

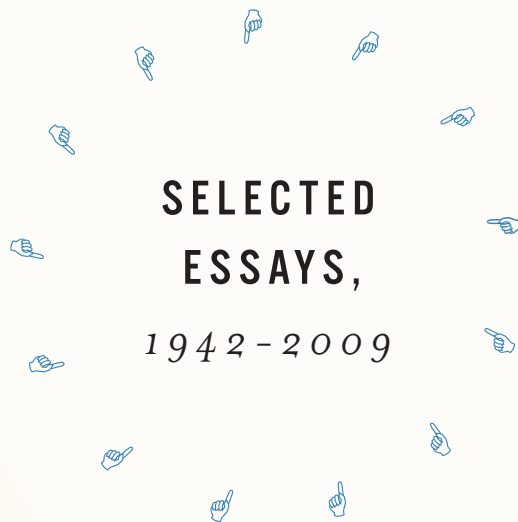
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**NEOCONSERVATIVE**

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**PERSUASION**



**SELECTED  
ESSAYS,  
1942-2009**

**IRVING KRISTOL**

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## THE NEOCONSERVATIVE PERSUASION



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The  
Neoconservative  
Persuasion

*Selected Essays,  
1942–2009*

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IRVING KRISTOL

*Edited by*  
Gertrude Himmelfarb

*Foreword by*  
William Kristol

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FOREWORD: IN MEMORIAM:  
IRVING KRISTOL,  
1920–2009

In 1994 my father wrote a piece for the *Wall Street Journal* titled “Life Without Father.” It dealt with the subject of the family and poverty and welfare—with my father drawing for his argument, as he so often did, on a combination of social science, common sense, history, and personal experience. In the course of the article, my father briefly discussed his father, Joseph Kristol, who, he wrote, “was thought by all our relatives and his fellow workers to be wise, and fair, and good. I thought so too.”

So have Liz and I always thought about our father. To us, he was wise, and fair, and good. I honestly don’t think it ever occurred to us that we could have had a better father. So as we enter the rest of our life—a life without our father—we are overwhelmed not by a sense of loss or grief, though of course we feel both, but by a sense of gratitude: Having Irving Kristol as our dad was our great good fortune.

Now, my father would often speak of his own great good fortune. That was meeting my mother. Shortly after graduating from City College, my father—a diligent if already somewhat heterodox Trotskyist—was assigned to attend the meetings of a Brooklyn branch of the young Trotskyists. As my father later wrote, the meetings were farcical and pointless, as they were intended to recruit the proletarian youths of Bensonhurst to a cause they were much too sensible to take seriously. But the meetings turned out not to be entirely pointless, because my father met my mother there. They were married, and they remained happily married—truly happily married, thoroughly happily married—for the next sixty-seven years.

Dan Bell, who knew my parents for that whole span, called my parents’ marriage “the best marriage of [his] generation.” I only knew my parents for

fifty-six years, so I can't speak with Dan's authority—and my first couple of years with my parents are something of a blur. But I know enough confidently to endorse his judgment.

During the 1960s and 1970s, when Liz and I were growing up, everything is supposed to have become complicated and conflicted and ambiguous. Not so with respect to my parents' love for each other. Or with respect to the love and admiration that Liz and I—and later, Caleb and Susan—had for my father. Our love for him was always straightforward, unambivalent, and unconditional.

As was the love of his five grandchildren for him. And as was his love for them. Almost seven years ago, my father was scheduled for lung surgery. As we were talking the night before, my father matter-of-factly acknowledged the possibility he might not survive. And, he said, he could have no complaints if that were to happen. "I've had such a lucky life," he remarked. (Actually, I'm editing a bit since we're in a house of worship. He said, "I've had such a goddamn lucky life.")

