism* is limited; yet, in the magazine article "Orientalism Reconsidered" (1985), Said said that no-one opponent provided a substantive rationale for claiming that the dearth of discussion about German Orientalism necessarily limits the scholarly value and practical application of the book's thesis. Moreover, in the Afterword to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, Said presented follow-up refutations of the criticisms that Bernard Lewis registered against the first edition (1978) of the book. *Orientalism* is regarded as central to the postcolonial movement, encouraging scholars "from non-western countries...to take advantage of the mood of political correctness it helped to engender by associating themselves with 'narratives of oppression,' creating successful careers out of transmitting, interpreting and debating representations of the non-western 'other.'"

Moreover, his critics and supporters acknowledge the transformative influence of *Orientalism* upon scholarship in the humanities—the former say that is an intellectually limiting influence upon scholars, whilst the latter say that it is an intellectually liberating influence upon scholars. In October 2003, one month after Said died, a commentator wrote in a Lebanese newspaper that through *Orientalism* "Said's critics agree with his admirers that he has single-handedly effected a revolution in Middle Eastern studies in the U.S." He cited a critic who claimed since the publication of *Orientalism* "U.S. Middle Eastern Studies were taken over by Edward Said's postcolonial studies paradigm" (Daily Star, October 20, 2003). Even those who contest its conclusions and criticize its scholarship, like George P. Landow of Brown University, call it "a major work." The Belgian-born American literary critic Paul De Man supported Said's criticism of such modern scholars, as he stated in his article on semiotic rhetoric: "Said took a step further than any other modern scholar of his time, something I dare not do. I remain in the safety of rhetorical analysis where criticism is the second best thing I do." Post-colonial studies, of which Said was an intellectual founder and a scholarly reference, is a fertile and thriving field of intellectual enquiry that helps explain the post-colonial world, its peoples, and their discontents. Hence the continued investigational validity and analytical efficacy of the critical propositions presented in *Orientalism* (1978), especially in the field of Middle Eastern studies.

The scholarship of Said remains critically pertinent to and intellectually relevant in the fields of literary criticism and cultural studies, notably upon scholars studying India, such as Gyan Prakash ("Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography", 1990), Nicholas Dirks (*Castes of Mind*, 2001), and Ronald Inden (*Imagining India*, 1990); and upon literary theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha (*Nation and Narration*, 1990), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (*In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, 1987), and Hamid Dabashi (*Iran: A People Interrupted*, 2007). Said does not include Orientalist painting or other visual art in his survey, despite the example on the book's cover, but other writers, notably Linda Nochlin, have extended his analysis to cover it, "with uneven results". In epidemiological studies, Said's work is thought to be the first extended use of the system of analysis developed by philosopher Michel Foucault. Anthropologist Talal Asad argued that *Orientalism* is "not only a catalogue of Western prejudices about and misrepresentations of Arabs and Muslims", but more so an investigation and analysis of the "authoritative structure of Orientalist discourse – the closed, self-evident, self-confirming character of that distinctive discourse which is reproduced again and again through scholarly texts, travelogues, literary works of imagination, and the obiter dicta of public men of affairs." The book describes how "the hallowed image of the Orientalist as an austere figure unconcerned with the world and immersed in the mystery of foreign scripts and languages has acquired a dark hue as the murky business of ruling other peoples now forms the essential and enabling background of his or her scholarship." His work continues to be widely discussed in academic seminars, disciplinary conferences, and scholarship.

Elsewhere, in and about Eastern Europe, Milica Bakić-Hayden developed the concept of Nesting Orientalisms (1992), based upon and derived from the ideas of the historian Larry Wolff (*Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, 1994) and upon the ideas that Said presented in *Orientalism* (1978). In turn, the Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova (*Imagining the Balkans*, 1997) presented her ethnologic concept of Nesting Balkanisms (*Ethnologia Balkanica*, 1997), which is theoretically related to and derived from Milica Bakić-Hayden's concept of Nesting Orientalisms. *Orientalism* has been used to draw attention to stereotypical portrayals of Russia.

Orientalism was not the first to produce of Western knowledge of the Orient and of Western scholarship: "Abd-al-Rahman al Jabarti, the Egyptian chronicler and a witness to Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, for example, had no doubt that the expedition was as much an epistemological as military conquest." Even in recent times (1963, 1969 & 1987) the writings and research of V. G. Kiernan, Bernard S. Cohn and Anwar Abdel Malek traced the relations between European rule and representations.

Criticism

Orientalism and other works by Said sparked a wide variety of controversy and criticism. Ernest Gellner argued that Said's contention that the West had dominated the East for more than 2,000 years was unsupportable, noting that until the late 17th century the Ottoman Empire had posed a serious threat to Europe. Mark Proudman notes that Said had claimed that the British Empire extended from Egypt to India in the 1880s, when in fact the Ottoman and Persian Empires intervened. Others argued that even at the height of the imperial era, European power in the East was never absolute, and remained heavily dependent on local collaborators, who were frequently subversive of imperial aims. Another criticism is that the areas of the Middle East on which Said had concentrated, including Palestine and Egypt, were poor examples for his theory, as they came under direct European control only for a relatively short period in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These critics suggested that Said devoted much less attention to more apt examples, including the British Raj in India, and Russia's dominions in Asia, because Said was more interested in making political points about the Middle East.

