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N.S.S. SUBMISSIONS ON ABORTION

"Abortion should continue to be regarded as a grave and tragic affair, and public opinion should under no circumstances be allowed to drift into regarding it as an alternative to contraception", says the National Secular Society in its submissions to the Committee on the Working of the Abortion Act. Nevertheless, the NSS advocates a further liberalisation of the present law, in the interests of individual choice and exercise of conscience. Those who lobbied and worked to get the present act on the Statute Book did so to provide safe, cheap facilities for women such as those who might otherwise be tempted to seek recourse to back-street abortionists. They are naturally concerned to hear reports such as that pregnant women seeking termination are being referred to doctors known to be against abortion on principle, and that certain doctors may be making £4,000 a week from private abortions. Equally disturbing are the activities of some of the commercial "pregnancy advice" bureaux. There is now a danger that there may soon be one law for the rich and another for the poor. The text of the NSS submissions is published below.

The Present Law

In considering the working of the Abortion Act, as the law stands, we are of the following opinions:

1. Abortion should take place early, before the foetus becomes recognisably human, for the sake of the medical staff concerned, as well as for the sake of the woman. Delay still makes some women prefer to face the dangers of an illegal operation. We recommend that priority should be given to speeding up the procedure and getting women into hospital without delay.

2. Great care should be taken to protect the abortion patient from psychological damage. We are very concerned by reports of actions by disapproving medical staff which seem designed to torment the patient with an induced sense of guilt. We recall with particular horror the case quoted in the *Daily Mirror* of 29 March 1971, of a woman who before her abortion was forced by the doctor to listen to the foetal heartbeat. Stories of refusal of pain-killing drugs are common, and we suspect that this is often motivated by a desire to punish the patient.

3. In view of the fact that some women who have had abortions bitterly regret doing so, while others feel nothing but relief, we consider it of great importance that an attempt be made, despite the practical difficulties involved, to ascertain the mental state of a statistical sample of women a year after the operation. A rational and humane policy cannot be made effective without such information. One needs to know the proportion of women with regrets and without, analysed according to such factors as age, state at which pregnancy is terminated, marital status, religion, and previous children. Ideally, a similar survey should be made on a sample of women who had considered abortion, but, for one reason or another, allowed the pregnancy to proceed to full term.

4. We are concerned at reports, such as that in the *Daily Telegraph Magazine* of 26 November 1971, that because of the shortage of NHS beds for abortion cases,

and because of localised opposition to the workings of the Act, high fees are being charged for private abortions in far-from-ideal conditions. We recommend:

4.1. That the number of beds available for NHS beds be increased and that this matter be given priority. Techniques such as vacuum aspiration, which may well be more suitable than those at present used, should also be investigated.

4.2. That control and inspection of private abortion clinics be re-assessed and improved.

4.3. That in particular no clinic should be licensed for abortions unless it has access to blood transfusion facilities.

Changes to the 1967 Act

In our opinion abortion should continue to be regarded as a grave and tragic affair, and public opinion should under no circumstances be allowed to drift into regarding it as an alternative to contraception. Equally, we find it repugnant that any woman should be compelled to bear a baby that she genuinely does not want. Such cases still occur despite the present law, and we therefore favour a change in the law permitting *abortion on request*.

We believe that a further change in the law in this direction will alleviate human suffering, but in order that it should do so effectively the following points must be kept in mind:

(a) Where abortion facilities are freely available, certain categories of women may be subjected to powerful pressures by family and friends to have their pregnancies terminated against the woman's personal wishes and judgment. In such cases it is of paramount importance that the woman shall receive protection and moral support from doctors and social workers, so that she may bear her baby in peace. This point should be emphasised

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LUNCH WITH ARTICHOKE

WILLIAM WELSH

My job, as roving correspondent for the *Plymouth High-flyer*, is nothing if not varied. And today's assignment is promising for Snaps and myself.

Jim, my cameraman, known to his friends as Snaps, carries round with him, in addition to his equipment, a copy of the *Sporting Chronicle*, a scrap of paper and a well chewed stub of a pencil. The reason for this in due course.

Today, we've to interview Miss Artichoke, headmistress of the bulging, all-in, purpose built, co-educational and progressive neighbourhood school of Pollution-on-Saltash.

It's ten in the morning. Miss Artichoke is in her sanctum finishing off a slice of no-calorie cake. And glancing downwards, with some misgiving, at over-generous hips. Her latest eating regimen is designed to reduce her ample proportions.

My mate and I approach the door with some confidence. We ring the bell with restrained jubilation. Reporters, we know, are not altogether unwelcome in schools. Particularly when flanked by photographers. Helps public relations. Just tell the old dear she's photogenic and she'll pose with something like abandon. Photogenic can mean, and is meant to mean, nothing at all in this context.

