

FREE THINKER

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BAN SEX! IT'S TOO ENJOYABLE

SEX is sinful. Sex endangers the soul. Sex is the Siren of Satan. Scarcely a week passes without some priest or bishop expostulating on the wickedness of pre-marital copulation, whilst the Law of the Land continues to regard adultery as the prime marital offence. In the past few weeks Monsignor Lambroschini has decried the moral turpitude of mini-skirted women; Lady Dartmouth has tried to have the GLC withdraw its licensing of *Ulysses*; the Oxford City Police have sent copies of the Oxford University magazine *Oxymoron*, containing unretouched photographs of the female nude, to the Director of Public Prosecutions; and Mrs Mary 'Clean-Up TV' Whitehouse has held her second NVLA convention in Birmingham with the able assistance of that wondrously wailing twentieth century Jeremiah, Mr Malcolm Muggerridge. History does not suggest we should follow such misdirected enthusiasm.

Paul in his saintliness said, "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I . . . for to be carnally minded is death . . . but if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn". Ever since, monks and nuns in their thousands have been burning with a holy ecstatic love for their Lord consummated on the altarbed of spiritual ardour. For two thousand years we have had the great paradox of sensual asexuality—an interior burning of vitality to escape the exterior burning of the body in the roasting-house of Hell, a jumping out of the frying-pan of libidinous licence into the fire of blazing sexlessness.

Ingenuously perverse means have been employed to avert the irreligious desire and enjoyment of genital titillation. Flagellation with the 'discipline', that aesthetically named tool, to the point of penetrating the flesh and its subsequent prolonged climatic evocation of that pious bodily juice blood, has proved a satisfying if masochistic substitute for the more heathen pursuit of copulation. Bodily purity

through bodily mortification has been the strident clarion call in Christian times.

Long before the Reformation, men of God and their spinsterly spiritual sisters tried to live together, even sleep together, in hermaphroditic chastity. But even this sexless delight was too permissive. It took the ascetic Church Fathers some time to stamp out the practice since there were still Christy saints tarred with the brush of paganism, struggling to reconcile the human beauty of a man-woman relationship with the Pauline dictates of sexual abstinence. When the Council of Nicaea proclaimed that the *agapetae* had to leave the clerical households once and for all so that there should be no red light ever to shine, tempt and lead astray, the death blow to many a promising bed partnership was dealt. Leontius, Bishop of Antioch, disagreed with the Council's means of insuring purity and resolved to retain his female companion without spermallly soiling her body or his soul. He castrated himself. We are not told whether or not he blessed and anointed the incisive edge before this depriving self-surgeon operation.

Of course, the laymen continued to lay women and enjoyed doing so, but the Church increasingly tightened the genital screws. Sex was tortured and outlawed. The Fathers said it was more than naughty, it was positively wicked, an instrument of the Devil. It must have troubled them to have a devilish instrument inexorably appended to their own body and, indeed, they and their clerical successors referred to it at length.

That virtuous trial judge of the Inquisition, Pierre de Lancre, who boasted of judicially burning 600 witches, bears witness to the sexual morbidity engendered by the obsessive repressiveness of the Church. In his *Tableau* (1612) he writes that Johannes d'Aguerre swore that 'the devil in the form of a goat, having his member in the rear, had intercourse with women by joggling and showing that thing against their belly', and seventeen-year-old Marguerite de Sare testified that whether the devil appeared as man or goat 'he always had a member like a mule's, having chosen to imitate that animal as being best endowed by nature; that it was as long and as thick as an arm . . . and that he always exposed his instrument, of such beautiful shape and measurements'. Christianity has truly been responsible for an appalling amount of neurosis.

We still suffer today from those who, anxious to fight for the triumph of Christianity, see sex as essentially anti-Christian. It is unfortunate that a Christian preoccupation with soul salvation invariably results in mental and emotional deprivation and deformation. The anti-sex maniacs are more of a danger to healthy living than much of the sexual activity they so fervently decry.

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Harry Lamont

Speaking Personally

A CORRESPONDENT asks why so many English people retain a relish for schoolboy smut and regard the ability to tell blue jokes as proof of sophistication. It is alleged that these traits merely denote emotional immaturity.

All my adult life—over half a century—I have wondered why conventional respectable folk associate smut with sex. Aldous Huxley asserted that to the Puritan all things are impure, and those who see dirt in jokes must have dirty minds.

Sixty years ago my mother gave me a fourpenny one and rampaged furiously because I said I knew where babies came from. In those days sex was what D. H. Lawrence called the dirty little secret, but dirty *big* secret would have been a more appropriate description. The subject was never mentioned by decent folk. Young people derived their knowledge of it from watching animals and studying lavatory walls.

For long it was assumed by the faithful that sex was Satan's bait to lure the sinner to eternal damnation, but intercourse was permitted under licence, provided the act had the sole and deliberate object of procreating. To take pleasure in it *per se* was wicked and reprehensible.

My childhood was made miserable by threats of madness, blindness and paralysis if one permitted or encouraged tumescence. I endured the tortures of hades in seeking to avoid thinking of the other sex.