But, he said, it would be just great to get another five years—in order to see the grandchildren grow up. That wish of his was granted. He got almost seven years. So he was able to see Rebecca and Anne and Joe graduate from college. He was able to attend Rebecca and Elliot's wedding. He—a staff sergeant in the army in World War II—developed a renewed interest in things military as Joe trained to be, and then was commissioned as, a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

And he was able to see Liz's children grow up too, to watch Max and Katy become poised and impressive teenagers—it turns out that's not a contradiction in terms. My father was able to get to know them, and to talk with them, in a way you can't with much younger kids. So that too was a great source of happiness.

Everyone knows of my father's good nature and good humor. He kept that to the end. In the last couple of years, his hearing loss—and the limitations of even the most modern hearing aid technology—sometimes made it difficult for him to understand everything that was being said in a noisy restaurant or a busy place. But he compensated. A few months ago, my parents were out for brunch with the Stelzers and the Krauthammers. After a stretch where he couldn't quite pick up some exchanges between Irwin and Charles, my dad said to the two of them: "I can't hear what you're saying. So I make it up. And," he added, smiling, "sometimes you disappoint me."

But my father was in general not the disappointed sort. It's true that he loved dogs and never had one. But he made up for that by doting on his two

granddogs—Liz and Caleb’s Sandy, and of course Patches, whom he saw more of because of our proximity. Patches really loved my father—and as many of you know, Patches is choosy in his affections.

Just a day or so before he slipped from consciousness last week, my father was greeted by one of those well-trained dogs that visit hospitals, in this case a big golden retriever. He patted it and communed with it for a while. Then, as the owner led the dog away, my father commented to us, as if for the ages—“dogs are noble creatures.”

My father liked humans too—though I’m not sure he thought they quite rose to the level of dogs as noble creatures. Still, as I look around today, I do wish my father could be here, because he would have so enjoyed seeing and talking with all of you.

In one of the many, many e-mails and notes I’ve gotten in the last few days, a friend commented, “When I’d stop by the *Public Interest* office in the 1980s, your dad would always start a conversation with, ‘How’s the family?’ I suppose that was his standard opener. But I noticed in the last few years, when I’d see him at AEI or somewhere else in D.C., he’d ask about ‘the family’ and then ‘how’s everyone?’ If I mentioned some former *PI* editor or writer, he’d beam—as if it were news of his own extended family.”

My father’s extended family ended up being pretty large. In politics and law and business and journalism, in New York and Washington and elsewhere, even in the strange outposts of modern academe, there are scores, legions—hordes they must seem to those who disapprove of them—who have been influenced, and not just casually, by my father.

How did he do it? I do think that in my father was found an unusual combination of traits—confidence without arrogance; worldly wisdom along with intellectual curiosity; a wry wit and a kindly disposition; and a clear-eyed realism about the world along with a great generosity of spirit. He very much enjoyed his last two decades in Washington, but he had none of the self-importance that afflicts us here. He loved intellectual pursuits, but always shunned intellectual pretension. For example, I don’t think I ever heard him use the phrase “the life of the mind,” though my father lived a life of the mind.

Beneath the confident wit and the intellectual bravado, my father had a deep modesty. My father spoke with gratitude of his good fortune in life. He wouldn’t have claimed to deserve the honors that came his way—though he did deserve them.

Perhaps in part because he was a man who was marked by such a deep sense of gratitude, he was the recipient of much deeply felt gratitude. Even I’ve been

surprised, judging by the e-mails and phone calls since his death, by the sheer number of those befriended by my father, by the range of those affected by him, by the diversity of those who admired him. I expected the appropriate remarks from distinguished political leaders and professors, and we were moved by eloquent testimonials from people who've known my father well, in some cases for many decades. But what struck all of us in the family were the e-mails from individuals who met my father only once or twice, but who remembered his kindness or benefited from his counsel—or from people who had never met him, but who were still very much influenced by his writing or other enterprises he was involved in.