Miss Artichoke is no exception. She greets us with a toothy, but not altogether synthetic smile. As a teacher of the Humanities, she still preserves a little of it. Of the humanity I mean.

"Good morning, gentlemen." Her voice is hoarse from mouthing propaganda for Women's Lib. "I'm ready for you."

She announces this as if about to pounce on us there and then; perform sacrificial rites on our persons in the name of sex equality.

Ultra Progressive

"You see, gentlemen, we're ultra progressive. We've abolished homework, of course; also work in general, you might say. Work, we've found by painful experience, is unpopular with children. This is the first and the most important of our discoveries. A few bizarre personalities in our midst insist on work. We indulge them now and then, but submit the malcontents to regular psychotherapy. Sooner or later they'll succumb to our collective rebellion against the Protestant work ethic. You'll know what I mean."

We don't at all, but appreciating our reactionary leaning towards Anglo-Saxon prosiness of outlook, she goes on to create between us one of those wretched "relationships" she sets so much store on.

She attempts a girlish giggle—to show that Women's Lib. is fundamentally feminine—and continues.

"Of course, gentlemen, I know what you want. You want to know what the public will want to know. What your readers will want. If what I want is what you want, what your readers want, then we're all happy."

Snaps and I are reasonably happy the way things are going. Readers will have what they want. Only this morning, Snaps took cheesecake photos of the Plymouth Rag Queen, goose pimples and all; a chill morning it was. Miss Mayflower, dry in a swimsuit. Another shot of local rep. star, Miss Julia Stripoff, a young actress whose claims to histrionic talent go little further than an ability to disrobe with grace . . . or disgrace, depending on your age and sex. Photo taken not altogether in the altogether but nearly so.

But Miss Artichoke proceeds: "Basically"—basically is an indispensable introduction to her Confucian-like pronouncements—"basically, what we aim at in this school, though you'll appreciate of course that our aims are essentially ambivalent, I repeat, what we aim at for those few who demonstrate, an apparently genuine but somewhat perverse desire to work, is an inter-disciplinary integration of liberal studies content, homogeneous yet varied, unified and fragmented, with cross-fertilisation between autonomous faculty concepts grounded on Concensus—yes, gentlemen, a capital C there—pursued within guidelines of undetermined periphery, not subordinated to rigid administrative structures, designed to permeate but not disrupt the whole infrastructure, itself dependent on, but not wholly frustrated by principles and life-styles altogether democratic in conception, but wholly alienated from archetypal organisation edifices with self-identifying échelons of influence."

She pauses for breath. Snaps and I have been taking notes furiously, and are now mopping our brows. But this is not the end.

"Crikey", mutters Snaps.

"Struth", I reply.

But Miss Artichoke is far away. Can't or won't hear a mutter. Practises her diaphragmatic breathing. Expletives are lost on her. We try to bring her back.

I drop a hint.

"Allow me to suggest . . ."

Miss Artichoke is preconditioned against improper suggestions; but it's not one of these suggestions.

"Allow me to suggest", I try again but to no avail. She spouts her verbosity in an irresistible flood:

Socio-Economic Catalysts

"The whole point of the exercise is to get parents to realise their responsibilities. Parents are susceptible to value-judgments collectively orientated to viable environmental organic units, socio-economic catalysts designed to illuminate by analytic and synthetic formulae, traditional Pavlovian pre-conditioning. Or simple brainwashing. Damn your ears. Oh! sorry, gentlemen, don't mean to be rude. Primitive Freudian *id* pops up from my jolly old unconscious, willy-nilly."

"And, of course", Miss Artichoke babbles on, "our whole ethos falls back on relationships. That and communications. Now take relationships. Everything hangs on them. Indeed, if you don't mind my referring to the subject, gentlemen, well, er . . . , sex you know."

"Actually, it's all quite simple. You'll appreciate, of course, that sex is on the way out. Not way-out any more. Rather on the way out. It's simply a matter of algebraic formulae. Like this: $x = \text{sex}$, $y = \text{relationship}$. Now, since x has nought to do with y , sex has nought to do with relationships. Since relationships are the in-thing, sex is out. QED. Nothing simpler."

"Thank you", groans Snaps, now thirsty for a pint of bitter.

"What do you find is the best approach to religion?" I venture, realising the penchant for RI among pagan parents.

(Continued at foot of next page)

THE NEW YEAR: "GIVE THEM TIME"

MOLLIE M. WATSON

"Where are you going?" anxiously questioned The Young One of The Old One, "and who is that standing behind you with a scythe across his shoulders and an hour-glass in his hand? See, the sand has run out of one half, almost emptying it, and filling up the other."

"It is time for me to go", replied The Old One, "and that is Father Time himself come to lead me to my place in Eternity. I have given Earth one more year's time, now you, The New Year, must take my place. For, when the upper half of the sand-glass is empty, I shall be gone. Soon Humanity will acclaim you and bid you welcome."