Strong criticism of Said's critique of *Orientalism* came from academic Orientalists, including some of Eastern backgrounds. Albert Hourani, Robert Graham Irwin, Nikki Keddie, Bernard Lewis, and Kanan Makiya addressed what Keddie retrospectively calls "some unfortunate consequences" of Said's *Orientalism* on the perception and status of their scholarship. Bernard Lewis in particular was often at odds with Said following the publication of *Orientalism*, in which Said singled out Lewis as a "perfect exemplification" of an "Establishment Orientalist" whose work "purports to be objective liberal scholarship but is in reality very close to being propaganda *against* his subject material". Lewis answered with several essays in response, and was joined by other scholars, such as Maxime Rodinson, Jacques Berque, Malcolm Kerr, Aijaz Ahmad, and William Montgomery Watt, who also regarded *Orientalism* as a deeply flawed account of Western scholarship.

Some of Said's academic critics argue that Said made no attempt to distinguish between writers of very different types: such as on the one hand the poet Goethe (who never traveled in the East), the novelist Flaubert (who briefly toured Egypt), Ernest Renan (whose work is widely regarded as tainted by racism), and on the other scholars such as Edward William Lane who was fluent in Arabic. According to these critics, their common European origins and attitudes overrode such considerations in Said's mind; Said constructed a stereotype of Europeans. The critic Robert Irwin writes that Said ignored the domination of 19th century Oriental studies by Germans and Hungarians, from countries that did not possess an Eastern empire.

Such critics accuse Said of creating a monolithic "Occidentalism" to oppose to the "Orientalism" of Western discourse, arguing that he failed to distinguish between the paradigms of Romanticism and the Enlightenment; that he ignored the widespread and fundamental differences of opinion among western scholars of the Orient; that he failed to acknowledge that many Orientalists (such as William Jones) were more concerned with establishing kinship between East and West than with creating "difference", and who had often made discoveries that would provide the foundations for anti-colonial nationalism. More generally, critics argue that Said and his followers fail to distinguish between Orientalism in the media and popular culture (for instance the portrayal of the Orient in such films as Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom) and academic studies of Oriental languages, literature, history and culture by Western scholars (whom, it is argued, they tar with the same brush).

Said's critics argue that by making ethnicity and cultural background the test of authority and objectivity in studying the Orient, Said drew attention to the question of his own identity as a Palestinian and as a "Subaltern".

Given Said's largely Anglophone upbringing and education at an elite school in Cairo, the fact that he spent most of his adult life in the United States, and his prominent position in American academia, his own arguments that "any and all representations ... are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions and political ambience of the representer ... [and are] interwoven with a great many other things besides the 'truth', which is itself a representation" could be said to disenfranchise him from writing about the Orient himself. Hence these critics claim that the excessive relativism of Said and his followers trap them in a "web of solipsism", unable to talk of anything but "representations", and denying the existence of *any* objective truth.

About Edward Said

Edward Said, who has died aged 67, was one of the leading literary critics of the last quarter of the 20th century. As professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, New York, he was widely regarded as the outstanding representative of the post-structuralist left in America. Above all, he was the most articulate and visible advocate of the Palestinian cause in the United States, where it earned him many enemies.

The broadness of Said's approach to literature and his other great love, classical music, eludes easy categorisation. His most influential book, *Orientalism* (1978), is credited with helping to change the direction of several disciplines by exposing an unholy alliance between the enlightenment and colonialism. As a humanist with a thoroughly secular outlook, his critique on the great tradition of the western enlightenment seemed to many to be self-contradictory, deploying a humanistic discourse to attack the high cultural traditions of humanism, giving comfort to fundamentalists who regarded any criticism of their tradition or texts as off-limits, while calling into question the integrity of critical research into culturally sensitive areas such as Islam.

Whatever its flaws, however, *Orientalism* appeared at an opportune time, enabling upwardly mobile academics from non-western countries (many of whom came from families who had benefited from colonialism) to take advantage of the mood of political correctness it helped to engender by associating themselves with "narratives of oppression", creating successful careers out of transmitting, interpreting and debating representations of the non-western "other".

Said's influence, however, was far from being confined to the worlds of academic and scholarly discourse. An intellectual superstar in America, he distinguished himself as an opera critic, pianist, television celebrity, politician, media expert, popular essayist and public lecturer.

Latterly, he was one of the most trenchant critics of the Oslo peace process and the Palestinian leadership of Yasser Arafat. He was dubbed "professor of terror" by the rightwing American magazine *Commentary*; in 1999, when he was struggling against leukaemia, the same magazine accused him of falsifying his status as a Palestinian refugee to enhance his advocacy of the Palestinian cause, and of falsely claiming to have been at school in Jerusalem before completing his education in the United States.

The hostility Said encountered from pro-Israeli circles in New York was predictable, given his trenchant attacks on Israeli violations of the human rights of Palestinians and his outspoken condemnations of US policies in the Middle East. From the other side of the conflict, however, he encountered opposition from Palestinians who accused him of sacrificing Palestinian rights by making unwarranted concessions to Zionism.

As early as 1977, when few Palestinians were prepared to concede that Jews had historic claims to Palestine, he said: "I don't deny their claims, but their claim always entails Palestinian dispossession." More than any other Palestinian writer, he qualified his anti-colonial critique of Israel, explaining its complex entanglements and the problematic character of its origins in the persecution of European Jews, and the overwhelming impact of the Zionist idea on the European conscience.

