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It began to occur to me that it would be interesting to set down a detailed account of my working life as a writer over a period of a year or so, and thereby to try to find out what kind of unprecedented world we live in and whether we have much understanding of it. As I wrote this day by day---talks with publishers, agents, actors, theatre managers, TV directors and producers---I began to find that there was an extraordinary ignorance of the functions of the present world among those who set out to provide it with its image. I found myself describing an unprecedented state of affairs which were largely treated as if they were a known and therefore past state of affairs---not only in the world of publishing and play-performing and film-making but in every world I touched on, from politics to working class life, from the countryside to newspaper organisation and travel. A new world had apparently come about which few people approached with more than the attitudes of the past. My scene is mostly London, but this necessarily involves Americans too, as they are so active in the literary and filming scene here. As I travel a lot, the Continent is taken into some of the arguments. When I am trying to describe something in detail here in London I elicit from it the non-provincial interest, and otherwise throw it out. For instance, a repeated experience in the narrative is that a purely English enterprise---where no Americans or Germans or Italians or even English Jews are involved---begins with warmth and then slowly or quickly peters out. Now this could be the occasion for moral reflection, about English 'cold feet', the now notorious lack of enterprise and grip. But my conclusion is, again and again, that in England perhaps more than anywhere else in the western world, including the once-agrarian Italy, there is a ~~greater~~ gap between present practices and functions on the one hand and attitudes and knowledge on the other.

Another fact elicited gradually from the narrative is that I find myself more and more dependent indirectly on American money, mostly via the publishers. At first this looks like the kind of international co-production which is happening in almost every field today. And that is so, partly. No TV 'art programme', for instance, can hope to be made nowadays on the finances of an individual TV company in any one country. My narrative shows the Swedes and Germans putting up over half the money for a BBC script of mine. But what I am saying here is that most other fields of English life show a story of American backing, until you find that little with real vitality lacks it. Here again there are powerful motives for moral reflection---'Chruchill sold us to the Americans' etc. But the facts are far more interesting. America is the first pure money-society, and its money-infiltration into other parts of the world has been exactly proportionate to the awareness in those parts of the system we now live in: that is, the greater the awareness the less damaging the infiltration. My conclusion is therefore that the infiltration into England has been as damaging as it clearly has been (producing

a sophisticated stagnation, comparable---but in terms of advanced civilisation---with the present state of Haiti) because of the stupendous ignorance of the operations of our world, above all in this country's one-time elite. It is not to say that America started the money society, or even developed and refined it. That was done in the sixteenth century in the first banking operations that disregarded frontiers. The election of Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor, for instance, was financed to the tune of a million gold sequine mostly by the Fugger banking family in Germany. Money of course is only the symbol of the operation. It takes no notice of allegiance: it seeks opportunities to expand, to reach profit, irrespective of allegiance. And naturally, when you have a pure money society, as ours is behind the web of allegiance and historical background, you have a quite new state of affairs which means the fundamental alteration of life from anything that the past history of Christendom even up to 1940 might have led us to expect.

This country's elite, hanging on by its last lifelines in the Fifties of this century, had on the whole little sense that a new world had come about which they as much as anyone else (and perhaps more than anyone else) had produced. It was thoroughly confused by its sense (even the bankers were) of having an historical position, and by an upbringing which offered moral incentives and even moral explanations for operations that clearly had nothing to do with morality at all. Its collapse was therefore all the more momentous. The disbandment of the British empire was the quickest collapse of a world power ever recorded in history, so drowsily indifferent was the elite to even its own survival (meaning 'so sunk in allegiance'). And socially therefore it was as smooth a transition of power as that which took place in the last hundred years of the Venetian republic, whose elite was as drowsily unconcerned for itself and for precisely the same reasons.

Through part of the narrative I am living among 'working people', who show as devastating an ignorance as the ex-elite, with more dangerous consequences because there are more of them. I notice their unsatisfied yearning for allegiance of the old type, and their assumption that it still exists, by way of mental substitute, and without any leadership towards the present realities. The lower the tabloid, the greater the tribal wallowing---via the eyes now. Another thing I become aware of is that the nineteenth-century system of work schedule, which took a man out of the house round about dawn, and brought him back about dusk, and was a visible guarantee not only that he had work but respectability, still dominates the 'working class' districts like a pall, at a time when work is staggered, no longer belonging to the mechanical but the electronic epoch. It is no longer true, as it was before World War II, that a working man seen out during the day was naturally put in the shameful

category of the workless, but the pall---the memory of this remains, and goes together with the expectations of allegiance and belonging. The streets no longer have the appalling sense of imprisonment, like a treeless ghetto cut off by no visible frontier (but all the more cut off for that) from the happier districts. But with the loss of ^{the} cauterised and disembowelled atmosphere of a ~~the~~ concentration camp has gone the snugness. Of course this is a slowly developing story, not one that started even twenty years ago: the evolution to our strikingly unbearable society has been slow, but the convulsions have been clear and sudden, and quick in their effects. I take England as a graphic example of what has been happening, and of the confusion that of course exists in every part of the world. It is a more subtle picture than that presented by Italy, for the simple reason that agrarian and virtually mediaeval Italy has had to leap across two revolutions (the mechanical and the electronic) simultaneously, with the result that the old attitudes, being so utterly irrelevant, were more easily ~~shed~~ shed, while in this country---more perhaps than anywhere else outside America---the expectations resulting from the mechanical revolution, a clamorous nineteenth century of great wealth, make it seem that the present age is known, that 'modernity' has long since been reached. Thus it is possible for the Italian holidaying in London today to find the hotels 'old fashioned', meaning that for ~~then~~ they do not belong to the recognisably 'modern' (in this case electronic) epoch. As a matter of fact nothing crippled this country's society more than its experience of the long mechanical revolution, when worker and middle-class expectations were drilled to a fixity difficult now to unloose. The old agrarian atmosphere of Italy, where a man might work for a month and then enjoy himself on the money before taking up another job (the 'Neapolitan' system), yielded much more easily to present requirements than the rigid mechanical society. There was no association between work and respectability, none of the evangelical background of Anglo-Saxon industrial life. Work was no allegiance, therefore it was all basically casual. That more than any other factor is the reason for the survival of Italy in this epoch, though the advantages will probably now dissolve as money-society industrial strikes, a new ferment of ideas, take hold.