For example, this, from a young Capitol Hill aide: “Your father was one of the first people I met, totally by accident, when I went to work at AEI a few years ago. And I will always remember how incredibly gracious and kind he was toward me, an utterly clueless research assistant.” Or this, an e-mail forwarded by one of our kids: “Sorry to hear about your grandfather. He was ahead of his time and provided the intellectual underpinnings for the only conservative kid in his Jewish youth group in Tulsa, Oklahoma.” Of all the communications my mother and my sister and I have received, I suspect my father might have gotten a particular kick out of that one.

Leon Kass said to me last week, after a final visit to my father, “It’s hard to imagine a world without Irving Kristol.” So it is. But as Leon would be the first to say, we’re not left simply with a world without Irving Kristol. It’s true that his death leaves the world a poorer place. But it’s a world made richer by the life he lived and the legacy he leaves.

*William Kristol*

Funeral service

Congregation Adas Israel

Washington, D.C.

September 22, 2009

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## INTRODUCTION

The memoir by my husband introducing his last volume of essays in 1995, *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea*, opens with a typical Irving Kristol quip.

Is there such a thing as a “neo” gene? I ask that question because, looking back over a lifetime of my opinions, I am struck by the fact that they all qualify as “neo.” I have been a neo-Marxist, a neo-Trotskyist, a neo-socialist, a neoliberal, and finally a neoconservative. It seems that no ideology or philosophy has ever been able to encompass all of reality to my satisfaction. There was always a degree of detachment qualifying my commitment.

That memoir does not mention the earliest manifestation in print of that “neo” gene. Rummaging among old files shortly after his death in September 2009, I came upon a couple of small tattered magazines entitled *Enquiry: A Journal of Independent Radical Thought*. Started by my husband and some of our fellow-exiles from Trotskyism, this was the first of several magazines he helped found; it lasted little more than two years, for a total of eight issues, by which time he and most of the other contributors were in the army. (Later, when an enthusiastic young person came to him with an idea, he was likely to say, “Start a magazine.”) My penciled note on the cover of my copy of the first issue, dated November 1942, identified the author of one of the articles, William Ferry, as Irving Kristol. (William Ferry was his “party name” in his brief Trotskyist period in college). The other issue, dated April 1944, required no such identification; here the author was Irving Kristol.

Rereading those articles now is illuminating, both for what they tell us about his thinking in those early years and for what they portend about

neoconservatism itself. “The Quality of Doubt” in the first issue is a review of W. H. Auden’s book of poetry *The Double Man*. It opens with the now-famous quotation from the poem, written on the eve of the war, about the thirties, that “low dishonest decade,” and goes on to describe the “growing doubts” and “undercurrent of questioning uncertainty” in Auden’s later poetry. Those doubts and uncertainty had an obvious political source, Auden’s disillusionment with Stalinism. But it is the poet’s pervasive moral tone, his sense of the “moral vacancy” of that troubled age, that impresses the reviewer—a “moral subtlety, receptivity, and sensitivity [that] is close to brilliant.”

“The Moral Critic” in a later issue of *Enquiry*, a review of Lionel Trilling’s book about E. M. Forster, is almost entirely on Trilling, Forster entering late in the review almost as an afterthought. It is also less about Trilling’s book on Forster than about an earlier essay by him on T. S. Eliot’s *Idea of a Christian Society*, and more particularly about the critique of radicalism and liberalism that Trilling found in that essay—a critique that he (and the reviewer) entirely shared. Abandoning their traditional moral vision by permitting means to prevail over ends and having a simplistic faith in their ability to change human nature, the radicals betrayed, Trilling wrote, “a kind of disgust with humanity as it is and a perfect faith in humanity as it is to be.” That attitude, he said, derived from a liberalism that was smug and self-righteous, preferring not to know that “the good will generates its own problems, that the love of humanity has its own vices and the love of truth its own insensibilities.” For the reviewer, this was the characteristic, and altogether commendable, mode of all of Trilling’s work, a “moral realism” that amounted to nothing less than a “brilliant and sustained, if sometimes impatient, exploration of the complexities of moral perfection and of the paths thereto.”