Rabelaisian humour is not due to emotional immaturity; it is the mocking spirit of man revenging itself on a taboo. If the thumbs were considered indecent and always covered, a whole saga of improper stories about them would arise.

But it isn't only the English who enjoy bawdy stories. I have found they are considered droll by emancipated spirits in many parts of the world, despite the prudes, prigs, bigots and other killjoys who frown at the mention of certain organs and their functions.

Many years ago I used to sing: "Alleluia, I'm a bum". My pious landlady complained that the ballad was indecent, and refused to believe me when I assured her that I meant an American tramp and not the buttocks.

In Paris an old maid telephoned the police to protest that from her bedroom window she could see a naked man. Even the French could not tolerate such an *outrage aux moeurs* and sent an agent to investigate. He stood at the complainant's window and said: "But, *mon Dieu*, you can only see him from the waist up". "Ah, *monsieur*," she hissed, "you climb on the wardrobe!"

When I was about seven I came home excitedly to announce that I had seen two dogs in a peculiar posture. My parents flew into a rage and told me I must be very depraved to notice such antics. Naturally I was very puzzled at such opprobrium and wondered what I had done wrong.

Countless Englishmen became unsatisfactory husbands because in childhood their minds had been poisoned about sex. They considered it shameful and degrading, and in marriage copulated with a feeling of guilt.

D. H. Lawrence called sex the sunshine of life, but conventional religious people still tend to regard it with strong aversion. Even today some newspapers fear and

avoid the word *pregnant*. They say an interesting event can be expected, or that a certain woman is expecting a happy event. There are still parents who tell children that babies are brought by storks, are found behind gooseberry bushes, or come from doctors' bags.

An old schoolma'am accused me long ago of telling a filthy story and she stalked out of the room before I had finished, but I protest there is nothing in the tale to shock normal people. The anecdote concerned a white man in East Africa who got engaged and confessed to the girl that he suffered from a physical defect, so she broke off the engagement. He met a similar fate with three other maidens, so resolved to get married before telling the next one. As they left the church after the ceremony, he whispered to his bride: "I have a confession to make. I suffer from a physical defect. I am colour blind". "You sure is, *bwana*", replied the black wench.

The ancient schoolma'am flew into a rage and stamped out of the room. She had obviously expected some juicy revelation about sex.

Children are naturally curious about sex, and their thirst for knowledge in this respect is increased when they suspect that adults are telling them falsehoods.

The question as to how much one should tell children can become a thorny one. When I was a schoolmaster Quintin Hogg (then Lord Hailsham), wrote a book about education in which he declared that the teacher must answer questions about sex honestly, frankly and without hesitation. In a letter I pointed out to his lordship that many parents do not wish their children to be told what are sometimes called the facts of life, and would raise Cain if their offspring received such information. Beyond a formal acknowledgement from a secretary, I received no reply.

A doctor friend of mine told me he was called to a house in which a wife was expecting a baby. The physician entered the bedroom, leaving the husband in the lounge. In a little while the medico stuck his head out and asked for a hammer, then a screwdriver, then a pair of pliers, then a gimlet. The husband brought the various articles and felt very worried until the surgeon laughed and explained he couldn't open his little bag.

A labourer on a building was told one wintry afternoon at dusk that his wife wanted him. She expected a baby and the birth was imminent.

The husband pushed down his dynamo, hopped on his bike and cycled the eight miles to his country cottage.

He arrived to find the dwelling in darkness. The doctor stuck his head out of a window and said: "The electricity has failed and we have neither lamps nor candles. Prop up the back wheel of your bike and pedal hard to make a light, so that I can see what I am doing".

Paddy obliged and pedalled furiously until the doctor shoved his head out of the window and cried: "Congratulations, a bouncing boy, but don't stop".

The exhausted Paddy continued to pedal until the doctor shouted: "A lovely girl, but don't stop".

Another ten minutes elapsed and the doctor yelled: "Another darling boy, but don't stop".

As he fell breathless from his machine Paddy gasped: "D'yer think it's the light that's attracting them?"

SEX IS NOT SMUT

Prudery varies from one country to another. In France I knew intelligent cultured women who told the most daring stories. Anyone who didn't know them well might have imagined that such females were dissolute, but their behaviour was impeccable. They merely had a keen sense of humour and a well-developed *esprit gaulois*.

The idea that sex is dirty was propagated by Christianity for so long that it dies hard, but it is on its way out. Today young people are on the whole much more honest, forthright and perspicuous than their parents were twenty or thirty years ago.

A doctor told me the other day that a worried young woman consulted him to find out if she were pregnant because her fiancé had kissed her.

I read about a doctor's daughter who had a nervous breakdown because she opened her father's desk, dis-

covered some contraceptives and realised their use.

For hundreds of years ignorance was equated with virtue. A young woman got married completely without any sexual technique. Often her husband was equally ill-prepared, his experience being limited to a few fleeting casual affairs with loose women.