No writer could describe working-class life today without talking a lot about the obsessive frivolity and the taste for violence that have crept into it, part of the same process. It is necessarily the field of his greatest battles. I show it operating in the TV companies---in the actual people, despite themselves. I show violence as a sophisticated taste (inherited with literacy), not the 'tribal' one quoted by some people, though of course it is a tribal response on a highly evolved level. The viciousness and violence on TV are the satisfaction of an effete taste, so to speak the last spasms of the body shaken by its failure to achieve any of the old satisfactions of allegiance, its struggle to achieve a new set of relationships of a tribal kind; a quest ~~originally~~ originated by the disturbed mind, not by the animal impulses, though it exploits and distorts these. Thus I would not at all accept the usual explanation of 'American violence' as something to do with America being a pioneer country, where violence has been an accepted

mode from the beginning. This violence is of a quite new and special (and worldwide) order, only America concentrates it precisely to the degree of its purity as a money society. The pioneer-country explanation is the 'old-type' thinking, the thinking by 'history', just as the idea of progress (and of America as the denouement of a long historical development of a moral kind) is 'old type' thinking, fit for another society where the idea of a moving belt of time, to-and-from, was a principal source of energy. Now America lacks the 'compensatory' background of history and the still-recognisable allegiances that other countries of the world have. It has none of the deep-cast shadows of aristocracy, church, tribe that the other countries have. The development of a pure money society makes no such spectacular reading. The degree of dislocation is greater in America than anywhere else, so much so as to threaten the survival of its social life. Now this subject of America enters the narrative not as the description of a foreign country but as an in extremis description of our own society, in all the various forms (the American-violence programmes that go out on the TV channels nightly, co-production schemes, visits of presidents, talks by campus revolutionaries recorded there and put out here, the numberless American 'refugees' in London, the Vietnam demonstrations). We have to guard just the same against the 'historical' view that we have been sucked into an 'american' world empire; it is simply that the whole world has been sucked into a new society, and that for a time America was its purest and most available element. In the narrative I notice Walter Lippmann in an interview with the British correspondent Henry Brandon saying, 'I think the difficulty for you, Henry, if I may say so, being English, is that you are haunted by the notion that the United States is going to fill the role in the twentieth century that Britain thinks it filled in the nineteenth century. I mean after the Napoleonic War the theory was that there was a Pax Britannica in the world. After World War 11, Britain having exhausted itself and America becoming very strong, the theory was propagated---foremost of all by Churchill himself after World War 11---that from now on we should have a Pax Americana in the world. Now, that proved to be an illusion. There won't be a Pax Sovietica or anything like it, because the world is too big to be governed by anybody. There will be no central place---not London, not Washington, not the United Nations---to which you can go and resolve every conflict.'

What I do not say is that there is a gap between people's attitudes and the 'technological' world that has come into being. I try to show that in fact the ~~technological~~ ^{technological} has come from the attitudes, and not vice versa, that the techniques are a manifestation of the change and not the change itself. I say that film and TV came into existence because they were required, they never 'burst' into life. I show that in fact ~~cinema and TV~~ cinema and TV are offshoots of the restricted 'picture stage' or 'proscenium arch' theatre, rather than actually in themselves imaginative advances. It was an imaginative requirement that brought them into being, but they did not satisfy this requirement; they were only instruments on the way. They are not the denouement that the old history-type thinking makes of them---i.e. the climax of a sort of moral unfolding, as if people everywhere and at all times dreamed and aspired towards them, and as if

they are here to ~~stay~~^{stay} and no one in the future will want to derive other satisfactions from life than ours. The narrative continually goes into the naivete of this now accepted ordinary man's thinking which derives from evangelical industrialisation. As a matter of fact, as I try to show, the theatre will satisfy new thinking far more than the cinema and TV for the simple reason that it is not, as technique, tied to the picture-stage or Italian renaissance-type of presentation, which is bound in Newtonian or rationalist space-time. The frame of the camera anchors it to this picture-view of life, and makes TV and cinema veer between two opposite extremes of the exhibition (french sense---erotic show) and the documentary. On the stage it is easy to talk across endless spaces and endless times, and in my narrative I describe how I have done it myself by using what I call the multiple-action stage. Most people even in the theatre (because it is still stumbling in the picture-stage, 'a window on to life' formula, and therefore is overshadowed by the cinema and TV) fail to recognise this 'new' but in fact simply proper use of the stage in the script form. I show Laurence Olivier (in a letter to another manager) having a slight misgiving that my script is 'static', for the good reason that he is an actor and studies the speeches (as he should and must) and not the movement. The script manager of a London theatre who recognised the mobile qualities of my script at once did ~~so~~ not do so because he was a better sirector than anyone else but because of the fact that in thirty years of stagework he had never branched off into TV or cinema. Contrary to expectations, he had a better chance of rejecting the picture-stage formula, which incidentally is less prevalent in Shakespeare than in most dramatic TV presentations.