Said recognised that Israel's exemption from the normal criteria by which nations are measured owed everything to the Holocaust. But while recognising its unique significance, he did not see why its legacy of trauma and horror should be exploited to deprive the Palestinians, a people who were "absolutely dissociable from what has been an entirely European complicity", of their rights.

"The question to be asked," he wrote in the *Politics Of Dispossession* (1994), "is how long can the history of anti-semitism and the Holocaust be used as a fence to exempt Israel from arguments and sanctions against it for its behaviour towards the Palestinians, arguments and sanctions that were used against other repressive governments, such as South Africa? How long are we going to deny that the cries of the people of Gaza... are directly connected to the policies of the Israeli government and not to the cries of the victims of Nazism?"

He insisted that the task of Israel's critics was not to reproduce for Palestine a mirror-image of a Zionist ideology of diaspora and return, but rather to elaborate a secular vision of democracy as applicable to both Arabs and Jews. Elected to the Palestine national council (PNC) in 1977, as an independent intellectual Said avoided taking part in the factional struggles, while using his authority to make strategic interventions. Rejecting the policy of armed struggle as impermissible - because of the legacy of the Holocaust and the special conditions of the Jewish people - he was an early advocate of the two-state solution, implicitly recognising Israel's right to exist. The policy was adopted at the PNC meeting in Algiers in 1988.

In adapting the English version of the Arabic draft text, Said used his influence to rephrase the Arabic; although his modifications were insufficient to satisfy the Reagan administration, which ended by dictating the crucial words that appeared in Arafat's speech to a special session of the UN general assembly (convened in Geneva because the US state department refused to grant Arafat a visa to attend the UN in New York), there can be little doubt that Said's tireless representations in the American media, explaining that the declaration amounted to a "historic compromise" on the part of the Palestinians towards the Jewish state, opened the way for the US-PLO dialogue that would lead to the Madrid conference and the Oslo peace process.

As the peace process gained momentum, however, Said adopted an increasingly critical stance and, in 1991, resigned from the PNC. The Oslo declaration, he argued, was weighted unfairly towards Israel; the scenario, previsioning an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho in advance of the other territories and agreement on the final status of Jerusalem, amounted to "an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles".

To the end, he remained a thorn in the side of the Palestinian authority. The best-known and most distinguished Palestinian exile became the subject of censorship by the representatives of his own people, one of the standard-bearers of the liberal conscience in the increasingly illiberal climate of intolerance and corruption surrounding President Arafat and his regime.

Said was born in Jerusalem into a prosperous Palestinian family. His father Wadie, a Christian, had emigrated to the US before the first world war. He volunteered for service in France and returned to the Middle East as a respectable Protestant businessman - with American citizenship - before making an arranged marriage to the daughter of a Baptist minister from Nazareth.

In *Out Of Place* (1999), the memoir of his childhood and youth, Said described his father, who called himself William to emphasise his adopted American identity, as overbearing and uncommunicative. His Victorian strictness instilled in Said "a deep sense of generalised fear", which he spent most of his life trying to overcome. To his father, Said owed the drivenness that brought him his remarkable achievements. "I have no concept of leisure or relaxation and, more particularly, no sense of cumulative achievement," he wrote. "Every day for me is like the beginning of a new term at school, with a vast and empty summer behind it, and an uncertain tomorrow before it."

Wadie Said revealed little about himself or the source of his money, but certainly Edward and his sisters never wanted for anything, travelling with battalions of servants, summering (after 1947) in the cultivated comfort of

Dhour el Shweir in Lebanon, enjoying sumptuous dinners on transatlantic liners. Said described his mother, whom he evidently adored, as brilliant and manipulative, neurotically difficult to please, giving always the impression that "she had judged you and found you wanting" - yet instilling in him a love of literature and music.

Said's first name, improbably inspired by the Prince of Wales, was the creation of his parents, whom he would come to see as "self-creations" out of an eclectic blend of elements and aspirations: American lore culled from magazines and his father's memories, missionary influence, incomplete and hence eccentric schooling, British colonial attitudes. Arabic was forbidden at home, except when speaking to servants; even the waiters at Groppis, the fashionable Cairo cafe, were addressed in bad French.

According to Said, his un-Arab Christian name induced a split in his adolescent sense of identity, between "Edward", his outer self, and the "loose, irresponsible, fantasy-ridden metamorphoses of my private inner life". Bright but rebellious, he described himself as having been a leading troublemaker at Cairo's Victoria College, the British-style public school whose snooty captain Michael Shalhoub would later achieve celebrity as Omar Sharif.

Sent at his father's insistence to Mount Hermon, a private school in Massachusetts, he blossomed academically, but lacked the right attitude to be acknowledged as an outstanding student. He responded positively to the American approach to essay-writing, which he found more imaginative and stimulating than the buttoned-up British approach in Cairo.

The contrast between his burgeoning academic distinction and the absence of formal recognition clearly marked him deeply. He would claim that it was this experience, as much as the work of his more widely acknowledged intellectual mentors, including RP Blackmur, Antonio Gramsci, Theodor Adorno, Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault, that influenced his anti-authoritarian outlook.