"But will they welcome me?" cried The New Year. "Will they not say of me as they have said of you, 'what a year it has been of war, strife, violence and unrest, tyranny and unhappiness. Too much heat, too much cold, flood, famine, distress, and disease. Only a few will have voiced the opinion that it has been a good year, some for money, some for love some for health. I am afraid to be the New Year and have all on earth say I have not been a happy year. Is there not a way in which I can make sure that people all over the world will have the Happy New Year they wish one another?'"

The Old Year sighed, "That you cannot do", he said. "It is not in your power to grant happiness to anyone. All you may do is give them another year of time. Time which some will use well, others waste. Some who will

complain that they have too much time on their hands and want to kill it. Time for living and time for dying, time to do harm and time to do good. Man himself decides what he will do in the time of this coming New Year, though it be no more than a breath drawn in the multi-millions of ages past."

"Why, then?" persisted The New Year, has man not yet found the way to peace and love for each and all nations. Is there no solution to lead to that states?"

"No", answered The Old Year, "not yet. Man is the newest and most complex of all the creatures which inhabit the earth. The most cunning, but at the same time the most gentle; the most generous, the most greedy; the most warlike, the most pacific. Man is all these things and many more. Tolerance, forgiveness, and consideration for his fellow creatures have still to fully emerge and engulf sorrow, misunderstanding and distrust. But now Young One, Father Time beckons me and I must go with him."

"But please", begged The New Year, as the The Old Year turned away, and leaning upon Father Time was rapidly fading from sight. "Cannot you tell me even one thing I can do to help Mankind to live in peace and happiness?"

The departing figure of The Old Year looked back over his shoulder and called out to The New Year, "Give them time. Give them time".

LUNCH WITH ARTICHOKE

(Continued from Previous page)

"As for RI, RE, or what have you, we've reduced it to a perfectly simple affair, an exercise in transcendental euphoria."

"You have, Miss Artichoke?"

"Why, of course. What our children like most is a happening. A love-in if you like. It usually culminates in a spot of oriental transcendentalism, in conformity to the heightened consciousness arising, from, say, pot, or the unreasoning existentialism that's for ever longing for enriching and rewarding experiences."

"Transcendentalism", she goes on, "is the inevitable evolutionary development of impromptu drama experimentalism. At Assembly, children do their thing. Become involved."

"I bet they do", mutters Snaps; I give him a nudge.

Miss Artichoke has gained her second wind: "We have the most marvellous happenings. In strict accordance with the evolutionary process, the boys at Assembly gravitate towards the girls, and the girls, well, they uninhibitedly discard their inherited taboos, their shibboleths—no, gentlemen, not their clothes—and they in turn gravitate towards the boys. Then we're totally involved."

"Arms are raised skywards. In spite of the former Bishop of Woolwich, our child intellectuals will persist in the infantile and regressive notion that celestial emotional experience is somehow directed skywise. But here's the crunch. We gather in a circle, arms pointed upwards, forming a kind of cone, a human pyramid. When the moment of truth comes, we shout 'Hooja, Hooja, Hula, Hola'."

We Lay Bets

Now, about the paper and pencil referred to. When Snaps and I interview a progressive, we lay bets. Like

football pools. Score draws and no-score draws. One point only for communications, relationships, viable, learning process, classroom situation; but two points for orientated, life style, self-identifying, nuclear family, extended family, and finding out "what makes people tick". Results worked out later in the pub.

Hoping the interview will be ultra-controversial, and tickle the palates of Victorian-minded maiden aunts as well as middle-aged lechers, I ask:

"Now, Miss Artichoke, I come to sartorial requirements in your now famous establishment. In short, and at this point I trust you'll excuse my being brutally frank . . ." At this, the Head's eyes light up in prurient anticipation.

"Just tell me, for the record, whether your girls wear hot pants."

Miss Artichoke affects a maidenly blush, but warms up none the less.

"Hot pants? Most certainly. Hot pants, cold pants, the lukewarm variety. Everything goes. Most apposite that our music mistress this morning played Bach's 'Air on a G String'."

"Indeed", I echo, not at first seeing the point.

The usual posing for the camera ensues. The Head assumes a toothy but not altogether synthetic smile. We take our leave rather brusquely. We sprint to the Coach and Horses. Snaps orders a second pint while I make for the pub 'phone booth and dictate my story. I hear the news editor smacking his lips. "Splendid, lads, you've done us proud."

Before we're back at the office, the papers are on the street. Large black type proclaims the message. Flaring headlines announce: "Miss Artichoke Spills the Beans. Hell-Raising Revelations".

The papers are literally hot with sensation. Snaps and I have a latish lunch . . . with artichokes.