Let us teach youths and maidens that there is nothing inherently wrong or disgusting with sex if two people are truly in love. Each partner should respect the other. We must never forget to insist that it is a serious mistake to bring an unwanted child into the world.

If I may venture into the abortion controversy, I believe no woman should be compelled to bear an unwanted child. And a Parliament dominated by men ought not be the final arbiter in a matter of such primordial concern to women.

Gregory S. Smelters

THEOLOGY AND THE UNIVERSITY

ACCORDING to a British visiting theologian last year (Prof. Rupp of Manchester), theology is now widely accepted in Britain by universities. In Australia, theology is absent from them. So, at the first national conference of the Australian Society for Theological Studies, recently in Sydney, there was a move to restore theology as a university course.

Today, such a move is just a step back to the Dark Ages where theology belongs. If theology is excluded from universities, it is because the case against it has been thoroughly established among academics and the public: "Theology here is widely regarded as a spurious branch of higher learning" (*The Australian*, May 16, 1966, Canberra). The current move is due to reactionary political pressure rather than alleged intellectual merits.

The case against theology is notably built upon the defence of the foremost principle of university education: free search for truth, of which there is one standard only at the university, as it is also in everyday affairs and, on an exact level, in all scientific endeavour.

The theologian, on the contrary, has two, contradictory, standards of truth—in private life he acts according to the everyday scientific standard, but in theology he teaches as truth what to the scientist and the public is plain fiction: the myths about the West Semitic god Yahweh, his breath-soul (Holy Ghost), his pre-existent son Yehoshuah, his messengers ("angels"), devils, etc, and their exploits in the Old and New Testaments. What is more, the theologian claims his "truths" to be higher than all scientific propositions.

Nowadays, such a claim to primacy over scientific and philosophical truth—as Dr E. H. Haenssler in his excellent statement of the case (*Theology: A Foreign Body in the Modern University*, Bern, 1960) points out—is sheer scandal!

It is an even greater scandal if this totalitarian, militant and intolerant claim of the theologian over scientists and philosophers is acquiesced in and tolerated not only without resistance, but even without any public protest at those universities where theology is taught.

The theologians, as Dr Haenssler remarks, understandably interpret such acquiescence as weakness and fear and arrogantly seize advantage of it.

Clearly, this basic objection to the theologian's duplicity

is so destructive that there is no answer to it, and it is not even attempted in such clerical symposiums as *Theology and the University* (ed. J. Coulson), or *Theology in Modern Education* (ed. L. Bright, OP, London, 1965).

So, let us insist relentlessly on this basic objection to theology, namely, the non-existence of the god Yahweh, "the Lord God" of Christian theology. The totally demolishing point is that, when the theologian asserts with Mark's Gospel (12, 29) and Deuteronomy (6, 4) that *Yahweh is our god, Yahweh alone*, he lies as he teaches (or tacitly assumes) that the West Semitic god Yahweh is a "living" (ie, existing) god. Mind you—the theologian does *not* teach—as the anthropologist does—that Christianity belongs to Middle Eastern folklore (see Rev. Hooke, *M.E. Mythology*, Pelican, 1963), and, in the last account, to the history of human stupidity and illusions. The theologian is, however, frank about his own duplicity—but only to other theologians! Let me illustrate my reference to the established case against theology both in Australia and on the Continent. Said the Editor of *The Catholic Worker* (Dec. 1951, Melbourne): "In these days of secularism—to call Australia a Christian country is really only self-deception". In West Germany, a pastor Le Seur talked to his superior, a Protestant clergyman, after the latter had preached theology: "Do you really believe yourself what you had just said to the audience?"—"What?" the superior countered astonished. "Do you mean whether I regard it as true? Of course, it is quite untenable scientifically. But I didn't talk to theologians, but to simple, believing people who expect a confirmation of their beliefs from their parson. If I removed a stone therefrom, I would endanger the whole edifice". (From an interview in *Penguin Magazine*, Aug. 4, 1949, Stuttgart.)

This state of affairs has been widely known on the Continent already in the days of Nietzsche who wrote a century ago: "Even one with the most modest claim to honesty must know today that a theologian, a priest, a Pope, with every sentence that he utters, not only errs, but *lies*—that it is not any more open to him to lie out of "innocence", out of "ignorance". . . . Everyone knows this, but nevertheless all remains as before. Where is gone the least sense of decency, of self-respect, if even our politicians, otherwise quite an unscrupulous sort of men, and thoroughly anti-Christian, still call themselves Christians today

(Continued on page 175)

NEWS AND NOTES

RICHARD AINLEY, the distinguished actor who died suddenly in London, was to have appeared in *Orestes* which opened at the Mermaid Theatre last Tuesday. His one-man show delighted a Sunday evening audience at the New Arts a few weeks ago, and was worthy of a much wider presentation. He was a valued member of the National Secular Society, and appeared in *Freethought and Humanism in Shakespeare*—the NSS contribution to the Shakespeare quatercentenary celebrations—and at the WUFT Congress concert last September.