In describing the development of a TV film called The Fall of Venice I show the difficulty of making a transition from the eighteenth century to modern life so as to convey a synthesis of meaning, though on the face of it the technique of the mix and dissolve make it easy, because of the expectations of the audience, who while used to adjusting very quickly from cut to cut cannot make the leap beyond the space-time formula of the actual camera-form. On the stage one can do it without the slightest confusion on the part of the audience; I deploy the stage for an audience accustomed to the quick cuts and message-giving dissolves of the TV and cinema, and maintain that people are fully capable of watching and absorbings several quite distinct actions at once, and of drawing from these ~~several quite distinct actions~~ ~~actions~~ separate actions exactly the synthesis I want them to draw.

Naturally the narrative shows the struggle of the writer as chiefly one against dead attitudes, the failure to think through the formulae used by the press and other media as the only shared language of mind that exists. The media live on cliché for this reason (no 'private' or 'personal' material). I show TV script editors reading formulae into all scripts not because they are journalistic in temperament but because they have somewhere along the line accepted the formulae as simply a description of the truth. I therefore basically show the struggle of the writer (and by inference the struggle of everyone) as that of unravelling the dead formulae

by means of which the people round him are interpreting life.

The skeleton of the narrative is provided by the gradual development from talking to plotting to planning to deplanning to bungling to finally shooting a BBC film (The Fall of Venice). It describes how the idea grew from a book of mine of the same title on the last hundred years of Venice's independence (Weidenfeld/Praeger). I describe a quick visit to Venice with the director, and our 'plotting the moves' and talking to anyone willing to talk to us. Venice is an excellent vehicle for describing the 'old' society kept alive for decorative purposes in a world that in no way resembles it: this is what kept Venice alive for its last hundred years---the fact that it was a showplace of the ancien regime to which people flocked from every part of Europe as a relief from the increasingly revolutionary atmosphere elsewhere. And it shows the collapse of an empire. Above all it shows that where some discrepancy exists between attitudes and actual practical function the same tastes prevailed as in our society---violence became 'heroic', there was stupendous self-indulgence; Carlo Gozzi in a famous sentence described Venice as a place where the men were women and the women men, and both monkeys. He said they 'sniffed' at each other like hounds on a scent. Great women lowered their shawls at the opera and were put under house arrest for it. And so on. There was the same obsessive use of the fertile organ as there is today, that is it had an obsessive imaginative role, being the main symptom of the mind-in-vertigo, unable---in the midst of imperial or religious or family or class allegiances of the past (allegiances as strong in the common people as in other classes)---to adjust to a world where these allegiances amount to nothing. A great sense of liberation is experienced, the old exclusive society is thrown off: the self-indulgence and self-display are simply the old society dissolving. So The Fall of Venice make a useful skeleton for the narrative, not simply in providing a story but in demonstrating the theme.

The narrative maintains that sexual exhibition or pornography belongs together with violence. Now I also examine this 'violence' in terms of Venice. Its 'violence' was the same as ours, in the sense that the Venetians were most peaceful and charming, as we are civic, and you could no more see the violence than you can in any respectable city today. It is the taste for violence, the imaginative appeal of violence that we are talking about: the mental violence that now and then realises itself in actual violence, as of course it must. When violence is achieved, you read about it in the papers, as Venice read about it in the gazettes (which were not by accident the first newspapers there ever were). That is, newspapers came into being because they were required. People wanted to read about it. It became more important than action. The newspapers reported what action there was. Today a minute amount of action from every part of the world makes a full newspaper.

As to the title, PICTURES OF A DARK AGE, this reference is not a loose moral reflection but a comparison of this epoch with the period between the Roman and the Christian empires. The historian Maitland once said that we call those ages dark because we are in the dark as to what happened in them. It simply means that the

spectacular and recorded events necessary to the making of history books were lacking. But there is increasing evidence that this was a period of ferment and incubation, when life went on developing (even in the matter of inventions) until what we know as the middle ages were evolved. And I compare this period we have now to that period of 'dark' incubation (necessarily dark like all incubation). The old 'barbarities' are noticed and dealt with, and stand out by their contrast with the new minds aware of them, and become for the moment even more in evidence than before. Naturally the middle ages, a highly evolved epoch, with inventions and doctrines and researches that emanated in what we call the renaissance, that is the beginning of our world, could not have come about after a stagnant twilight boorish period at the end of the Roman empire. In any case it is simply not the way empires fall. Also of course we have the comparison between the falls ~~of~~ (that is, the evolution into new epochs) of the Roman and European (British/French) empires, whose systems of communication were exploited for the new uses to be put upon them. The American society falls into place as the new multilingual switchboard for a time--- a brief time because the nature of the newly evolved epoch is as little imperial, as little given to strong centres as the middle ages were, in fact much less so.

We should not be blinded by the multiple inventions and apparently spectacular events of our epoch. Journeys to the moon or Mars or Venus, or extra-uterine conceptions, add nothing to the scene, as little as a man with toothache in Bangkok resolves it by flying to Berlin. Incubation is an interior affair. What is financed, publicised and heralded is necessarily of an archaic nature, however it may be in the 'modern' idiom. Decided epochs are simply decided attitudes, and these are not formed by means of clear power-endorsed announcements. What is looked on now as spectacular (but even then by relatively few people) will later seem simply a mechanical repetition of earlier attitudes. The impatience of American TV audiences at their programmes being over-interrupted for space shots was in fact impatience with archaic concerns, above all perhaps with the hypertensive theory imported from Germany that contemporary society is the culmination of the work of past societies, in an ever rising line: pageant science always carries this implication of tribal arrogance.