THE FREETHINKER

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The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Board.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The *Freethinker* is obtainable at the following addresses. London: Collets, 66 Charing Cross Road, WC2; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, N1; Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street (Angel Alley), E1; Rationalist Press Association, 88 Islington High Street, N1; Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2; Freethinker officer, 103 Borough High Street, SE1. Glasgow: Clyde Books, 292 High Street. Brighton: Unicorn Bookshop, 50 Gloucester Road, (near Brighton Station).

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). For information or catalogue send 5p stamp to Kit Moutat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

Always wanted: books on freethought and kindred subjects. Will call anywhere in the United Kingdom. Immediate settlement and clearance. Nelson's Bookroom, Lydbury North, Shropshire; telephone Lydbury North 219.

EVENTS

Ashurstwood Abbey Secular Humanism Centre (founded by Jean Straker), between East Grinstead and Forest Row, Sussex. Telephone Forest Row 2589. Meeting every Sunday, 3 p.m.

Humanist Holidays. Annual General Meeting and Reunion, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Friday, 7 January, 6.30 p.m.—9 p.m. Refreshments; admission 20p. Ski party to Norway, 26 February for two weeks. Easter at Bristol (no single rooms left). Whitby, Yorkshire, 19 August—2 September. Details: Marjorie Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone 01-642 8796.

The Room, 5 Nelson Road, Greenwich, until 9 January. An exhibition of Paintings by Oswell Blakeston.

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8, Sunday, 2 January, 7.30 p.m. A discussion on the future of LYH.

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 2 January, 11 a.m. David Tribe: "Humanism and Poetry". Tuesday, 4 January, 7 p.m. Peter Fenwick: "Illusion, Education and the Real World".

NEWS

1972

At the beginning of this, the ninety-second year of publication of *The Freethinker*, we take this opportunity of wishing all our contributors, readers, and friends a happy and successful New Year.

In particular, we send New Year greetings to the new state of Bangladesh, emerging from the chaos of war. We hope that this new nation will live up to its proclaimed intention of being a secular democracy, and will serve in the future as an object-lesson to the forces of tyranny and theocracy!

We wish our enemies a happy New Year as well.

PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT

To inherit the editorial chair of G. W. Foote and Chapman Cohen is a great honour, albeit a daunting one—daunting enough to induce a little modesty even in one so incurably pompous as myself! I shall try to live up to it. I am also grateful to Bill McIlroy for "showing me the ropes". To set at rest the fears of those that know me, I promise to try not to fill the paper with nineteenth century history and articles on Ireland to the exclusion of all else!

It is a great temptation, with an historic institution like *The Freethinker*, to fall back all the time into romantic dreams of "dear dead days beyond recall" and thereby become irrelevant to the here-and-now, and yet what did Bradlaugh, Foote and the others strive for, if not, in part, to inspire future generations to pick up the torch? The Victorians worked very hard at creating a myth for themselves that should be "morally uplifting" to posterity. It is incredible how much that most gullible of all ages, the twentieth century, has fallen for it, both by credulity and over-reaction. The other pitfall is to ignore the past completely, for which the humanist movement at large is currently paying the cost, and become trendy and superficial. An editor, like a circus performer, must learn to ride the backs of several horses at once. Perhaps an analogy with Oscar Wilde would be better: "Please do not shoot the pianist, he is doing his best".

Having settled in at Borough High Street, and ordered my aspidistra from the florists, I proceeded to read through some of the back numbers of *The Freethinker*, particularly those of ninety and fifty years ago. The world has certainly changed a lot, but nevertheless the issues with which this paper has been traditionally concerned seem just as relevant. There are no Gotts languishing in English prisons for blasphemy nowadays, but the balefires of theology are burning brightly on the Indian sub-continent and across the Irish Sea, and smouldering in the Near East. We are told, by the naïve, that the battles are all over, and yet tyranny and obscurantism still have an international following in the 1970s. Ninety years ago to the day, G. W. Foote did a "send-up" of a Mr Talmage who was sermonising against "impure literature" in New York, and whose activities Foote compared with "a great uproar in Glasgow about the 'can-can' which was being danced nightly at a music hall by some young ladies in remarkably short dresses; and the result was that before the dance was suppressed half the officials of the city went to see it in the interest of public morality". Nowadays we have what my predecessor aptly called the "Festival of Blight".

AND NOTES

The purpose of *The Freethinker* in the 1970s is, as I see it, to defend intellectual and physical liberty, against supernaturalism and the authoritarian mind; and to champion the old virtues of rationality and truthfulness against modern propaganda and the cults of mass-mindlessness. By the "authoritarian mind" I mean that which believes that everything should either be prohibited or compulsory, and which takes refuge, when on the defensive, in clichés like "opening the floodgates", and "liberty, not licence". The authoritarian mind tends to have a fixation on floodgates, thin ends of wedges, domino theories, and Plato. It will be with us for a long time yet.