Son of Henry Ainley, one of the most famous actors of his day, Richard did not use the family name until he had won his spurs and when he felt that audiences accepted him on his own merits. He had a magnificent voice and appearance, and the good fortune to serve an apprenticeship with Martin Harvey's company, Harcourt Williams at the Old Vic and Barry Jackson at the Malvern Festival. He was in *Twelfth Night* at the re-opening of Sadlers Wells in 1931, and was seen in many London productions during the thirties.

Richard Ainley was acting in New York at the outbreak of the 1939-45 war, and later joined the American forces. While serving in Germany, he was travelling in a vehicle which struck a mine, and the injuries he received were to

be a handicap for the rest of his life. But he was a man of tremendous courage and tenacity, and resumed his stage career after the war. He played *Everyman* (1947) and *Faust* (1949), and did much broadcasting. He was adjudicator at the 1958 Dominion Drama Festival in Canada, and became Principal of Bristol Old Vic Drama School.

Richard Ainley was a charming, intelligent man; dedicated to his profession and devoted to his family.

Censorship in Ireland

IRELAND'S censorship laws may be liberalised in the near future, but in that priest-ridden country there is little hope that the changes will be radical. It is proposed that books on the banned list for more than 20 years should be freed, but even if this happens all the books by Edna O'Brien, and some by Brendan Behan, Samuel Beckett, Frank O'Connor and Patrick Kavanagh to mention only a few Irish authors, cannot be legally sold in their own country.

During a recent debate in the Dail one Government back-bencher called for the abolition of the system whereby books are banned by a committee sitting behind closed doors, without the knowledge of the author or publisher. The Appeal Board is a similar Star Chamber, and it was suggested that authors and publishers should have the right of appeal to the High Court.

Irish censorship laws have been receiving unwelcome publicity in other countries, and the overflow meeting a few months ago at a Dublin theatre calling for censorship reform, was widely reported. One of the speakers on that occasion was Edna O'Brien, who will be taking part in the Public Forum on censorship which the National Secular Society is organising in London on June 23rd.

Generous with Ratepayers' money

THE West Riding County Council is to make a substantial donation to the York Minster appeal fund. The exact amount is undisclosed, but when asked if it would be £20,000 the Council chairman, Alderman J. H. Hudson, said: "It is considerably more than that, but Finance Committee minutes are confidential and I can't say more". But he did say that the gift would be coming out of the rate fund.

Only one member objected. Councillor Bernard Fahey (Conservative) told the Council: "I feel the Church of England are a far richer institution than the county council and have enough money to do this work themselves". It has been reported that the Council's gift will in fact be £200,000.

Every little helps

ONE of the main intentions of the Novena to Saint Dominic Savio—the schoolboy saint—is the rejection of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill.

In darkest England

A CORRESPONDENT recently claimed in the *Daily Telegraph* that public taste was not so debased as some people think, and supported his argument with the uplifting news that *The Sound of Music* had been playing to capacity audiences in Birmingham for two and a half years.

Several days later it was reported that 250 members of the Mary Whitehouse organisation—the National Viewers and Listeners Association—gave Malcolm Muggeridge a standing ovation after he had addressed their annual conference in Birmingham

E.A.

PUBLIC FORUM

CENSORSHIP

Speakers include

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PETER FRYER	PETER WATKINS
DAVID TRIBE	JOHN MORTIMER
The Very Rev. IAN HISLOP, O.P.	

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A STUDY OF SEXUALITY

George Foss Westcott

At the Hampstead teach-in on Censorship in the Arts (see FREETHINKER, April 7, 1967) publisher Charles Skilton said:

"At the moment I am engaged in a little censorship, wielding a blue pencil with some scratching of head: I have a book in preparation called *Walter, the English Casanova*, which is an interesting book, edited by two American psychiatrists, and is the diary of a Victorian who describes his sexual experiences; it contains a great deal of fascinating background information and psychological matter—and I find it very difficult to know exactly what should be left in and what cannot be left in at the present time."

"*Walter: The English Casanova. A presentation of his unique memories*", by Drs Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen. Published by Polybooks Ltd., London, 1967. 60/- net.

THIS study of the diary of an unidentified 19th century English gentleman by two well-known American sexologists is a readable and stimulating introduction to and analysis of an original work of 11 volumes and 4,200 pages of printed text, restricted by its author almost entirely to his sexual adventures.

The author of *My Secret Life* dealt with his subject with such single-mindedness, such attention to detail, and, apparently, such innate psychological understanding of sexuality, especially that of women, that his work should be of considerable scientific value. He made many observations of sexual behaviour which anticipate those only recently confirmed by modern psychologists; and his original diary should be a useful source of data for historians of 19th century life. For example he shows how the poverty-stricken working-class women and girls were economically and sexually exploited by the wealthier classes, leading to the great prevalence of prostitution; also how the relative sexual freedom of the working classes and the strict upbringing and protection from sexual contacts of upper class women perpetuated separate sexual standards for men and women, and the division of women into two kinds—the good, who didn't, of whom Dr Acton stated "to suggest they have sexual pleasure is a vile aspersion", and the bad, who did.