As the narrative remains at this moment it will claim that civilisation has nothing to do with manners, much less civic manners, but is always the attempt however bungled and brief to realise in daily life the terms of some mystical thought. The failure of Christianity to provide a valid basis for the realities, to provide adequate 'spiritual exercises' is therefore the basis and key of the book, though it will hardly take up more than a few pages. Here I may use with value my present commission The Spanish Terror (Constable/Putnam) for something on the Jesuit exercises. Thus the narrative of a writer's working life is used to fulfil a programme far beyond a recital of market news.

Here below are some excerpts from the narrative, taken at various points throughout. Naturally the future work involved in this book is the collation of day-to-day material, noted down without particular thematic slanting, into a continuous narrative with dominant and recurring themes. At the moment the work is in the form of

five or six close-written notebooks. It is still being written, necessarily, since I want the shooting of the TV film to close the story at the end and that won't happen before March 1970. I imagine about 80-100 thousand words would come out of it.

You will see that I use italics here~~and~~ there. In the book these would actually be italics bold, so that the themes will be clearly seen in the body of the work, and recognised whenever we want to look forward or back through the pages. Partly this is to replace chapter divisions and running titles, which are rather made impossible by the nature of the book.

The Hitler excerpt below is one of several designed to demonstrate the theme that Hitler and Mussolini laid down the working principles of the 'dark age' for the first time.

I think perhaps there is an occasion for pictures in this book, with captions from the text.

....I passed by the Arts theatre to get a decision on Carmagnola but a 'crisis' had just happened---there were no costumes for a show going up at the end of the week....

....He phoned on Friday to say that the BBC might possibly put up the money for a film of Mann's Death in Venice with perhaps Paul Schofield playing Aschenbach, and would I do something to get hold of the rights. He said we would simply stay on in Venice when our FALL OF VENICE had been shot. I telegraphed Germany and next day got a call to say that Erika Mann had sold the rights in the States some years ago and that she was trying to disentangle them, in which case they would be ours....

....the story of Berlin in the last war on TV, and we saw Hitler in triumph, with vast pushing crowds. Later he was on a balcony with Goering and others. Goering was shaking his head like a delighted child at the sheer size of the crowd below, and exchanged a glance with Hitler, and Hitler smiled to himself in a quick moment of intimate pride. Hitler craned forward suddenly; he wanted to see how far the crowd extended. Goebbels, seen at a political rally, looked as much a boy as Goering, but ingenuous, with vigorous, even perhaps unmalicious thoughts passing through his head. None of them seemed to have anything to do with Hitler. The crowds, healthy and smiling, delightedly pushing at the cordons of police, who delightedly held them back, seem to have nothing to do with him either. He is quite alone. He steps down from his car in a prowling, ghostly way. When he peers into the camera during a procession his eyes are black discs without the slightest meaning or depth in them. They carry no message whatsoever. They are simply black stagnant pools in which nothing is reflected. The message comes from the crowds. Their cheering is the message. He seems simply the instrument. He seems to float, long-stepping, on to the dais to take a salute---small, pale, self-effacing in the German way.... I caught a moment of evil when the other officials stepped aside for him---a sense of the terrible vibrations he was famous for. He looks mad. It is the German who chaperones and protects him. Everything falls into place around his madness. There is no one to halt any of his ideas, no form in which to contain his roving unearthly ambitions...His strategy was mad. He first thought of invading England, and abandoned it just when it might have come off. He bombed strategic points in Britain and then switched to night raids on London just when the fighter protection was at the end of its ~~tether~~ tether. He switched his attention to the Mediterranean, to Russia, to the Balkans, to Britain, in a series of impatient moves that flabbergasted those near him who knew anything about war. And he ended with four fronts going---Italy, Russia, France and the Balkans. His strategy was distracted, that of a madman. It was the excesses---precisely the excesses---not the victory or the power or the war---that people needed. He was called into being. He had a worldwide function to fulfil....

....Along this street they are technical operators now rather than the factory workers they used to be. They are post office technicians, printing mechanics, electricians, laboratory assistants, machinists, salesmen of technical appliances. The street has changed entirely, without a brick or an evergreen hedge of a bleak slate roof looking different...

....The function of TV (not the purpose, because it has no purpose, having come into being to fill a need, and not having itself brought the need into being) is to generalise the habits of the new epoch or the new society, and finally to disrupt the old make-believe affiliations of class, family, church, country---'make-believe' now because they have no further function. TV is therefore an instrument of social movement, a technique of adjustment, and has nothing to do with art or indeed any meaning, any value whatsoever. It has simply to do with the generalising of at first unfamiliar attitudes. It is the quickest direct agent of change there is. In an agrarian country like Italy, in country-districts everywhere, it reveals---it shows with authority---the new attitudes to take..... When TV goes out into the theatre, the studio, the workshop, the streets, it is simply universalising, putting-on-display. The interest it excites in us is quite different from that of the cinema. It is not a dramatic interest. When a programme achieves dramatic interest it is because it has become for a moment an imitation-cinema, or an imitation-theatre: it is still at its job of universalising, displaying so to speak the revolution that is going on all the time and whose terms are just being deciphered for us....

....Even the favourite idea that TV spreads 'knowledge' is wrong. TV spreads facts about the human presence. TV can be false or true: this is irrelevant. It is the human presence we are watching. We notice the way he sits, smiles. The fact that he is talking nonsense makes no difference. But an insincere look, that does make a difference....