POETRY AND PROSE

Several recent editors have refused to include poetry in the general content of this paper, which seems to me a pity when one looks back at the considerable poetic talent that appeared in the columns of the freethought press in the past. We have therefore decided to relax this ruling, and accept a limited quantity of verse. For the time being we can only consider poems that are short—Sylvia Winckworth's *Reminiscence* is a good example of this. Contributors are warned that the editor's tastes in verse are thoroughly old-fashioned and square.

Today, as in the past, *The Freethinker* depends for its success as much on the kindness and generosity of its contributors as on the full-time staff. We should like to thank those who in the past have given of their time and services so willingly and we hope that they will continue to do so. We are always glad of original articles and offers to review books. Would contributors please remember to leave wide margins on their copy, and, in the case of typescript, to *double-space*.

In addition to articles and reviews, we are pleased to receive press cuttings and news of kindred organisations. We will gladly carry notices of meetings, but will secretaries please ensure that we receive notices well in advance, and, in the case of society programmes, please indicate parts which are intended for members only, and not for general publication.

TWO CULTURES?

With all due respect I regret that I cannot live up to David Tribe's compliment that I am "admirably placed to bridge the gap between the 'two cultures'" (*The Freethinker*, 11 December) for the simple reason that this is another myth that I do not believe in. The theory that there are "two cultures" supposes that scientists, and the scientific approach, is completely divorced from the well-springs of art and artistic feeling. This is clearly not true of any of the scientists whom I have met or have read about.

The origin for this category mistake seems to lie in the fact that people nowadays talk of "science" as if it only applied to a dehumanised mass-technology, organised solely for financial profit, and served by armies of intellectual prostitutes. This may be big business, and an "application" of science, but it certainly is not science itself.

As I see the world, there is a single cultural spectrum of many colours, all of which subtly blend at the edges one with another. Science and art are two of the brightest

colours, lying close together, and heavily overlap. The Taj Mahal and the Parthenon, for example, are as much works of art as of engineering. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to know whether certain pursuits should be termed artistic, or scientific, or both. The alternative to science is not art, nor to art, science; but cultural nihilism and death. Both are founded upon man's insatiable curiosity and his search for truth and its expression. Their roots are the same.

RADIUM ON BOXING DAY

Boxing Day tends to be a bit of a Cinderella-day as far as the present holiday season goes. We were therefore pleased to see it commemorated in the Christmas Day edition of *The War Cry* (official organ of the Salvation Army) with an article on Pierre and Marie Curie, entitled "Discovery on Boxing Day", by "Aussie". Apparently the Curies' discovery of Radium was first published in Paris on Boxing Day, 1898. The Curies shared the 1903 Nobel Prize in Physics with Henri Becquerel for their work on radioactivity. Freethinkers now have an excellent reason for joining in the Boxing Day festivities, for as "Aussie" says: "Radium has been used extensively in the realm of medicine, mainly in the treatment of cancer, both to relieve and prevent pain . . . Humanity has much to thank the Curies for; this achievement alone has assured their names of immortality".

We agree, but note that *The War Cry* tactfully omitted to mention that the Curies were both without any religious beliefs and had only a civil marriage ceremony.

RESOLUTIONS FOR IRELAND

We commend the following old Gaelic proverb to Irish readers contemplating a New Year resolution: *Is fearr bheith díomhaoin ná droch-ghnóthach*, or, in the English, "It is better to be idle than evilly-employed".

N.S.S. SUBMISSIONS ON ABORTION

(Continued from front page)

in training for medical and social work. We do not believe that legal restrictions are any solution to this problem, and may, as at present, add to the difficulties of those women who desperately want pregnancies ended.

(b) No doctor or nurse having objections to abortion in general, or in a specific case, should be embarrassed thereby or be required to assist in such an operation. Equally, those carrying out a lawful abortion in good faith should receive no undue hindrance in performing their duties.

(c) Abortion cannot be considered entirely in isolation. In further liberalising the present Act, it is essential that on the one hand, public education about contraception should be intensified and cheap and efficient methods be made readily available (preferably free of charge on the NHS); and, on the other, that improved support and assistance be given to single, poor, and otherwise underprivileged mothers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is our opinion that the right of a pregnant woman to choose either to bear and cherish her child, or to have the pregnancy swiftly and safely terminated, should receive first priority.

A HISTORY OF CRIBBING

I. S. LOW

Schoolboys who crib get caned. But adults who do it often become famous.