In this country, today, there seem to be three main attitudes which merge into one another: (1) The puritanical Christian view that sex is fundamentally sinful because it is contrary to God's command and only to be tolerated within lifelong monogamy for the purpose of procreation. This produces the attempt to suppress the powerful sexual instincts, which cannot be completely repressed, for certain periods, eg, before marriage, and their restriction even within marriage. Sin and the need for forgiveness follow. The salvation religions can supply this need by acceptance of its dogmas and ministrations. Thus a vicious circle is set up which strengthens the hold of a religion on its adherents.

(2) The view that life-long monogamy is essential for the preservation of a stable society and the successful upbringing of children, and that, for these reasons, considerable sexual repression must be accepted, even at the cost of frustration, unhappiness and neurosis.

And, finally, (3) The view that the greatest happiness and health for the individual is obtainable by allowing him the fullest possible freedom consistent both with the stage of his mental and physical development, and also with the prevention of his doing harm to others, or interfering with their freedom.

Attitude (1) appears to be dying out almost spontaneously perhaps mainly because today fewer and fewer

people are able to accept the theological beliefs required. Attitude (2) is, perhaps, the most commonly held today. This may be largely due to the inertia of tradition, and the reluctance to give up attitude (1) completely, while rejecting the theology. However, attitude (2) seems to be being continually eroded by the economic changes and by actual new behaviour patterns, particularly those of young people, which are bringing about rapid changes in sexual attitudes and beliefs, regardless of old preconceived theories.

The Kronhausens accept roughly the view (3) and use their study of Walter to support their thesis

"that sexuality is basically a positive, benign life force, capable of enhancing individual happiness, of enriching the arts and literature, of stimulating intellectual development and material progress and of casting a softening and 'civilising' effect on human relations in general. In accordance with our positive position on sexuality we feel that the various attempts at the social suppression of the healthy, natural sex impulse have merely led to some of the most regrettable reaction formations and characters distortions, both on an individual and cultural plane, as witness the widespread sexual misery on the personal level and the appalling distortions of sexuality into various sado-masochistic patterns of group behaviour, violence and delinquency.

There are many points of interest considered in their comments by these expert sexologists; for example, their theory of the difference between 'falling in love' and 'becoming infatuated', in which the latter state is accounted for by the theory of reinforcement by frustration or punishment.

It is a pity that *Walter* has no index, but a far greater imperfection is the fact that it has been thought necessary, in order to avoid the danger of prosecution, to change the actual language and words used by Walter. The result is that the Kronhausens' work is a kind of annotated, abridged, expurgated translation, so that one can never feel quite sure that Walter's character, thoughts and acts have been accurately described. Thus it is a little strange to see that where Walter presumably used the common four-letter word 'cant', one finds 'vagina', a word which, in medicine, describes a particular restricted anatomical feature, whereas the four-letter word, comprising not only the vagina, but also the vulva and other parts, conveys the whole of an erogenous zone. Perhaps this extended use of 'vagina' is an Americanism now considered quite 'proper'. It is found, for example, also, in an advertisement in women's magazines, where 'the outer vaginal area' is mentioned. I suspect that mention not only of the vulva but also of the anus has been largely censored: in view of Walter's voyeurism and his great and uninhibited interest in and exploration of female anatomy, physiology and psychology it seems unlikely that he did not discover and mention that the anal region is an erogenous zone for many women (see Kinsey). Yet the anus is seldom mentioned, and then only incidentally. If this omission is due to censorship, there may be other omissions, and one may therefore feel doubtful whether an accurate account of Walter's sexuality has been given.

As for Walter himself, although he mentions a god-father, he appears to have almost completely escaped from the restrictions of religious taboos and to have been influenced by social taboos only to the extent of keeping his adventures secret. On the other hand he acquired a feeling of genital inferiority, a great fear of venereal disease and accepted the then current medical theory of the dire effects of masturbation. He was undoubtedly highly sexed, and was to some extent probably neurotically obsessed with

sex. The spread of his sexual instincts was very wide, but apparently in normal directions. There are no signs of homosexual, masochistic or sadistic tendencies, except perhaps in the defloration of virgins which was the fashionable thing to do in his time.

Walter's technique of seduction depended largely on the arousal of erotic desire and the complete elimination of all inhibitions in his mistresses. He made full use of all the senses (sight, sound, touch, smell and taste)—only thus, he believed, could full responsiveness be obtained. He considered 'pornographic' speech especially valuable, and appears to have been particularly skilled at its use. Unfortunately, fear of prosecution has prevented any examples of his verbal technique being published. It is rather tantalising to read, for example:

"We feel that it would be less than prudent to reproduce here all the intimate details with which Walter describes how he initiated this girl into the delights of *cunnilinctus* or the rhapsodical terms in which he praises her parts and tells of her orgasmic experiences";

or again:

"... the *cunnilinctus* incident, which is, in our opinion, one of the most beautiful descriptions of this act in erotic literature, but which, for legal reasons, we have had to omit in Walter's own words".