....Technique is simply a mental operation, and disappears when we divest our minds of the need for it, that is, when we can control life without it. Technique is a step towards an attitude of control, necessary for control itself... It is the universalisation of a habit of mind-detachment not very different from oriental disciplines that had the same end. But of course it is not detachment itself, as we see from the vested interests, the tribal ferocities in and behind 'technical' people. Technique is the demonstration of an animated world, to those who do not wish to be animated themselves as 'part of nature'. It destroys the 'mechanical' or 'rationalist's' world of separate visible entities joined only by intellectual concepts, and substitutes a message about the overall forces at work. People who laughed at the idea of telepathy or radiations emanating from people or rocks, or invisible light that could pass through objects, were safe during the strict mechanical era (i.e. eighteenth century thought) but were thrown into confusion by radio, TV, x-rays, electricity, by the whole science of invisible unheard frequencies....

....a film made in the Thirties with Robert Donat, based on Cronin's The Citadel. How delicate everyone looks, not in health but in their relation to each other: they stand more separate from each other; the furniture, the way of talking and walking, shots of Piccadilly and the Bank of England and the Park, with passing ornate buses and square-mouthed taxis, make everything seem more ordered, more rational. One object is separate from the next. People and things stand more away from each other; there is space, ordered space---in people's eyes, in their talk. And the film is informed with ideas. These ideas coolly

and clearly pervade the action. The old civilisation still lingers. The mind has not yet concentrated itself on the appetites....

....It seems to me that I was brought up on the idea that life is simply a system for the appeasement of gross appetites, though neither my parents nor my grandparents had anything to do with formulating the idea, or ever believed such a thing themselves. It was simply the idea on which their lives were forcibly based. It was the condition in which they found themselves working---my mother as a maid of all work at the age of twelve, looking after three children, and my grandfather as a football maker who dressed up on Friday nights and got 'as drunk as a fiddler's bitch'. Appetites were the aspiration. It was a hard, roaring society, where most were thwarted of their full 'satisfactions'. There was this yearning all the time, this pressure on everyone to satisfy himself and his failure to do so because of poverty or else puritan feelings (in turn a stimulant to the appetites). My mother's mother was unyielding to her young. My uncle Oliver told me that she would sweep all his books off the table and shout at him 'Who the bloody hell do you think you are, reading?' The children grew up to think of themselves as unwanted (also a spur to the appetites): nearly everyone was higher than themselves----policemen, shopkeepers, rent-collectors, insurance men; they all had to be feared. My mother's mother never allowed her nine children to touch the teapot until she had had her second cup. 'You leave that bloody pot alone!' And yet, in all the resenting stories told about her, there was a sense of a certain majestic firmness and sureness, as if none of her thoughts failed to be clear, engage in the battle of the appetites. She turned a solid, thumping, appetite-appeasing family out into the world. My mother would sometimes say, 'We were buggers---the lot of us. We got up to some terrible tricks.' Their father would tiptoe into the house in his socks after he'd been drinking, and throw a bag of sweets into their bedroom on the way up. Their mother gave them the rooted impression that she had a natural proprietary right over all sweets in the world. She would hide them in the coal skuttle, among the coals. My mother and her sister would come in and have a 'singing lesson'---one would bang the piano while the other rummaged in the coal skuttle. I remember going to see my grandmother when she was in bed. I was rather afraid, perhaps with my mother's fear. She was propped up ~~in~~ solidly and massively and self-assuredly on her pillows and I have the impression that she leaned forward and gave me a long searching look like an important property being valued. It may have been her deathbed. There were stories---those dim tribal stories of childhood which are only half heard---that money was hidden under her mattress, and that one of the 'soppy' brothers (the family was divided into the intelligent and the 'soppy' or 'doughy' wings) found it and got away to Canada. When one of the doughy ones came to see us my father would dive into the house with, 'There's that bripehound Walter coming down the street.' I remember the steps leading up to the door of the grandmother's house, one of those solid, pugnaciously square Victorian houses where gross appetites seemed to sweat and stew through the bricks and stones. The whole world glowered, puffed, boiled with passions. Even churches managed to smell of steak and onions....

We ached to be like the grownups in one sense particularly----to share their appetites---the smoking, fornicating,

drinking. Growing up was the process of inheriting these rights, and smoking, drinking, fornicating were allowed us in that order. The thought of these appetites seldom left my mind free to do what it wanted to do. It could never concentrate on the book it wished to enjoy. I turned over the leaves of books as if actually reading them was a privilege I was still waiting for. I was a precise definition of the word 'barbarian' without having anything aggressive in me. Being barbarian or otherwise has nothing to do with manners.

The fervid dissipation of the young is due to having been given this definition of life. Technique stimulates the appetites, which it defines as the whole of life below its level of operation. Only when I got to know what fields looked like did I begin to realise that perhaps life wasn't the scheme I thought. It was better. Civilisation emanates from the countryside to the barbarian for the simple reason that it has been formed, generation by generation, into a garden, refining the earth's grosser appetites. The breath of a different life came from the leaves as they rustled against the window, and the sky seemed capable of taking their echo, even that of rustling leaves....

....The little house roared all the time and spilled its life straight on to the pavement. Privacy was unheard of. The women suckled their children in front of you. The air stank from the gasworks and the trains and the factory at the end of the street. The men used to get drunk on Saturday nights and pick a fight with each other. They walked into the tiny back yard in their bowler hats and fought with bare fists until there was a nose-bleed or a knockout. The women and children went on roaring in the front room, taking no notice of the scuffling and cursing outside. My father was exempted from these fights as his right hand had been cut off in a sawing mill. It was obviously a penance for my mother to go there, and she translated the sense of penance to us. She was living forward to the new epoch....

....'Reason' can offer no reason for death. If life is defined as appetites and their appeasement, death must be defined as the guillotine which suddenly and inexplicably cuts them off. It poses the question of why you should have been popped into life with a set of appetites simply in order to appease them. 'Reason' therefore makes the world a wildly unreasonable place. It produces schools of unreason, which argue that religion, being foreign to this type of rationality, must come from irrationality. Hence you have a society riddled with the most refined crimes, sometimes described as of a 'ritual' nature, and on the other side the utmost apparent rational detachment. The two belong to each other....