In 1942, when my husband wrote the first of these articles, he was all of twenty-two and two years out of college where he had majored in history (after a brief foray in mathematics) and minored, so to speak (in the Trotskyist alcove at City College), in Marxism, post-Marxism, and anti-Marxism. He was now working as a machinist in the Brooklyn Navy Yard awaiting his induction into the army—altogether an unlikely initiation, one might think, into the world of poetry and literary criticism. Yet even as a neo-Trotskyist, he had been more “neo” than most of his comrades, for while he was engaging in disputes about the Marxist dialectic or the prospects of international revolution, he was also reading the fashionable “modernist” writers—his memoir mentions D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Franz Kafka—and was entering the New York intellectual world by way of *Partisan Review*, the preeminent “little magazine” of the time. It was in *PR*, in 1940, that he read Trilling’s

essay on Eliot, the first of many of Trilling's essays that, he later recalled, "hit me with the force of a revelation."

It is against this background that the founding of *Enquiry* (which may have been inspired, on a very much smaller scale, by *Partisan Review*) may be understood. Yet even then, and in that congenial circle, Kristol was conspicuously a "neo." The subtitle of *Enquiry*, "A Journal of Independent Radical Thought," does not capture how "independent" he was, not only in regard to the writers he chose to write about (his were the only pieces in *Enquiry* on literary subjects) but also in his appreciation of the moral sensibility and complexity he found in them. Half a century later, in the preface to *Neoconservatism*, he expressed his surprise upon finding, in essays on a wide variety of subjects and written over a long span of time (the first essay in that volume dates from 1949), the "homogeneity of approach, the consistency of a certain cast of mind." He would have been even more surprised had he reread those still earlier *Enquiry* articles, which might have been written, with perhaps only the smallest emendations, at any point in his career.

His memoir emphasizes another aspect of the neo gene—his abiding interest in and respect for religion. This too is evident in those early articles, in his praise of the "religiosity of tone" in Auden's poems and, in the Trilling essay, of the "religio-ethical tone" of such other critics of radicalism as Jacques Maritain, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Christopher Dawson. Another essay, "A Christian Experiment," is a sympathetic although not uncritical account of a novel by Ignazio Silone about the hero's evolution from "revolutionary Marxian politics to a libertarian revolutionary Christianity." And "Other People's Nerve" is, among other things, a rebuke to Sidney Hook for dismissing too cavalierly the religious "heretics" who were defecting from the supposedly "scientific" irreligion of the Left.

That religious neo gene emerged most conspicuously in *Commentary* a few years later. Kristol's first article, in September 1947 (the very month he came on the staff), "The Myth of the Supra-Human Jew," is a learned exploration of the idea, for good and bad, of "the chosen people," quoting not only from Jacques Maritain but also from Raïssa Maritain and such other French theologians as Léon Bloy, Ernest Renan, and Charles Péguy—not the usual authorities cited in *Commentary* (or even *Partisan Review*). His next article, four months later, was on more familiar terrain. "How Basic Is 'Basic Judaism'" is a critique of a conception of Judaism so "basic" as to deny, he thought, the very essence of Judaism. Other essays followed, on Christianity as well as Judaism. Because he was the only editor interested in religion—this in a Jewish magazine—he became the *de facto* religious editor. But here



too, as his memoir testifies, his neo gene prevailed, for he was then, as he remained, “a nonobservant Jew, but not a nonreligious one”—indeed, a “neo-orthodox” Jew.

It was in *Commentary* that yet another neo-ism revealed itself. As Trilling, the “skeptical liberal,” was the dominant influence upon Kristol in the 1940s, so Leo Strauss, the “skeptical conservative,” was in the 1950s. And as Trilling’s essays had struck him as a “revelation,” so Strauss’s *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, in 1952, produced “the kind of intellectual shock that is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.” In both cases what impressed him was not so much their political views (which were more implicit than overt), but the mind-set that informed their views of culture, religion, society, philosophy, and politics alike. His review of *Persecution and the Art of Writing* focuses on Maimonides as the exemplar of Strauss’s major themes: the relation of the esoteric and the exoteric, of reason and revelation, of philosophy and the polity. It concludes by commending Strauss for accomplishing “nothing less than a revolution in intellectual history” by recalling us to the “wisdom of the past.”