One frequently hears it stated quite categorically, but without the support of adequate evidence, even by those one may consider to be generally open minded, that 'pornography' cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. Our legal establishment can hardly be said to be unduly per-

missive, yet they do not close down the fairly numerous 'pornographic' bookshops, provided that their proprietors take care to exclude sub-adults. Can it be that they realise that there is a considerable number of adults who have been severely sexually repressed, and do they think that these unhappy people can obtain from even 'hard-core pornography' (or 'pornographic' photographs) some relief from their obsessions, which might otherwise cause them to do harm to others, or to come into conflict with the law? Perhaps the completely nude strip-tease shows are tolerated for similar reasons.

If the sex-positive attitude should eventually become socially and legally accepted, the value of literature specifically intended to be sexually stimulating, as well as other means of arousing sexual desire, may be admitted to have a valuable function. Meanwhile we obviously need more research to obtain data to enable scientific analysis to replace prejudice in determining social attitudes and legal sanctions to sexuality.

Walter does, I think, provide some of this needed objective evidence. May we hope that the editions of the whole of *My Secret Life*, being prepared in America and in Denmark, may be made readily available to adults in this country.

Frank Harris's *My Life and Loves* forms an interesting sequel to *Walter*. It is another autobiography of a highly sexed individual—one, however, who lived at a later period, the turn of the present century.

Denis Cobell

SEX, DOCTORS AND GOD

IT is only three years since the British Medical Association produced its report *Venereal Disease and Young People*, which placed great emphasis on the decay of religious practices as a cause for the decline in national morality and an increase in VD amongst adolescents.

Now, in a leading article in a recent issue of the *British Medical Journal* (organ of the BMA), the predominant atheism of many students is blamed for their sexual promiscuity, the attendant rise in pregnancies among female students and the increased incidence of venereal diseases. If the author of this article believes that a decline in religious practices is responsible for vastly increased promiscuity, he would do well to check one of the sources from which he gleaned certain facts, more closely, to discover how prevalent such behaviour really is!

R. S. Morton wrote in a magazine with the somewhat macabre name *The British Journal of Venereal Diseases*, last December; "There seems little doubt that sexual intercourse is a more common experience for students in recent years. The data suggests that some of this marginal increase is of a promiscuous nature".

Dr Morton's survey was conducted amongst students at Sheffield: in the five years, 1961-65, he discovered that only 1 in 1,000 students had contracted gonorrhoea—the principle venereal disease, in this country. Propaganda, often with emotive and religious connotations, brought many students to the VD clinics although they were not infected. The incidence of venereal disease is not always a reliable guide to the amount of sexual promiscuity, but this survey leads one to realise that it is not as common as the BMA suspects.

One London teaching hospital has not assented to the wholesale condemnation of students by the BMA. In its journal, the *Guy's Hospital Gazette*, it warns against labelling students who indulge in pre-marital sexual inter-

course, with a constant partner, as promiscuous. In the same article it also points out that theological morality is not the only acceptable ethical code. It would seem that many Christians are not prepared to swallow this, but prefer to look at minute areas of youthful promiscuity and conclude that personal responsibility no longer exists in sexual relationships, for anyone.

This is a ridiculous view and one which these 'believers' employ in order to produce a paradox. They also oppose the setting up of clinics where help and advice on the use of contraceptives can be given to unmarried persons. However, to avoid the miseries created through unwanted pregnancies, this attitude of the puritan must die. Although their numbers are considerably diminished, the remainder of religious adherents possess powers quite out of proportion to their representation, and they are able to prevent progressive measures to aid sexual stability amongst the unmarried young.

The BM Journal often embarks on moral crusades with a medical accuracy that shames its sociological assumptions. To draw conclusions about current moral and religious practices from medical evidence alone is not only absurd, but dangerous; it confuses the rôle of ritual with the 'social ethic'. Most people keep within a moral code that is universally accepted by society. At one time this had a superstitious basis because there was insufficient scientific knowledge; nowadays sexual behaviour has become a matter of personal responsibility—as it should, if the rational elements which seek to unite society are going to win.

There may be a long way to go before reaching an ideal situation, but it will not be such a long road if our medical pundits stop making remarks outside their own field of professional expertise and leave religion to those who are following in the footsteps of the dodo.

THEOLOGY AND THE UNIVERSITY

(Continued from page 171)

and go to Communion?". (Quote from an essay of 1862.)

Theology is intellectually bankrupt. Read the British theologian D. Jenkins' admissions that now, due to R. Bultmann, almost the whole of the Bible is non-sense, and that the God (of *theism**) does not and cannot exist, since he is defined by the theologian as not existing anywhere in space-time (*Guide to the Debate about God*). Read J. S. Bezzant's confession that the salvation-through-Jesus theology has been shattered by modern knowledge (*Objections to Christian Beliefs*). Read M. Werner's *Formation of Christian Dogma* (London, New York, 1957) to see how another theologian argues that the contradictory Christology is mythology, namely, that "Jesus" started as a chief of Yahweh's angels (as in *The Revelation*) and got his earthly "biography" invented much later.