....Religion begins with the words, 'I have always been here.' It takes the barbarian's helpless 'I feel, therefore I am' and separates the 'feel' from the 'am' by defining the 'I'. On the definition of the 'I' all religion rests....

....Schoolchildren were reading little essays into the camera on old age. I remember the same sense of urgent concern for old age when I was at school. We were charged with pity for the old for the simple reason that we were talking about ourselves. Seeing ourselves stripped of our smooth skin, our ready and tireless sex appetites, our hungers and our iron digestions, we saw ourselves as nothing, since the appetites were all we supposedly had

and were. 'Who am I?' was answered many times in Anatolia, in India and Mesopotamia, in Crete, in Egypt, in Greece. But not in Rome. And from Rome we spring....

....I was sitting in the basement with the tiny monitor-screen in front of me, flickering, and the tea trolley being pushed along outside. 'He wants to walk,' the child said into the camera, 'but he cannot.' Old age was helpless. But if he cannot walk he must have trained himself not to walk, because of the image of old age he---like this child---was given. Thought makes faces. It digs lines, opens and darkens eyes, halts the stride. It trains our bodies whichever way we want them to go. And if we believe that our bodies have a life of their own, and we have no control over them, and they are separate from our thoughts like armchairs are separate from our arses, we produce a helpless body which swells and erupts and stumbles and does things for which no preparation can be made. Those who have helpless bodies prove satisfactorily to themselves that the body is helpless, and so nature achieves its end quite implacably, having signed no document on behalf of our particular salvation. It will pour into the holes it finds open. Believing that people are black in heart will populate the world with black-hearted people. Nature is quite a magician, having a foothold inside us as well as outside. Or so it seems. But it is thought that is the real magician. Only when it becomes literary or disembodied does it lose its depth: but even then it shows its presence by producing the 'literary man', concentrated on his appetites mentally. Fascism derives its seeming contradiction (i.e. the work of intellectuals, carried out by thugs) because it is a 'literary' doctrine of society. Therefore it should be no surprise that a thoroughly literate world should plunge into a dark age. The more literate the society, the greater the propensity to violence. This excites a horror of literacy, which in turn produces doctrines of irrationality, which produces the violence again....

....The best thing would be for him to read my Black Cats and Carmagnola as these fulfil best my 'multiple-action stage' idea. In both playscripts I have people talking to each other from different scenes---that is, across distances of space and time. On TV this couldn't be conveyed in anything like so graphic a way. In fact it couldn't be conveyed at all without a spooky, surrealist or bogus effect. In Carmagnola I have Philip II of Milan perched on his throne in whispered conversation with his courtiers while another character in Savoy, downstage, is describing his various appalling qualities: Philip sits there, so to speak silently demonstrating these, and the other man's listeners watch him as if they could actually see him before them. On TV you would have to have the Savoy character as a Voice Over, that is commentator, thus losing his visible contribution....

....There is no such thing as a physical object. That fiction is an inheritance of the cartesian philosophers. Nothing is dead....

....I turn out ideas by the dozen---programme ideas, book ideas, play ideas---so that a handfull of them may be picked up and keep me in shoe leather for the following year. The scene has changed entirely for the writer, but few people treat me as if it was anything but 1930 and we were all still serving our separate inspirations

and marketing the results, like the men we read about. Over half my work is 'samples'. That is, the play or TV script is sent to the producer as a sample of my work, for other purposes....The solution for the writer (his liberation) used to be the fashionable success. This is no longer the case. As there is no continuous audience, so there is no continuous reputation. Scripts from celebrities pour into the theatres and TV companies and pour out again, rejected. A fashionable success does not in fact 'establish' anything but a market event. Henry James at the height of his reputation produced seven novels in a row each of which failed to repay its tiny advance of £150-£300. His 'success' was entirely another matter from what we mean by that word today, though it was fashionable enough. All these terms have to be re-defined....

....TV cannot be the sole training for the writer, actor, musician, director. The mind and the spontaneity soon wither, even if the nerves hold out. The writer must have tried himself in a dozen ways outside TV before he can cut and fade and mix and intercut his material for the camera without the camera taking over. The pressure on the nerves of seeing everything, when only a small part of life is ever seen, is the exact opposite to what art requires and thrives on....

....She asked a junior no higher than her shoulder what flavour his icecream lolly was and he said, 'Strawberry, and stick it up your arse.' She said on the stairs the boys look up their skirts from below, or spit on them from above....

....He wrote ~~a~~ from his school in Germany that if a boy does something wrong he is disciplined by the other boys. He is woken in the middle of the night and powerful torches are shone into his eyes while he is under cross-examination, sometimes until dawn, sometimes for nights on end....

....I phoned Erika Mann and she said that the rights could be ours only after four and a half years, and that they would cost something like forty thousand dollars....