Said's engagement with Palestine drew on deep emotional roots, particularly his affection for his Jerusalem aunt Nabiha, his father's sister, who, after 1948, devoted her life to working with Palestinian refugees in Cairo, although she never discussed the political aspects of the dispute in Said's presence. Until his 30s, Edward was too preoccupied with his studies, progressing smoothly through Princeton and Harvard graduate school, developing his critical methodologies and indulging his passion for music, especially the piano, at which he achieved an almost professional level of competence, to take much interest in the politics of his homeland.

It was the trauma of the Arab defeat in 1967, which unleashed a second wave of refugees (many of them already refugees from the 1948 exodus), that shocked him out of what he would come to see as his earlier complacency, reconnecting him with his former self.

Said's writings on English literature, such as *Culture And Imperialism* (1993), and western classical music drew heavily on his sense of being an outsider. Like Joseph Conrad, the subject of his PhD thesis and first published book, he retained an "extraordinarily persistent residual sense of his own exilic marginality", which enabled him to deploy a kind of double-vision in his readings of the English novel, discerning the invisible colonial plantations that guarantee the domestic tranquillity of *Mansfield Park*, or finding in Conrad's self-consciously circular narrative forms the sense of the potentiality of the challenges to western hegemony that would erupt during the post-colonial era.

Where African writers such as Chinua Achebe dismissed Conrad as a racist, suggesting that, whatever his gifts as a writer, his political attitudes must make him despicable to any African, Said saw such reasoning as amounting to spiritual, intellectual and aesthetic amputation. Contrary to the assumption sometimes made about him, he did not consider that the hidden political agendas and attitudes of cultural supremacy that he regarded as informing the canons of western culture from Dante to Flaubert necessarily diminished their artistic integrity or cultural power.

His achievement may have been to enhance artistic comprehension by drawing attention to unstated political dimensions in the knowledge that art must always escape enlistment for partisan ends. In a brilliant essay on *Die Meistersinger* that grapples with Wagner's anti-semitism, he quoted, with approval, Pierre Boulez's remark that "Wagner's music, by its very existence, refuses to bear the ideological message that it is intended to convey."

A similar statement could be made about Said's work as a critic. The anti-colonial perspective that animates his work does not issue in ideological consistency. Rather, it challenges conventional assumptions about art, music and literature, opening up new avenues of inquiry and questioning the criteria by which knowledge is organised and husbanded. Like his hero, Theodor Adorno, Said was "the quintessential intellectual, hating all systems, whether on our side or theirs, with equal distaste".

Versatile and subtle, he was better at elucidating distinctions than formulating systems. A Christian humanist with a healthy respect for Islam, he was a member of the academic elite; yet he inveighed against academic professionalism, venturing into territories well outside his area of speciality, insisting always that the true intellectual's role must be that of the amateur, because it is only the amateur who is moved neither by the rewards nor the requirements of a career, and who is therefore capable of a disinterested engagement with ideas and values.

The unusual complexity of his background - privileged yet marginal, wealthy yet powerless - allowed him to empathise with dispossessed people, especially the victims of Zionism and its western supporters, while enjoying in the fullest measure the cultural riches of New York, a city that rang louder than any other with Jewish achievement and success.

In his final years, Said's health grew ever more fragile, and, though passionately concerned with the unfolding Palestinian disaster in the wake of 9/11 and the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, he took a conscious decision to withdraw from political controversy and channel his energies into music. The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra he founded with the Israeli citizen Daniel Barenboim in 1999 grew out of the friendship he forged with the musician who shares his belief that art - and, in particular, the music of Wagner - transcends political ideology. With Said's assistance, Barenboim gave master classes for Palestinian students in the occupied West Bank, infuriating the Israeli right.

The orchestra received a tumultuous reception at the BBC Proms last month. It may prove a fitting legacy for an intellectual whose work illuminated our crisis-ridden world by embracing its contradictions and celebrating its complexities.

In 1970, he married Mariam Cortas, by whom he had a son and a daughter.

Enough Said: The False Scholarship of Edward Said by Joshua Muravchik

Columbia University's English Department may seem a surprising place from which to move the world, but this is what Professor Edward Said accomplished. He not only transformed the West's perception of the Israel-Arab conflict, he also led the way toward a new, post-socialist life for leftism in which the proletariat was replaced by "people of color" as the redeemers of humankind. During the ten years that have passed since his death there have been no signs that his extraordinary influence is diminishing.

According to a 2005 search on the utility "Syllabus finder," Said's books were assigned as reading in eight hundred and sixty-eight courses in American colleges and universities (counting only courses whose syllabi were available online). These ranged across literary criticism, politics, anthropology, Middle East studies, and other disciplines including postcolonial studies, a field widely credited with having grown out of Said's work. More than forty books have been published about him, including even a few critical ones, but mostly adulatory,

such as *The Cambridge Introduction to Edward Said*, published seven years after his death of leukemia in 2003. Georgetown University, UCLA, and other schools offer courses about him. A 2001 review for the *Guardian* called him “arguably the most influential intellectual of our time.”

The book that made Edward Said famous was *Orientalism*, published in 1978 when he was forty-three. Said’s objective was to expose the worm at the core of Western civilization, namely, its inability to define itself except over and against an imagined “other.” That “other” was the Oriental, a figure “to be feared . . . or to be controlled.” Ergo, Said claimed that “every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was . . . a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric.” Elsewhere in the text he made clear that what was true for Europeans held equally for Americans.