The English journal *Encounter*, founded with Stephen Spender the following year, displayed a breadth of interest and receptivity to ideas that transcended party, class, and national lines. An important intellectual and political force in the Cold War period—an antidote to the communism that was still attracting many liberals as well as radicals—it served as a model for similar magazines on the Continent and abroad. It was also an education for Kristol, introducing him to a culture and polity different from but wonderfully congruent with that of America. He returned to the States in 1958, first as the editor of *The Reporter* and then at the publishing house Basic Books, with an enriched sense of the Anglo-American tradition and historic “relationship.”

The “neo” disposition took on a more political and economic character with the founding in 1965 of *The Public Interest*, co-edited first with Daniel Bell and then with Nathan Glazer. The “quality of doubt,” the “questioning,” “uncertainty,” and “sharp, cynical analysis” that had been so provocative in Auden’s poetry reappear, more prosaically, in a journal that was ever doubting, questioning, and sharply, even cynically, analytic of social policies and reformers. So, too, Trilling’s observations about the simplistic, self-righteous liberals, who do not know that “good will” and “love of humanity” generate their own problems and vices, are echoed in *The Public Interest*’s repeated invocation of the principle of unanticipated consequences. And Trilling’s critique of the liberal reformers of his generation was all too applicable to a later generation of reformers, chastised in *The Public Interest*, who were intent upon waging a “War on Poverty” in the name of “the Great Society.”

For Kristol, this mode of thought—questioning, skeptical, ironic, yet “cheerfully pessimistic,” as he said—soon evolved into “neoconservatism,” a label invented by others as a pejorative term that he happily adopted for himself. Again, there were reminiscences of the past, as in the title he gave *Two Cheers for Capitalism* in 1978, recalling Forster’s “two cheers for democracy,” which he had cited in his essay on Trilling. He now made this a defining principle of neoconservatism, three cheers being too utopian for any human venture, including capitalism. So, too, the “moral realism” he had admired in Trilling (and in Forster as well) was now identified, by himself and others, with neoconservatism, and not only with respect to domestic affairs but foreign affairs as well—as exhibited in yet another journal founded (but not edited) by him in 1985, *The National Interest*. Ten years later, an essay in the Festschrift dedicated to him was entitled “Irving Kristol’s Moral Realism.” It is fitting that that essay should have been written by the co-founder of *Enquiry*, Philip Selznick, although it is unlikely that Selznick recalled the provenance of that phrase half a century earlier.

In Kristol’s later years, he wrote less about literature, religion, and philosophy and more about politics, economics, and foreign affairs, not as separate disciplines but as parts of a whole, imbued by a common purpose and disposition. Thus he reminded economists of the political and ethical dimensions of their subject—“political economy,” as Adam Smith (himself a professor of Moral Philosophy) had termed it. He urged politicians to embrace a “new economics,” supply-side economics, which would invigorate the polity and society as well as the economy. He cautioned statesmen and foreign policy experts to be wary of the simplicities and ideologies that pervert the best-intentioned policies and subvert the national interest. And he advised all of them that the success of their endeavors depends upon an ethos, a culture, and—that enduring token of “American exceptionalism”—a religious disposition that make for a stable and decent society.

Yet even as the focus of his writings shifted, his old interests persisted. In 1984, in a symposium in *Partisan Review* on the question of how his cultural and political views had changed in the past decades, he recalled the problem that had always vexed that journal: how to reconcile its radical or liberal politics with an admiration for modernist literature that was often politically reactionary (most notably in the case of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound). He himself had no such problem. His cultural views, he assured his old friends, had evolved in happy congruence with his political views.