....Like me, he found ^{the} Love's Labour's Lost production as cold as mutton, with nothing real in the love, and certainly nothing courtly. Inept and ungainly business interferred with the lines as in all the current fashionable productions of Shakespeare ~~today~~. A belch was slipped in, to bring a cretinous laugh from the stalls. Every reference to copulation was helped by a back and forward motion of the hips, and all the physical functions when mentioned were heavily underlined until they got the right knowing roar ('We are liberated! We recognise what you are doing!') from the audience. The women were squeaky, flat-chested, out of tune, as if not really wanted on the stage at all. Biron stepped on his lady's train to stop her walking off during an elegant chat they were having. Everything Shakespeare meant by the king's withdrawal from public life and therefore sex for three years was lost. It clearly was never thought about. Almost none of the speeches were decently comprehensible, and the lines were 'eaten' to imitate colloquial speech, in the current fashion, so that they lost their natural rhythm. At the end there was a burst of poetry, for a

few seconds, so that you were reminded of how much you had missed in the last two hours. You realised how deeply and deliberately and perhaps spitefully it had been missed out. In the pub afterwards I talked to Paul Curran, who played Holofernes, and asked him why the first half was so cold, and he said, 'Well, you know---the Bard---it often happens---it simply is cold!' I told him I had seen an Old Vic production of the same play where the first half had if anything been warmer than the second. Love's Labours Lost is after all Shakespear's most deliberately literary, most satirical play: it satirises preciosity, but describes chivalry, and unless you get the enchantment of the chivalry, unless you know that chivalry was the absorption of Christian feeling into the daily life of the rather crude noble classes for the first time, unless you realise its particular application to women, raising them so to speak to the level of Mary-in-life, unless you know that chivalry was the advancement of a quite new kind of love between the sexes you can only get out of Love's Labours Lost a cold literary exercise without much meaning, and this production was certainly that. Everybody sympathised with Olivier in his job of directing it. He came into the pub looking tired and perhaps smilingly sad. It was like directing a play 'in a vacuum', one of the actors quoted him as saying. Of course it is if you conceive the play in a vacuum, without a reason ~~xxxxxxx~~ or a history or a place in any system of ideas!.....

....The next day's paper called the production cold but asked the idiotic question, what are we to make of 'The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo'? In a play swimming in tongue-tying and nearly incomprehensible literary conceits he takes the simplest one of all, and that not even a conceit. Collapse of theatre always goes with collapse of criticism....

....In the afternoon the Arts theatre rang to say that they had read Carmagnola and would like to talk to Laurence Olivier about it, for the National. It was too 'big' for them. He will be coming to the Arts next Monday with his children and they will give him the script....

....If anything Hitler's influence on the German was far less than on the rest of the world. The rest of the world didn't go through a deliberate inner de-hitlerising operation as the Germans did. Hitler never succeeded in inciting the Germans, through his military commanders, to the detestable task of mass bombing foreign cities, as he did the English and Americans. An influence works many ways. You can succumb to it by reaction. This is how all dictators rise to power....

....I asked her how many scripts she read in a week and she said fifteen at least, with 'a few' novels. My agent said that this was about his quota too. She talked about a new series London Weekend are launching. ...He said he would send her further 'samples' of mine. We ate French rolls and cheese and squeezed together on a bench in the smoke and noise... ~~I told me that Lindy and ... was ... in the film world at the moment, presumably because he had just turned out a fine film.~~ He said that bad work had an imperative hold on the film world. We talked about Ford Madox Ford, whose rights he controls. I mentioned The Good Soldier as one I liked very much, and he asked me if I thought I could

adapt it. A film is in the air and both Robert Bolt and John Osborne have been approached and have turned it down. The company at present wanted a 'big market name' but if they ever decided they wanted a writer suitable for the job he would suggest me. He said the signing of contracts had no connection with the value of the writer signing. A writer's value was perhaps the last value to be considered in taking a writer on....

....Christendom has concentrated on sin. There is an Islamic doctrine that the earth is the creation of the devil, and Christendom has not been far from this at times. The concentration has naturally produced spectacular results. Christendom produced a whole hierarchy of sins---mortal, venial and those simply of imperfection, and volumes have been devoted over the centuries to analysing and grading all the possible actions of men in the scale of sinful manifestations. So much childish rubbish has poured from the printing presses, from monasteries and universities, that it is little wonder that the whole thing came tumbling down, and the names 'God' and 'Christ' and 'the holy spirit' lost meaning for people, and 'sin' and 'the devil' and 'evil' maintained their vividness and began positively to appeal....

....The theatre# is in a particularly bad situation (in all epochs) because it sucks in the barbarities of every society it serves. The bulk of the productions will always appall the best theatre minds of every generation. The theatre wades in the blood and scum of its times and that is its nature, and on the very rare occasions when it illuminates and thereby escapes the barbarities it becomes what the next generations will want to see. For each epoch has enough barbarities of its own not to want to share those of a previous world, especially as past barbarities always look absurd and exactly what they are---barbarities. No one is more amused or shocked by the barbarities of the last epoch than the barbarian of this one....

....In the Pinter two-hander the audience rustled into a moment's warmth and ease, letting out great coughs of laughter, when 'buggers' started coming out, and at the remark 'there was shit everywhere'. Barbarities surge out of the audience at the slightest touch....

....Out of five hours viewing on Friday evening there were three and a half devoted to crime, war and 'mystery'. If you run forty minutes of cruelty all you have to do is suggest (at the end) that this doesn't pay, and you can purvey more or less what you like. This is the accepted market formula....

....He rang to say that he didn't want to waste my Intercom on TV, especially as it was an hour too long for a teleplay anyway. He would like to try it on a film company....

....He said that a trinity of American producers was giving him a quarter of a million for filming this year, and one of the scripts he wanted to do was my Intercom, as he found it very funny....

....He said the Americans were pulling out of the deal. A crisis has hit the industry. It may only last a year....

....We arrived at a sort of plan for my teleplay Persona Non Grata. I said I thought it was hopeless to put

the script through the script department, where it would certainly be blocked as 'unpopular'. And I suggested I get a director to hitch his name to it first. This is farcical, as she is the script department, but she thoroughly agreed, and this is what I did....

....When he arrived he was carrying Persona Non Grata and to my relief said he would like to direct it. My agent said he would convey this to London Weekend....