The R2P Doctrine

This echoed a theme of 1960s radicalism that was forged in the movements against Jim Crow and against America’s war in Vietnam, namely that the Caucasian race was the scourge of humanity. Rather than shout this accusation from a soapbox, as others had done, Said delivered it in tones that awed readers with erudition. The names of abstruse contemporary theoreticians and obscure bygone academicians rolled off pages strewn with words that sent readers scurrying to their dictionaries. Never mind that some of these words could not be found in dictionaries (“paradeutic”) or that some were misused (“eschatological” where “scatological” was the intended meaning); never mind that some of the citations were pretentious (“the names of Levi-Strauss, Gramsci, and Michel Foucault drop with a dull thud,” commented historian J. H. Plumb, reviewing the book for the *New York Times*)—never mind any of this, the important point that evoked frissons of pleasure and excitement was that here was a “person of color” delivering a withering condemnation of the white man and, so to speak, beating him at his own game of intellectual elegance.

In truth, Said was an unlikely symbol of the wretched of the earth. His father, who called himself William, had emigrated from Jerusalem (a place he hated, according to Edward) to America in 1911, served in World War I, and become a US citizen. Reluctantly yielding to family pressures, he returned to the Middle East in the 1920s and settled in Cairo, where he made his fortune in business and married an Egyptian woman. Edward, their eldest after a first-born had perished in infancy, was told he was named after the Prince of Wales. He and his four sisters were reared in the Protestant church and in relative opulence, with a box at the opera, membership in country clubs, and piano lessons. They were educated at British and American primary and secondary schools in Cairo until Edward was sent to an elite New England prep school at fifteen, then to Princeton. After graduate studies at Harvard, he began to teach literary criticism, rising to the award of an endowed chair at Columbia by the time he was forty and later to the rank of university professor, Columbia’s highest faculty title.

A year after *Orientalism* sent his personal stock soaring, Said published *The Question of Palestine*. Fifteen years earlier, the Palestine Liberation Organization had been founded in the effort to consecrate a distinctive Palestinian identity, and the announcement of that identity to the world had mostly taken the form of spectacular acts of terror whose purpose was in large measure to draw attention to Palestinian grievances. Now, Columbia University’s Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature gave the Palestinian cause a dramatically different face.

He brought authenticity to this task because of his origins and authority because of his membership in the Palestinian National Council, the nominal governing body of the PLO. Assuring his readers that the PLO had, since its bombings and hijackings in the early 1970s, “avoided and condemned terror,” presenting PLO leader Yasir Arafat as “a much misunderstood and maligned political personality,” and asserting his own belief in a Palestinian state alongside—rather than in place of—Israel, Said argued in behalf of “a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.” This was so compelling as to sweep up *New York Times* reviewer Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, who wrote: “So logically and eloquently does Professor Said make [his] case, that one momentarily forgets the many countervailing arguments posed by the Israelis.”

These two books—*Orientalism* and *The Question of Palestine*—each of which was followed by various sequels and elaborations, established the twin pillars of Said's career as the avenging voice of the Palestinians against Israel, and more broadly of the Arabs, Muslims, and other "Orientals" against the West as a whole.

Said rolled American racism and European colonialism into one *mélange* of white oppression of darker-skinned peoples. He was not the only thinker to have forged this amalgam, but his unique further contribution was to represent "Orientals" as the epitome of the dark-skinned; Muslims as the modal Orientals; Arabs as the essential Muslims; and, finally, Palestinians as the ultimate Arabs. Abracadabra—Israel was transformed from a redemptive refuge from two thousand years of persecution to the very embodiment of white supremacy.

There was one final step in this progression: Edward Said as the emblematic Palestinian. From the time he came into the public eye, Said presented himself as an "exile" who had been born and raised in Jerusalem until forced from there at age twelve by the Jews. A sympathetic writer in the *Guardian* put it: "His evocation of his own experience of exile has led many of his readers in the west to see him as the embodiment of the Palestinian tragedy." Indeed, he wrote and narrated a 1998 BBC documentary, *In Search of Palestine*, which presented his personal story as a microcosm of this ongoing *Nakba* (or catastrophe, as Palestinians call the birth of Israel).

But in September 1999, *Commentary* published an investigative article by Justus Reid Weiner presenting evidence that Said had largely falsified his background. A trove of documents showed that until he moved to the United States to attend prep school in 1951, Said had resided his entire life in Cairo, not Palestine. A few months later, Said published his autobiography, which confirmed this charge without acknowledging or making any attempt to explain the earlier contrary claims that he had made in discussing his background.

In reaction to the exposé, Said and several of his supporters unleashed a ferocious assault on Weiner. Said sneered that "because he is relatively unknown, Weiner tries to make a name for himself by attacking a better known person's reputation." And eleven ideological soul mates of Said's, styling themselves "The Arab-Jewish Peace Group," co-signed a letter to the editor that likened Weiner's article to "deny[ing] the Holocaust."

Much of the debate between Weiner and Said revolved around the house in which Said was born and that viewers of his BBC documentary were given to understand was the home where he had grown up. Weiner showed from tax and land registry documents that the house never belonged to Said's father but rather to his aunt. In his rebuttal, Said had written somewhat implausibly: "The family house was indeed a family house in the Arab sense," meaning that in the eyes of the extended family it belonged to them all even if the official records showed it to be the property only of Edward's aunt and her offspring.