Meanwhile, for myself, I have reached certain conclusions: that Jane Austen is a greater novelist than Proust or Joyce; that Raphael is a greater painter

than Picasso; that T. S. Eliot's later, Christian poetry is much superior to his earlier; that C. S. Lewis is a finer literary and cultural critic than Edmund Wilson; that Aristotle is more worthy of careful study than Marx; that we have more to learn from Tocqueville than from Max Weber; that Adam Smith makes a lot more economic sense than any economist since; that the Founding Fathers had a better understanding of democracy than any political scientist since; that. . . Well, enough. As I said at the outset, I have become conservative, and whatever ambiguities attach to that term, it should be obvious what it does *not* mean.

He might have recalled, as he did in his memoir, a remark by Leo Strauss: that a young man might think Dostoyevsky the greatest novelist, but in maturity he should give that plaudit to Jane Austen.

\*\*\*

The title of this volume, *The Neoconservative Persuasion*, comes with the authority of the author, who used it as the title of his last essay on the subject in 2003. He then referred in passing to a book he had reviewed almost half a century earlier, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*, by the historian (and his good friend) Marvin Meyers. The final paragraph of that review has a special pertinence to his own work.

The word "persuasion," which he [Meyers] defines as "a half-formulated moral perspective involving emotional commitment," hits off exactly the strange destiny of ideas in American politics. Parties do not have anything so formal as an ideology, but they do—and must—profess something more explicit than a general ethos. "Persuasion" is a most apt term for what in fact issues from this predicament.

"Persuasion" is also a "most apt term" for neoconservatism. If neoconservatism is not, as Kristol repeatedly insisted, a movement or an ideology, let alone a party, it is something more—a "moral perspective" deriving from a broad spectrum of ideas, beliefs, and sentiments that inform politics, to be sure, but also culture, religion, economics, and much else. (The cover of a pamphlet of his much-reprinted essay "Adam Smith and the Spirit of Capitalism" bears his handwritten notation, "The Bourgeois Persuasion," an allusion to the ethical as well as economic dimension of Smith's political economy.) Over the years he used other terms to characterize neoconservatism: "imagination," "disposition," "tendency," "impulse," "cast of mind," "spirit," even "in-

stinct.” The Festschrift published in 1995 on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday bears the title *The Neoconservative Imagination*. But finally he himself settled on “persuasion.”

Much has been made of the consistency of tone in his writings—bold and speculative but never dogmatic or academic, always personal, witty, ironic. That tone is not only a matter of style; it suggests a distinctive intellectual sensibility—skeptical, commonsensible, eclectic, and at the same time strong-minded and hard-headed. It is a double-edged scalpel that he wielded against the “terrible simplifiers” of his generation, the utopians of the Left and the dogmatists of the Right, both of whom failed to appreciate the complicated realities of human nature and social action—realities, he insisted, that had to be confronted honestly and boldly.

From the many hundreds of uncollected essays by Irving Kristol, I have selected about fifty. (The only one that has previously appeared is “An Autobiographical Memoir” from his last volume.) Divided topically, they reflect the many subjects that engaged him in his long and productive career. They also reflect the free-flowing quality of his mind, one theme suggesting another, so that some of the essays could have been assigned to more than one category. Within each category, the essays are in chronological order, showing the evolution of his thought—or, as often as not, the consistency of his thought over so long a period of time.

The essays speak for themselves. If anything more needs saying, by way of background or explication, he himself has said it in the memoirs reprinted in this volume. (The only changes are in punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing, which often depended upon the whim of the editors of the journals in which the essays appeared.) The bibliography provides further documentation of his range of interests and vitality of mind. And the eulogy prefacing this volume, delivered at the funeral service by our son, William Kristol, expresses the sentiments of so many after his death who paid tribute to a man whose influence in the lives of young people was as memorable as his contribution to the political and intellectual life of his times.

*Gertrude Himmelfarb*

December 2010

2.