Shakespeare cribbed the plots of most of his plays. According to one expert all of them except (I think) *Love's Labour Lost*. And according to the Signet classic edition published by the New American Library, it is accepted that *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is cribbed from a prose romance called *Diana Enamorada* by the Portuguese Jorge de Montemayor (and this gives trouble to the Stratford Establishment, because the English translation came out about five years after Shakespeare's play!). *Twelfth Night* is cribbed mainly from a prose narrative *Of Apolonius and Silla* by Barnabe Rich. Also Shakespeare "pillaged Plautus" (New American Library edition of *Twelfth Night*) for the *Comedy of Errors*. Anyway, I think William is over-rated: when I want a laugh I don't read about Falstaff; I read P. G. Wodehouse and Edmund Crispin.

Some of the most famous bits of Winston Churchill's speeches in 1940 were cribbed. "We shall fight on the beaches . . ." was almost certainly cribbed from a speech by Clemenceau in World War I: "If we are defeated at Amiens we shall fight before Paris; if we are defeated at Paris we shall fight . . ." and so on. I once read an autobiography in which the writer mentions Churchill (in World War I) expressing admiration for this speech, though I've forgotten the name of the book and author. By the way, a friend of mine who had a friend in the Churchill menage tells me that when Winston made that speech he had an aeroplane ready to take him to Canada if necessary. As for "Never was so much owed by so many to so few", it's one of the oldest of cracks. It originated with a battle in the Civil War, "Never did so many flee from so few". And Napoleon had a go at it. Before the Battle of Austerlitz he told his men his plans and said, "Never will so much be accomplished in so short a time".

Handel, the great composer, is shown to have done lots of cribbing. According to Paul Henry Lang in his book *George Frederic Handel*. Handel borrowed from Graun, Kerll, Telemann, Muffat, Keiser, Kuhnau, Habermann, Carissimi, Urio, Erba, Stradella, Porta, Lotti, Legrenzi, Astorga, Steffani, Bononcini, Clari and Cavalli. For instance he inserted a serenata by Stradella into *Israel in Egypt*. Readers of *The Freethinker* might be interested to know that most writers on Handel (e.g. Streatfield) think that the composer of the *Messiah* was a humanist. He was interested in the Bible stories he used in his oratorios because he thought them dramatic not because he was religious. Streatfield quotes a contemporary clergyman as saying, "In spite of all that people say to the contrary, I believe Mr Handel to have been a sincerely religious man", which, as Streatfield points out, suggests there had been doubt on the point. Anyway, the clergy were indignant when Handel used Biblical subjects to create works of art, and *Semele* was simply shocking.

Fleming and Cheyney

Ian Fleming almost certainly cribbed the idea of James Bond: from a character called Slim Callaghan in a series of novels by Peter Cheyney. Callaghan drinks a lot, smokes

a lot, has lots of love affairs with lovely women and is generally unscrupulous. In the Callaghan stories there is a similar atmosphere to the Bond ones, with the West Indies and Chicago gangsters in the background. In a Callaghan book called *The Urgent Hangman* this passage occurs: "Callaghan realised that he was tired. He disliked the feeling, not because he minded being physically tired, but because there was a great deal of quick thinking to be done". And the second paragraph of *Casino Royal*, the first of the Bond novels, starts: "James Bond suddenly knew that he was tired. He always knew when his mind or body had had enough and he always acted on the knowledge". In a Callaghan book *They Never Say When* occurs: "Her voice was soft, pleasant". In *Doctor No*: "The voice was velvet, dangerous". The biography of Ian Fleming mentions how Fleming once hoped that one of his novels would "lay the blabbering ghost of Peter Cheyney". Whom was it haunting? It is amusing to read writers like Kingsley Amis solemnly and pompously laying down the law about how Bond takes a lot of cold showers because this kids the reader into thinking that if he did likewise he'd be able to fight a giant squid—when in fact Bond takes baths because Callaghan takes them! (Callaghan doesn't fight a giant squid.) But of course the Angry Young Men are out of date and off the rails—like John Osborne, who makes Jimmy in *Look Back in Anger* belly-ache about the hydrogen bomb and who (Mr Osborne) then bleats in the Beaverbrook press about how spiritual national sovereignty is—though it's because of national sovereignty that we have to worry about H-bombs!

Marx, Shaw and Mozart

According to Robert Payne, several famous passages of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* were cribbed. "The workers have no country" was cribbed from Jean Paul Marat, the French revolutionary. The bit about the people seeing the feudal coat-of-arms on the aristocratic socialists' backsides came from Heinrich Heine. A young friend of Marx's thought up "The proletariat have nothing to lose but their chains" and "workers of the world unite". Anyway, dear old Karl is a bit dated now. It's no longer true that Capitalism is the main enemy of mankind as dear old Karl thought, national sovereignty's far more dangerous.