Said's cynical *modus operandi* was to stop short, where possible, of telling an outright lie while deliberately leaving a false impression. Even so, he did not always avoid crossing the line or dancing so close to it that whether his words should be labeled a lie or merely a deception amounted to a difference without a distinction. "I have never claimed to have been made a refugee, but rather that my extended family . . . in fact was," he wrote in response to Weiner. But what was a reader supposed to have inferred from his book, *The Pen and the Sword*, where he had spoken of his "recollections of . . . the first twelve or thirteen years of my life before I left Palestine?" Or from the article, in the *London Review of Books*, where he had written: "I was born in Jerusalem and spent most of my formative years there and, after 1948, when my entire family became refugees, in Egypt?"

It may be that Said, as he claimed, "scrupulously" recounted his life in his autobiography where at last the true facts of his education and residence emerge. But, as his critics continued to ask, does finally telling his story truthfully wipe away twenty years of lying about it? In the end, Said downplayed the matter. In a late interview with the *New York Times* he said: "I don't think it's that important, in any case. . . . I never have represented my case as the issue to be treated. I've represented the case of my people."

What *was* important, however, was the light shed on Said's disingenuous and misleading methods, because they also turn out to be the foundation of his scholarly work. The intellectual deceit was especially obvious in his

most important book, *Orientalism*. Its central idea is that Western imperial conquest of Asia and North Africa was entwined with the study and depiction of the native societies, which inevitably entailed misrepresenting and denigrating them. Said explained: "Knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control."

The archetype of those who provided this knowledge was the "Orientalist," a formal designation for those scholars, most of them Europeans, whose specialties were the languages, culture, history, and sociology of societies of the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. However, Said explained that he used the term even more broadly to indicate a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."

Orientalism, he said, embodied "dogmas" that "exist . . . in their purest form today in studies of the Arabs and Islam." He identified the four "principal" ones as these:

one is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. Another dogma is that abstractions about the Orient . . . are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. A third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself . . . A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared . . . or to be controlled.

Initial reviews of the book, often by specialists, were mixed, but it appeared at a time when "multiculturalism" was becoming the new dogma of the intellectual elites and took on a life of its own, eventually being translated into more than three dozen languages and becoming one of the most influential and widely assigned texts of the latter part of the twentieth century.

Critics pointed out a variety of errors in *Orientalism*, starting with bloopers that suggested Said's grasp of Middle Eastern history was shaky. Said claimed that "Britain and France dominated the Eastern Mediterranean from about the end of the seventeenth century on," whereas for another hundred years it was the Ottomans who ruled that area. He had written that the Muslim conquest of Turkey preceded that of North Africa, but in reality it followed by about four hundred years. And he had referred to British "colonial administrators" of Pakistan whereas Pakistan was formed in the wake of decolonization.

More serious still was his lack of scruple in the use of sources. Anthropologist Daniel Martin Varisco, who actually agreed with Said on many ideological issues, observed in his book *Reading Orientalism* that "one of Said's rhetorical means for a polemical end is to partially . . . quote a phrase while judiciously neglecting words that would qualify and at times refute what the phrase alone might imply." He offered as an example of this duplicitous method Said's use of two quotes from the writings of Sania Hamady, an Arab-American who wrote critically of Arabs. The quotes put her in a bad light, but both times, says Varisco, they were taken from passages where Hamady is merely summarizing someone else's view, not giving her own. In the same vein, John Rodenbeck, a professor of comparative literature at the American University of Cairo, found that Said's "persistent misconstruction and misquotation of [the nineteenth century Orientalist Edward] Lane's words are so clearly willful that they suggest . . . bad faith."

Said's misleading use of quotes shows the problem with his work in microcosm. On a broad view, Said fundamentally misrepresented his subject. In challenging Said's first alleged "dogma" of Orientalism, which ascribes all virtue to the West and its opposite to the Orient, Varisco says that Said is describing "a stereotype that at the time of his writing would have been similarly rejected by the vast majority of those [Said] lumps together as Orientalists." And the British writer Robert Irwin, whose book *Dangerous Knowledge* offers a thorough history of Orientalism and also a rebuttal of Said, notes that, historically, "there has been a marked tendency for Orientalists to be anti-imperialists, as their enthusiasm for Arab or Persian or Turkish culture often went hand in hand with a dislike of seeing those people defeated and dominated by the Italians, Russians,

British, or French.” (Like Varisco, Irwin makes clear that he is no opponent of Said’s political position, but is offended by his travesty of scholarship.)

This is but a small instance of a large methodological problem that invalidates Said’s work entirely, namely, his selectivity with evidence. Said made clear that his indictment was aimed not at this or that individual but at “Orientalists” per se, which, as we have seen, was a category in which he included all Westerners who said anything about the Orient. Thus, he wrote, “all academic knowledge about India and Egypt is somehow tinged and impressed with, violated by, the gross political fact of empire.” And: “No one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism.”

Why did Said choose to paint with such a broad brush? Because he knew that if he had asserted merely that *some* Westerners wrote pejoratively or condescendingly or misleadingly about the East while others did not, his argument would have lost much of its provocation. It would have demanded clarification about the relative numbers or influence of the two groups, about variations within the groups, about reciprocal attitudes among Easterners toward the West. Above all, it would have drawn the inevitable retort: so what? Was it news that some individuals favored their own societies over others?

