

# BEYOND THE PALE - Growth of a Messiah

A collection of autobiographical sketches by  
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## PREFACE

Comprised of numerous autobiographical sketches, this literary work is divided, unusually, into four sections, the first dating from 1983, the second from 1985, the third from 1993, and the fourth from 1996. All these sketches are written in the supernotational vein of my mature philosophy (especially from 1985 onwards) and often overlap with general speculations on a variety of subjects which have played a significant role in my personal life. Thus they are anything but purely autobiographical, although autobiography forms the basis of this project, which is certainly beyond the pale of 1983 so far as three of the four sections are concerned!

John O'Loughlin, London 1996 (Revised 2008)

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# SELF-REVELATIONS (1983)

Writing a journal is really a sort of madness, though it isn't generally recognized as such - unlike, for instance, a person who talks to himself. The writer of journals, notebooks, diaries, etc., also talks to himself, but on the higher level, as it were, of recorded thought. Often the journal is kept or written without concern for immediate publication; though most famous writers who keep journals doubtless do so with respect to eventual, if posthumous, publication. Thus Baudelaire, Gide, Camus, Nietzsche, amongst others. Had they not also been recognized men-of-letters, with various publications to their names, it is doubtful that any of them would have kept journals.

Although, from another point of view, it could also be said that a man addicted to writing will be glad of the opportunity a journal affords to continue writing, if in a relatively relaxed, lazy, and informal kind of way. When he has nothing else to do, or is unwilling to take on a difficult professional task, he can always take refuge in a journal, passing the time in a lukewarm though, on the whole, intellectually-gratifying, egotistical sort of way.

But if talking to oneself is a sort of madness, then writing to oneself cannot be much else, even if it corresponds, as a rule, to a more intelligent mind!

I have never much liked the proletariat, especially the lumpen proletariat, of which description the Borough of Haringey and, in particular, the area of Hornsey would appear to be well stocked. The man who lives in the room next to mine is a vulgar boor, who can never close a door without slamming it. He wretches and coughs in a disgusting manner, and very often mimics 'ahems' for my dubious benefit; though I am so used to such tepid sarcasm by now, after nine years of bedsitter accommodation in north London, that I tend not to be offended by it. What I most suffer from, where this middle-aged proletarian is concerned, is the volume of his television, which penetrates the thin wall separating our respective rooms on a nightly basis, obliging me, when I can't bring myself to complain, to seek refuge in wax earplugs. Sometimes one can hear his television blaring away during the afternoon as well, though he is generally more considerate then than at other times, possibly because he is slightly ashamed to be indoors all day (he is unemployed) and doesn't wish to distract me from my writing or, more likely, because the TV is simply less interesting then.

But I dislike the man intensely, not only because he is a layabout, but because of his bad language, ugly proletarian looks, cultural philistinism, and tendency to slam his door. Once or twice I thought of asking him to close it quietly; but, on reflection, I supposed that I would merely appear in a humiliating light, as a gentleman prepared to live with, or being obliged to live with, a rough prole! Then again, how can one expect someone who is so patently not a gentleman to behave like one? It would be quite illogical of me to require gentle behaviour of a lumpen brute. I have no option, short of changing address, but to persevere with him!

It was not so long ago that I began to form a distinction, in my mind, between children and kids. Ordinarily, educated people would take the latter term for a vulgar equivalent to the former, a lower-class way, as it were, of referring to children. This is of course the way I see it on one level; though on another level, peculiarly my own, I prefer to regard kids as lower-class children, as creatures for whom the term 'children' would be inappropriate, because suggesting something delicate, well-behaved, pretty, gentle, quiet, well-spoken, shy, respectful, and intellectually curious. These 'kids', on the other hand, are foul-mouthed, dirty, brutish, destructive, and ugly, being, in Ezra Pound's concise phrase, the 'offspring of the very poor'.

Living in a room which overlooks an alley, I have heard and seen these 'kids' playing there often enough to know that, by no stretch of the poetic imagination, could one reasonably apply the word 'children' to them! One or two of them are notably fiendish, and will doubtless become vandals and thugs in years to come. A 'kid' is not someone one would wish to pat on the head for being a good boy. On the contrary, he is somebody to avoid contact with, from fear that one might be tempted to knock him on the head for being a brute!

It would be difficult to imagine a greater musical distinction than that which exists between the two violin concertos on a Supraphon record I recently had the privilege of borrowing from Hornsey Central Library, and that despite the extraordinary fact of both concertos having been composed or published in the same year (1939), and being performed, on this record, by the same orchestra, viz. the Czech Philharmonic, under the same conductor, viz. Karel Ancerl, with the same violinist, viz. André Gertler.

These two quite remarkable concertos are the Hindemith and the Hartmann, and whereas the former is the epitome of Neo-Classicism, the latter comes straight out of mid-nineteenth-century Romanticism, and therefore isn't even late-Romantic, like, say, the Berg Violin Concerto, but anachronistically Romantic, reminiscent of Liszt. This in part doubtless explains why we're not more familiar with Hartmann's name!

Nevertheless, a considerable work in its own right, demanding passionate incisiveness from the soloist over long stretches of the third movement, the *allegro di molto*, which contrasts with the generally lugubrious tone, *de profundis*, of the preceding and succeeding movements, the work itself having been dubbed *Concerto Funebre*. But, typical of Romanticism of this type, one is dragged into the emotional vortex and obliged to identify with the composer's and performers' passion, particularly in the third and longest movement.

How different from the Hindemith, which keeps one outside, a spectator, as it were, of its cool classical poise, sparsely orchestrated with the finest of solo tones, the violin for the most part in the highest register - clear, clean, precise, a dispassionate, though not indifferent, performance. I would have preferred the Romantic work on side one and the Neo-Classical on side two, so that, having plumbed the depths, one could soar to the heights of dispassionate contemplation. Beginning with the latter and ending with the former, however, suggests a kind of Jekyll-and-Hyde transformation on the part of orchestra and soloist alike. Nevertheless, a great record!