Bernard Shaw frankly admitted that he got the idea of *Mendoza*, the brigand who writes poetry in *Man and Superman* from a character in a novel *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* by Conan Doyle. And T. S. Eliot did it again and again—for instance "I had not thought death had undone so many" in *The Waste Land*. And in the section "A Game of Chess" in the same poem we have "The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne glowed on the marble . . ." Compare these lines from Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, "The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne burned on the water".

The following instance can't be regarded as proved. But I think it's interesting. A year or two ago I was at a weekend school on the operas of Mozart. The lecturer, who

(Continued on back page)

JUST HUMAN NATURE

CHARLES BYASS

In the volumes which have been written and spoken about over-population, pollution and conservation, much has also been said about human nature. Experts and non-experts on this latter subject can perhaps at least share the experience of knowing some of "the facts" from "the mere theories".

Of the forces which are now going against survival of the human species, the most powerful exist within the very nature of the human species. The most powerful threat comes from among those innate human forces which are generally called "instincts" or, more popularly, "just human nature". Of these inherited instincts, the one of "aggression" is rivalled only by the sex one as being the force which "will yet" be the death of us all.

Long ago, when human groups, and members of those groups, "lived by their instincts", aggression was a force for survival. Today, the human situation is very (though not entirely) different. We still have the "old" instinct of aggression but its "old" exercise is—as it has long been—no longer appropriate; rather more—it now rather serves extinction.

The human species has, so far, not merely survived; it has also "developed". There has been, along with the survival of our "old" survival kit aggression, a new exertion of human faculties. The cumulative exertion of these faculties now presents us with "new" powers, by way of science and technology. It is the combining of "old" aggression, newly applied faculties, and "new" powers which now poses the question of human survival. If in the use of our "new" powers we follow our "old" aggression, it will lead us to extinction.

A New Remoteness

Now while there is much "gain" in our "new" applied faculties and "new" powers, there is a "loss" of "old" identities and immediacies which used to regulate "old" aggression. Today, many things (indeed) can be done by simply pressing buttons, turning switches. There is now a "new" remoteness between human action and human response to its outcome. Moreover, many of us can sit comfortably while reading, listening to and/or looking at "news reports" of human and other happenings on, and sometimes off, this planet. If in this there is the "gain" of a response which is rationally controlled or aggressively ineffectual, there is a "loss" in that an act of imagination now comes between even an "actual" event and our response to it. There is *no* equivalent experience to that of "actually" witnessing an event, let alone being "actually" involved in it. The "new" intermediary of the mass media may well be muddling the "old" aggressive responses.

In general, the healthy thing to do today is not to suppress (or exercise) "bad old instincts" like aggression, but rather to satisfy them with some "new" exercises; the aim is to satisfy them in ways which are at heart negatively harmless if they are not positively beneficial. All human beings of course display their share of "old" aggression. There is, however, the desire and intent of directing aggression at things rather than persons. In the potential target of these "things" are the "things" which are done by persons and the "things" which make persons do those things. If it is not always easy to "miss" the person, even with oneself, to help the aim there is the allied ambition to understand what it is that makes us do the things we do.

Ignorance is perhaps the most powerful enemy of "new" aggression; as perhaps lack of understanding is of the persuasion of reason. And if the dark places in our nature "take some understanding", there is no need to lose sight of the brighter ones.

Quite a lot of new aggression is already being aimed at many physical, intellectual and moral things. Whenever and if "new aggressives" reject the supernatural or attack superstition, they are not rejecting or attacking religious or superstitious persons but "things" which are done in the cause or name of a religious or a superstitious belief. All beliefs can apply as a potential target for "new" aggression; as can all intolerances in the related target of "things" done through intolerance. Here it is perhaps particularly healthy to recall that some persons have a natural resistance to "things" of change and some persons are naturally inclined to question established "things". Yet also there is the instinctive respect for "the person" which has been established by nature. This "instinct" has its counterpart in new aggression at things which go against "the person"; as do so many things in the thing of status and of "competition". Much disrespect to "the person" is also done in the cause or name of such things as the dead, the past, the future and—sometimes perhaps less irrationally—the Here and Now. There can never be a right and sensible time to kill and die "on behalf of" the survival of the human species.

Acting Out Aggression

Of course, there are already today many new exercises which appear to be satisfying old aggression well enough. There are the many forms of art and entertainment; in the process of creating things (if not persons) we can exercise physical, intellectual and moral aggression without the end product being necessarily "aggressive". Then there is sport (blood sports excepted) and games, where the occasional old aggression at least takes place within new semi-rational rules. There can be no winning or losing between persons but there *can* be persons against skills. Most team supporters appear to satisfy old aggression with a militancy that is "acted" rather than actual.

Among supporters and would-be supporters of human survival there are perhaps some who can share the experience of thinking and feeling that, apart from the Saviour, the enemy is within us yet so are the allies. The ambitious hope is of course that in a new "acting out" of old aggression, everyone can be aggressive without actually harming anyone.