The only way Said could make his generalized indictment seem plausible was to select whatever examples fit it and leave out the rest. When challenged on his omissions, Said replied with hauteur that he was under no obligation to include “every Orientalist who ever lived.” But of course the real issue was whether the ones he included made a representative sample (and whether he presented them faithfully).

These methodological failings were mostly lost in the dazzle. What made the book electrifying was that Said had found a new way to condemn the West for its most grievous sins: racism and the subjugation of others. With great originality, Said even extended the indictment through the millennia, a depiction that drew a protest from Sadiq al-Azm, a Syrian philosopher of Marxist bent (and one of that country’s most admired dissidents). Wrote Azm:

Said . . . trac[es] the origins of Orientalism all the way back to Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, and Dante. In other words, Orientalism is not really a thoroughly modern phenomenon, but is the natural product of an ancient and almost irresistible European bent of mind to misrepresent other . . . cultures . . . in favor of Occidental self-affirmation, domination, and ascendancy.

Azm may have thought this wrong, but it was heady stuff. If we are talking about a mentality that is continuous before and after Christ then we are talking less about European culture, which is in large measure defined by Christianity, than about the European race. Thus did *Orientalism* fit the temper of a time when it was widely asserted that *all* white people were inherently bigoted, and “encounter groups” met at campuses and workplaces so that whites could discover and confront their inner racist. And nowhere was the evidence of this white evil laid out in greater depth and seeming sophistication than in Said’s pages.

In this atmosphere, wrote the *New York Times* in its obituary for Said, “*Orientalism* established Dr. Said as a figure of enormous influence in American and European universities, a hero to many, especially younger faculty and graduate students on the left for whom that book became an intellectual credo and the founding document of what came to be called postcolonial studies.”

It was not only American leftists who seized on the book. The *Guardian*, in its own obituary, observed that:

Orientalism appeared at an opportune time, enabling upwardly mobile academics from non-western countries (many of whom came from families who had benefited from colonialism) to take advantage of the mood of political correctness it helped to engender by associating themselves with “narratives of oppression,” creating successful careers out of transmitting, interpreting and debating representations of the non-western “other.”

Orientalism, added the *Guardian*, “is credited with helping to change the direction of several disciplines,” a thought echoed by supporters and detractors alike. Admiringly, Stuart Schaar, a professor emeritus of Middle East history at Brooklyn College, wrote that “the academic community has been transformed and the field of literary criticism has been revolutionized as a result of his legacy.”

Without ever relinquishing his claim to personify a “glamour-garlanded ideal of ‘outsiderdom,’” as one disillusioned reviewer of a series of lectures Said delivered in London put it, Said and his disciples took power in academia, as reflected in the astonishing number of courses that assigned his books and the frequency with which they were cited. Varisco observed that “a generation of students across disciplines has grown up with limited challenges to the polemical charge by Said that scholars who study the Middle East and Islam still do so institutionally through an interpretive sieve that divides a superior West from an inferior East.” The new Saidian orthodoxy became so utterly dominant in the Middle East Studies Association, and so unfriendly to dissenting voices, that in 2007 Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami took the lead in forming an alternative professional organization, the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa.

Said was fond of invoking the mantra of “speaking truth to power.” This was an easy boast for someone who opted to live in America, or for that matter to live anywhere, and make a career of denouncing the West and Israel. But while a daring Promethean in the West, Said was more careful closer to native ground. Habib Malik, a historian at the Lebanese American University and a cousin of Said’s, recalls hearing him deliver a talk at the American University of Beirut: “On one occasion he blasted Saddam Hussein and a number of other Arab dictators but stopped short of mentioning [then Syrian dictator] Hafez Assad for obvious reasons: the Syrian *mukhabarat* [secret police] in Beirut would have picked him up right after the lecture!”

Said’s career, the deviousness and posturing and ineffable vanity of it, would have been mostly an academic matter if he had not been so successful in redefining Arabs and Muslims as the moral equivalent of blacks and in casting Israel as the racist white oppressor. Four years after the UN General Assembly had declared Zionism to be a form of racism, Said gave this same idea a highbrow reiteration. Israel did not give Arabs the same right of immigration as Jews, he said mockingly, because they are “‘less developed.’”

Decades after *Orientalism* was published, Said explained that Israel had been its covert target all along:

I don’t think I would have written that book had I not been politically associated with a struggle. The struggle of Arab and Palestinian nationalism is very important to that book. *Orientalism* is not meant to be an abstract account of some historical formation but rather a part of the liberation from such stereotypes and such domination of my own people, whether they are Arabs, Muslims, or Palestinians.

Said had not acknowledged such an agenda in the pages of *Orientalism* or at the time of its publication, although this ideological subtext could be discerned in his ferocity toward Bernard Lewis, who, observed Irwin, “was not really attacked by Said for being a bad scholar (which he is not), but for being a supporter of Zionism (which he is).” It was also implicit in the identity of those Said exempted from his generalization about Westerners. In the concluding pages of *Orientalism*, he allowed that a very few “decolonializing” voices could be heard in the West, and in a footnote he offered just two American examples, Noam Chomsky and MERIP, the Middle East Research and Information Project. Chomsky of course is not a Middle East expert or someone who writes often on the Middle East, but he had already carved out a place for himself as the leading Jewish voice of vituperation against Israel. MERIP, a New Left group formed to cheer Palestinian guerrillas and other Arab revolutionaries, was so single-minded in its devotion to this cause that it praised the massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics for causing “a boost in morale among Palestinians” and “halt[ing]” moves “for a ‘settlement’ between Israel and the Arab regimes.”