# ENQUIRY

*A Journal of Independent  
Radical Thought*

NOVEMBER, 1942

**WHERE WE STAND**

**Editorial Statement**

**PERSPECTIVE OF LEFTIST POLITICS**

**Lillian Symes**

**THE DILEMMA OF SOCIAL IDEALISM**

**Phillip Selznick**

**TOWARD A SCIENTIFIC RADICALISM**

**Gertrude Jaeger**

**UP FOR COMMENT . . . .**

**AUDEN: THE QUALITY OF DOUBT**

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IN THE  
BEGINNING...

*Enquiry*

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# Auden

## *The Quality of Doubt*

*The Double Man* has been treated with consideration by the majority of reviewers. These registered their approval of the expressed religiosity of tone, the inward searching doubts concerning the viability of a humane revolutionary program, the bursting bubble of “clever hopes” expiring at the end of a “low, dishonest decade.” A congenial attitude was evident toward the feeling that

*All our reflections turn about  
A common meditative norm,  
Retrenchment, Sacrifice, Reform.*

Be that as it may; we leave their motives and motivations unquestioned, desiring, rather, to explore certain political problems, incidental to the poetry as such yet relevant to the attitudes expressed therein.

Auden is certainly one of those “whose works are in better taste than their lives.” His early verse, ideologically viewed, was brashly positive, didactic, clever, facile, and possessed of a nasty Stalinist bent. The undercurrent of questioning uncertainty, often stilled but always there, became dominant only late in the decade. A “New Year’s Letter” (1941), a part of this latest volume [*The Double Man*], is the organized end product of these growing doubts, and its moral subtlety, receptivity, and sensitivity is close to brilliant. The bitterly acquired political wisdom of a generation seems to flourish in the pen and stagnate in the poet. Of course, being poetry, the problem is only stated; but a good statement is half a solution.

It is not the need for specific moral decisions by the poet which so troubles the verse, as it is the feeling that the basic issues of morality itself are undefined, immediate, and pressing—a common enough revelation of the age’s moral va-

cancy. Combined with this is the guilt-fear of the individual for the crimes committed around him, the responsibility of even passive contribution, the warping of ideals by greed and egoism, which leads Auden to say:

*Our million individual deeds  
Omissions, vanities, and creeds,  
Put through the statistician's hoop  
The gross behavior of a group.*

To put the issue more bluntly than the poetry permits, what is being advanced is a working concept of original sin, a concept which gives the conditions of idealism and forces to the fore unremittingly a sharp, cynical analysis of self and others, ends and means. Rather than hypostasizing goodness as a quality which by hypothesis some men must possess, let it be remembered that men in all ways seem better than they are. Those who see the world of the future making tremendous forward leaps through the agency of technology and the applied social sciences, or who believe in a complete spiritual regeneration of a majority of men, are deceiving themselves. The permeating fact of evil, both past and present, speaks differently.

Scientists and nonscientists alike live on an inclined plane of credulity, and it is given to no one type of mind to discern the totality of truth. The science of politics, consistent with the nature of science as such, is a process of abstraction, simplification, and logical exclusion. It strives for the quantitative and minimizes the qualitative. The partial efficacy of all this brooks no denial, but its partiality must be insisted upon. A systematic rationality of action is encouraged which is often a false rationality of unity, simplicity, and generality. As a counterweight to this exists the insight of ontology (to borrow a term made current by John Crowe Ransom), which attempts to see things wholly, qualitatively, in their full particularity. It is contemplative, not utilitarian, and its medium is the arts, not the sciences. The three main weapons of the ontological view are tragedy, irony, and comedy. Tragedy offers a realism of its own against ingenuous enterprise, warning against "excessive expectations as to the prosperity of structures." Irony exists when the spectator is given an insight superior to that of the actor. When spectator and actor are one, this insight is that of the "double man," inducing humility and possibly a certain measure of self-contempt. The comic corrective ("sense of humor") is a reaction against human acts being determined by abstract principles and is essentially critical of programs. It is these constituents of the double or ontological view which



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