The theologian's tale is, however, not simply myths alone—it abounds in self-cancelling contradictions. If we analyse his tale we see that the primitive Hebrew's illusion of Yahweh as the maker of heaven and earth, etc. was never needed, if only he had reasoned properly. The universe is infinite in space-time: any setting up of two-sided boundaries to it is always sheer falsehood (self-contradiction) which makes any talk of "creators" false from the start! This alone explodes theology. If more debunking is needed, there is another grand fallacy. The theologian claims that "the Lord God" (in Hebrew, "the god Yahweh") is all-knowing. Here, the theologian assumes, as his starting point, rigidly determined, eternal chains of all events of the universe, of which his god Yahweh has eternal, true foreknowledge, including, of course, his own (Yahweh's) future behaviour. This true foreknowledge makes Yahweh, from all eternity, absolutely powerless to change anything in favour of the theologian's prayers, otherwise than what he truly foreknows. Yahweh is then—by definition—an automaton in a deterministic universe. And as such, Yahweh is also absolutely useless. On the theologian's theory, all the eternal chains of events would come to pass regardless whether Yahweh (or any other all-knowing god such as Zeus) existed or not. Driven to this logical conclusion from his own myths, the now useless theologian must cancel himself and his "plainly corrupt Church" (Rev. McCabe) out of modern life and knowledge.

* NOTE ON 'THEISM'.—R. Cudworth in 1678 introduced 'theism' as opposite to 'atheism' (denial of gods), and so it must mean 'assertion, at least, of one particular god'. Thus, the Jewish-Christian-Muslim monoyahwism is an instance of theism. All theisms, being based on revelations (ie, mythologies) are fictions. But the belief in "a god, God distinct from all revealed gods", is "deism", and this is a logical falsehood, a category-mistake (ie, mistaking a class-name for a proper name). This distinction is recommended G.S.S.

REVIEW

S. A. Josephs

Primary Philosophy by Michael Scriven (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, pp. 320 + xvi. Price 46s).

ONE of the commonest complaints against contemporary linguistic philosophers is the assertion that they have turned their backs on the great philosophical problems of the past and are only concerned with trivial arguments about the correct analyses of various types of sentences. I think this is a reasonably fair attack on the value (but not the validity) of the activities of most contemporary Anglo-American philosophers, and I therefore welcome Professor Michael Scriven's book as the first serious attempt to consistently employ the powerful analytic tools developed by linguistic philosophers for a thorough-going analysis of the historically important problems of philosophy.

Scriven makes his position clear right from the very beginning:

"This book is devoted to a discussion of certain fundamental philosophical problems which are here called the primary problems of philosophy. The primary problems of philosophy are those to which everyone has an answer, whether he knows it or not, and which everyone can understand whether he has tried to or not. A man's private behaviour makes clear whether he believes morality to be just a system of conventions, art a matter of taste, and God a myth; and the questions whether he is right in these beliefs are three of the primary problems of philosophy. Although he may never discuss these issues in his lifetime, he does not hereby avoid them; and they are the first questions he raises if he has an enquiring mind and a desire to justify his behaviour or understand the most penetrating puzzles about his world".

After an introductory chapter outlining the scope and plan of the book, there follows chapters on Knowledge, Art, God, Man, Responsibility, and Morality. Every chapter is worth reading, and each exemplifies the same rigorous logic and lightness of touch so that the reader is constantly delighted by the author's intellect and charmed by his clarity and style.

But it is the chapter on God to which the freethinker will return again and again. Starting with the basic question "What kind of God, if any exists?" Scriven devotes eighty-one pages to analyses of the concept of God; reasons for belief; arguments for the existence of God; and arguments for atheism. It is one of the most powerful pieces of philosophical analysis that has appeared in print. Each step follows logically from the one before; each wall is methodically demolished until finally the unsupported roof collapses and the author arrives, coldly and dispassionately, at his inevitable conclusion that "atheism is obligatory". It is a brilliant demonstration of sustained, lucid, logical argument, and I can only echo the author's concluding remark:

"The intellectual infection of the theistic myth is so pervasive that even today few of us can read such a remark ['He does not exist'] without inwardly recoiling and instinctively raising sad cries about man's ignorance, his incapacity to judge God, as if these slogans will ward off the baleful light of the truth, the truth that we are alone. Truths are often most unpalatable, especially truths about ourselves, and the history of the resistance to this truth is a history of sad truths about ourselves. We are still an extremely primitive tribe".

Primary Philosophy is one of the most exciting books that I have read in years and I recommend it to every reader with an interest in, and love of, the problems of philosophy.

THEATRE

David Tribe

The Deadly Game (Friedrich Dürrenmatt and James Yaffe), Savoy.

World War 2½ (Roger O. Hirson), New.

The Trojan Wars (Euripides and Jack Lindsay), Mermaid.

Three Sisters (Anton Chekhov and Edward Bond), Royal Court.