National Secular Society

THE CLARENCE, WHITEHALL, LONDON, SW1

Friday, 7 January, 8 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

THE DEREK BENTLEY CASE IN PERSPECTIVE

Speaker:

DAVID YALLOP

author *To Encourage the Others*

N.C.C.L. REPORT ON NORTHERN IRELAND

The National Council for Civil Liberties has recently published a report, entitled *Crisis in Northern Ireland*, which includes the text of a letter and recommendations to HM Government on the Ulster situation.

The NCCL's recommendations included: a general release of all detainees under the Special Powers Act; a general amnesty for certain categories of prisoners (such as those detained under the Criminal Justice Amendment Act, 1970); repeal of the Special Powers Acts of 1922 and 1933; reform of the Northern Ireland judiciary; a bill of rights; and withdrawal of all gun licences. In its list of proposals the report also comments: "We can see no justification for the continuation of denominational schooling, provided that adequate opportunity exists for the study of different religions and cultural values, and provided that order can be restored to the point where it again becomes safe for children to travel reasonable distances to schools".

The report has some hard words to say about both ends of the Northern Ireland political spectrum: "There are those in Northern Ireland who will say that the consistent neglect of injustice left them no alternative but the gun. No doubt such views can be expressed with complete sincerity, but they are wrong . . . Just as injustice feeds on itself, so violence breeds violence and creates a legacy of fear and hatred from which it becomes progressively more difficult to escape. Furthermore, civil liberties may only survive within the context of respect for the proper rule of law and for the rights and feelings of others".

Of the Unionists, the report goes on to say: "It is hard to see how discrimination in general can be effectively eradicated while the Orange Order retain its dominant influence over the governing party. Its capacity for mischief cannot be underestimated as demonstrated by its recent offer to enrol members of the British Armed Forces".

The report deals with other anomalies which have come to NCCL's notice, such as the case of a man receiving a six-month sentence for painting "No tea here" on his house, and an ex-B Special being given a suspended sentence for "discharging his gun in a public place". The report also lists cases of alleged maltreatment of detainees in internment camps, and includes cases of phoney medical treatment for fictitious diseases, exhausting exercises, and deprivation of food and sanitary facilities. Commenting on the findings of the Compton Report, the NCCL document describes them as presenting "an appalling study of ill-treatment, and . . . brutality by some troops and police . . . In spite of the serious weaknesses in the nature and scope of the inquiry, it found that brainwashing techniques had been used that we believe to be reminiscent of Algeria and Greece . . . If the same incidents were to happen in an English police station, they would surely be correctly labelled as 'brutality'".

Crisis in Northern Ireland is obtainable, price 10p, from NCCL, 152 Camden High Street, London NW1.

REMINISCENCE

Heartbreak and happiness, development;
 The waiting, the frustration, the desire,
 Illumination, fate's uncertain fire
 Lighting the destined path, and my intent
 To learn and love and suffer, for I must
 Encounter new experience every day,
 Losing and winning, finding a new way,
 Accepting both the just and the unjust
 Remembering that past anguish when the heart
 Challenged the power of time, in vain, in vain,
 And then, with a new day, the stumbling start
 To join the human pilgrimage again.
 And now, in winter stillness, now I hear,
 The wings of fate surmounting doubt and fear.

Sylvia Winckworth.

A HISTORY OF CRIBBING

(Continued from page 6)

thought Mozart was the Greatest Opera Composer Who Ever Lived (which I don't) was talking about that composer's *Don Giovanni*. He said, "Most composers at that time wrote an opera about Don Juan. For instance Gluck [who composed before Mozart] wrote one. And—it's remarkable—the two operas are note for note the same. It's extraordinary!"

I've just heard of another case. In *The Guardian* (3 December 1971) the famous economist Professor J. K. Galbraith, the author of *The Affluent Society*, admits that he cribbed the celebrated phrase "the bland leading the bland" from a speech by Arthur Schlesinger about the Eisenhower administration. But Galbraith says he realised what a good phrase it was more clearly than Schlesinger did.

What's the lesson from all this? I think it is this: a really first class piece of work is beyond the power of any single individual. If you try to produce some really great drama all by yourself—if you try to think up the plot, develop the characters, etc.—you'll fail. But if you crib someone else's plot you'll be able to devote time and energy to the descriptions, the style, the characters, and the world will say what a genius you are. But you must do one thing—you must do something better with the idea you've cribbed than the man who thought of it did. Handel is an example of devotion to this rule. Also let us realise that the man who first thinks of an original idea deserves as much honour as the man who pinches it and wins glory. Finally don't feel too inferior—you might have written *Hamlet* yourself if you'd thought to crib (even if you couldn't fight a giant squid).