Although Said’s assault on the Jewish state was thus initially camouflaged, it was devastatingly effective, as his stance on Arab/Israel questions came to dominate Middle East studies. The UCLA historian of the Middle East

Nikki Keddie, whose sympathetic work on revolutionary Iran had won Said's praise in his book *Covering Islam*, commented:

There has been a tendency in the Middle East field to adopt the word "Orientalism" as a generalized swear-word essentially referring to people who take the "wrong" position on the Arab-Israeli dispute or to people who are judged too "conservative." It has nothing to do with whether they are good or not good in their disciplines.

His reputation made by the success of *Orientalism*, Said devoted much of the rest of his career to more direct advocacy of the Arab/Muslim/Palestinian cause, starting with the publication of *The Question of Palestine* in 1979, by which time he was already a member of the PLO's top official body, the Palestinian National Council. The book was a full-throated polemic. The Jews were the aggressors; and the Palestinians their victims—on all counts and with little nuance. Even on the matter of terrorism, Said asserted, "There is nothing in Palestinian history, absolutely nothing at all to rival the record of Zionist terror."

Said proclaimed himself "horrified" by the terrorist acts that "Palestinian men and women . . . were driven to do." But all blame ultimately rested with Israel, which had "literally produced, manufactured . . . the 'terrorist.'"

He wrote, with what even a *New York Times* reviewer called "stunning disingenuousness," that "at least since the early seventies, the PLO had avoided and condemned terror." These words appeared just one year after the organization's bloodiest attack on Israeli civilians, the March 1978 "coastal road massacre," in which thirty-eight civilians, thirteen of them children, were randomly gunned down, with scores of others injured—and not by any "renegade" faction but by the PLO's mainstream group, Fatah. (Said himself was already a member of the PLO's governing body when this "action" was carried out.)

Said worked hard to solidify the myth that for years Arafat had tried to make peace and been rebuffed: "On occasion after occasion the PLO stated its willingness to accept a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza," citing resolutions of the Palestinian National Council in 1974 and 1977. This was true, but these resolutions did not convey, as Said went on disingenuously to claim, "an implicit recognition of Israel." Rather, they envisioned a strategy in which Palestinians would form a government in the West Bank and Gaza, in the event that international diplomacy afforded them this opportunity, not as a step toward peace but with the declared intent of using this territory as a base to fight on to "liberate" the rest of Palestine, i.e., Israel proper. As the PNC's 1974 resolution stated: "The PLO will struggle against any plan for the establishment of a Palestinian entity the price of which is recognition [of Israel], conciliation, secure borders, and renunciation of the national rights of our people, its right to return, and self-determination on its national soil."

In 1988, a decade after Said's book appeared, the PLO did renounce terror and imply its willingness to acquiesce in Israel's existence, albeit equivocally. These two pivotal concessions were clearly avowed only in the 1993 Oslo Accords. When Arafat finally took this indispensable step toward peace, one might have expected Said, who had been claiming that this had happened *avant la lettre*, to praise him. Instead, Said denounced his hero. Arafat, he complained, had "sold his people into enslavement," and he called Oslo—in which Israel and the PLO recognized each other and pledged to hammer out a two-state settlement—an "instrument of Palestinian surrender." Back in Arafat's terrorist days, Said had seen him as "a man of genius" and said that "his people . . . loved him." (Indeed, "Arafat and the Palestinian will . . . were in a sense interchangeable," he once gushed.) But signing this agreement with Israel had, at a stroke, transformed Arafat, in Said's eyes, into "a strutting dictator." Arafat and his circle had become a bunch of "losers and has-beens" who "should step aside."

Said himself adopted a new position on the Israel-Palestinian conflict. No longer did he envision a two-state solution, as he had professed to do back when the idea was theoretical, since the main Palestinian organization (on whose board he sat) was not prepared to suffer the existence of Israel in any shape or form. Now, however, he sought instead "to devise a means where the two peoples can live together in one nation as equals."

This was not a proposal to be taken seriously. In Israel, large numbers of Arabs did live freely but not in complete equality, a fact over which Said often protested. In the Arab states, many Jews had once lived but nearly all had been expelled. In other words, Said's new formula was nothing more than a fancy way of opposing the only genuine possibility of peace.

This bitter ender's position was, of course, phrased in terms chosen to sound idealistic. In that sense it was characteristic of Said's oeuvre and of the movement of which he was such a critical part. Leftism is the stance of those who aspire to make the world a better place, according to their own view, through political action. For roughly a century its modal idea was Marxism, which identified the proletariat as the engine of redemption, a choice that resonated with the age-old Christian belief that the meek shall inherit the earth. As the twentieth century wore on, however, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela displaced Joe Hill, Mother Bloor, and Henry Wallace as objects of veneration. People of color and strugglers against colonial oppression stirred the hearts of idealists more than leaders of strikes and fighters for a fair day's pay. Once, Zionism had tapped into that older leftism, seeing itself as a workers' movement. But instead in the latter twentieth century—and in considerable part thanks to the impact of Edward Said—it became redefined as a movement of white people competing for land with people of color. This transformation meant that from then on the left would be aligned overwhelmingly and ardently against Israel.

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