A RETIRED Swiss judge, prosecutor, defence counsel and hangman all keep themselves young by the intellectual stimulation of trying house guests for past offences. Surprising things are revealed in this *Deadly Game*. A courtroom drama with a difference, the play raises in passing humanist problems of guilt, intention and responsibility. Director Leslie Phillips appears as an English sales director who gets more than dinner in the lonely Swiss chalet, and is ably supported by a distinguished caste, notably Stephen Murray. Ronald Adam and Wilfrid Brambell, who impressively handle dialogue infinitely superior to what a "thriller" usually commands.

World War 2½ is not about war, other than the battle of the sexes. Roger O. Hirson is an American dramatist who has recently turned to the stage from television. He has produced here not so much a stage play as two entertaining "television" dramas brought together in the theatre. The first one is a *comédie noire* of an amoral murderer and a naïve barrister on a hopeless dock brief. The second purports to go back into the life of the accused and the husband she has murdered, but the characters are entirely different from those suggested in the first half and the final return to the cell set is a production gimmick which offers no real coalescence. Yet the dialogue is unfailingly amusing and the first half a brilliantly sustained one-act drama with TV immediacy. The second part is more discursive in itself as well as unrelated, but makes a vehicle for highbrow revue sketches of husband and wife charades, of which the funniest and most interesting psychologically is when the husband dresses up as a sex-starved Greek businessman. Roy Dotrice and Sarah Miles have much scope for

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone HOP 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Holidays, Art Holiday, Burton Galleries, Wirral Cheshire, 29th July to 12th August. Small Youth Camp near Yeovil, Somerset. Details of both from Mrs M. Mephram, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Humanist Letter Network (International) and Humanist Postal Book Service. For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to Kit Mout, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

Manchester Branch NSS, Platt Fields, Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m.; Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

The Progressive League. Arts Weekend at Briziers Park, Ipsden, Oxon., June 2nd-4th. Painting, Play-reading, Music, Poetry, Discussion, Dancing. Fee £5. Details: Miss Terry Gabriel, 9 Russell Gardens, London, NW11.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, June 11th, 11 a.m.: MAURICE CRANSTON, "Freethought and Liberty".

West Ham Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, London, E.11), Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.

quick changes and character parts. Peter Coe directs with exactly the right change of pace and Michael Knight's revolving set is devilish ingenious.

The Trojan Wars is probably the first and the best of anti-war plays. It is everything the recent Lowell-Miller production tried to be and wasn't. The credit is largely Euripides'. Reviewed here are the first two of the tetralogy, Iphiginea in Aulis and Hecuba, both translated by Jack Lindsay and directed by Bernard Miles. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that the first is noticeably more colloquial in dialogue and informal in production than the second, especially in the chorus. The second is rather more successful. Euripides doesn't need to be jazzed up to make him relevant for our day. He takes all the epic elements of Homer and uses them as a great funnel to shout the horrors and futility of war. I hope school parties will be brought along in their coachloads. In this production the women are conspicuously more convincing than the men, of whom the most adequate is Stephen Moore as Achilles and Polymester. Josephine Wilson as Clytemnestra, Michelle Dotrice as Iphiginea and Polyxena, and Beatrix Lehman as a Hecuba in the truly epic tradition, nicely contrast acquiescence and rebellion to fate.

Nobody expresses provincial frustration and bourgeois effiteness better than Chekhov. An experimental theatre must be careful about revivals, which will be charged with keeping new writers off the stage, but there are some classics which should from time to time be shown for comparison. Three Sisters (1901) is a standard by which everything else written this century will ultimately be judged, the precursor of *inter alia* the split dialogue of the surrealists. William Gaskell's production is painstaking, unobtrusive and affectionate, and a splendid cast fills its framework with distinction. Avril Elgar, Glenda Jackson and Marianne Faithfull are the three sisters Olga, Masha and Irina. Pop star Marianne Faithfull needs a little more experience to cope fully with Chekhovian breakdowns, but she will clearly, like Tommy Steele, have a rewarding acting life ahead when the fans grow faithless.

LETTERS

Moral animals

THE statement in Dr Goldman's splendid article that "only man is moral" is surely questionable. Quite touching tales are told of faithfulness among animals from birds to elephants. In our back gardens we see some birds on watch while others feed and if a wolf leader makes a private kill he also is killed. Rogue elephants are expelled. Also many whom we term savages are far more social than we 'civilised'.

H. FIDDIAN.

The arms race

I WAS more shocked when I read A. C. Thompson's letter (May 12th) than I have been for many years. Does he not know that an arms race is the most certain way of bringing about a war. The mad and fantastic spending of millions on building armaments which are obsolete before they are finished is lunacy. They are not even a deterrent as the 'enemy' has by then invented an answer to it with more dreadful death-dealers. And thus the race goes on and we are left with the hungry, the destitute and the ignorant while we cut down on schools, hospitals and homes. I do not see where A. C. Thompson gets his ethical necessity for owning these death-dealing horrors. Of course the Pope's prayers won't bring about the end of war but disarmament would. You cannot fight without weapons.

LILIAN MIDDLETON.

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