....She said that the producer had been very impressed and wanted to see my next script but they couldn't do this one, in spite of its being coupled with a fine director. Translated, this means much fighting inside. She lost the battle. Later the battles got to the Press...

....He phoned to say that the script manager of the Mermaid had liked Carmagnola very much and wanted to discuss it with me....

I took the new Fall of Venice script to the office to get it photostatted. We shall take this to Venice and 'stand it on its head', to make the final script....

....The cinema served quite another function. It was a simple extension of the picture-stage theatre, to reach millions. It was the picture-stage theatre aiming at a vast simultaneous audience, for vast profits. The audience paid for its seats like a theatre-audience. But TV, virtually gratis, is the homeport of the cinema---- what it was trying to reach.... Cinema was thus a bridge from one world to the other, as the internal combustion aeroplane was a bridge to cheap-fare jet travel....

....The key to our ^society is not its being technological (whatever else the key may be): for instance, the theatre is not dead because of fifty years of cinema, and in certain ways it even looks like superseding it....

....Our society is a certain attitude, and technology is simply one of the aspects of this attitude. All technology could disappear and leave this attitude intact. The attitudes call the technology into being. In turn the technology enforces changes in attitude: it so to speak drives the attitudes already there home to their meaning....

....Global wars broke out when there were grave hitches in the universalising of these attitudes. Where people clung to the past they provoked or reacted to fierce doctrines of assault. The job of universalising is now being done with great pain, but the global-type war has ended its function....

....The British empire was a revolution in communications.

It set up global communications for the first time, with its centre London, a vast multilingual switchboard. Its destruction was simply a further step in the development of this system, just as the 'destruction' of nazism was a step in its diffusion as a system of political life....

give/

....She said, 'Nobody wants it straight any more. He loses his erection as soon as a bed, a woman and no chance of being interrupted offer themselves.'....He said a respectable Swiss banker had offered him five quid for his soiled underpants but wasn't interested in sex (which he was quite willing to ~~offer~~ offer)....

....Meanwhile the Broadway actress was keeping up a volley of jokes. She and a young Polish actor went into a long story about some quantity called kakapoopoo which they had invented for the long hours of waiting in the film studio. It applied to everything. Said at all times of the day, and in all situations, it sent them into fits of laughter. My agent said to her sotto voce that she might press a copy of Carmagnola on the Broadway manager at present setting up Ginger Rogers in Mame....When she got up to leave he leaned forward, bold to the last, and said, 'Don't forget about Carmagnola.' There was a little pause, then---from her---'Kakapoopoo!', and roars of laughter....

....to a young American writer. He said that in the States there was only one fact, one theme, one activity, and that was the 'revolution' going on. He probably sees no such revolution here, precisely as I would see no revolution there. That is the nature of the revolution going on everywhere....

....ATV put out an interview with one of the so-called SS men over here with the president. The man proudly pulled out what looked like a fountain pen and said with a smile that it wouldn't be comfortable to find yourself at the wrong end of this....

....There were small demonstrations and scuffles wherever the president went but the greatest demonstration was that of abashed and wondering silence as people kept away from those still-looking men with their hands on hidden holsters....

....He said the BBC had offered Tyrone Guthrie fifteen pounds for a treatment for a series of programmes on the history of the theatre which would take two years to film....

....Just after we took off he asked me for a precise idea of how the Venetian empire fell. We talked all the way... I found that the intense script-writing period in London had swept all the names of the Grand Canal palazzi out of my mind...He showed me how to get an idea of what a shot would look like on the box by bending down and twisting one's head as far upside down as possible---a cameraman's trick....That evening we went across to the Lido and found Aschenbach's hotel. He got very excited and said, 'Look, that's the balcony he sat on, watching the dancers down below, the night he heard about the plague!' All the way back on the vaporetto we talked about Mann...We will make it an interview where he shows us his latest paintings of Venice, among them several strange ones on the theme of 'the end of Venice', starkly reminiscent of Domenico Tiepolo. I ask him why he chose the theme and

he says, 'Because Venice is ending.'....I went to the Fenice theatre and found it would cost over five hundred pounds for half a day's shooting there, which is too much... I found two actors to play our little Goldoni. I was standing in the box office with the manager and they were suddenly peering through the grille at me, the Knight and the Marquis to the life!....The generator and the costumes are our headache. It would cost over two thousand pounds to bring costumes from London, but on the other hand it would cost as much if not more to hire them in Milan.... Access to museums, convents etc is easy when palms have been greased. He said he would take care of the greasing. We stood by the bar and he reminisced about the films he'd been involved in. He described an English star who was the terror of the hotel he lived in. When he entered the foyer everybody started trembling. This was last year. When the whisky couldn't be found one morning there was well nigh a revolution, and filming was wrecked for the whole day. No king, no shah, no wildest of sheikhs could behave like that nowadays, he said....

....I asked Orazio why Venice had fallen, and he said, 'Because men have fallen'....

....We have £5000 from Munich and £4000 from Sweden. So we shall be able to budget for fourteen thousand....

....It is easy to talk about a dark age but putting a duration to it, when it began and when it ended, isn't so easy. The fact is that our Christian world, which means largely Europe as far as history goes, never did do more than fling itself up like a flying fish out of the darkness, and then flop back again. The European people have never been really religious. They were theological, often moral, sometimes bigotted, superstitious, but they never had, in comparison with the peoples of Egypt, India, China, sustained spiritual illumination....

....At no time was there Christian development without ambition and greed on a barbarian scale. The establishment of a separate church in England happened quickly and easily because of the big church lands available for grabbing. The crusades were nakedly profit-making exploits, on which Venice based her empire and her naval hold on the Adriatic and the Aegean. When the Spanish planted the cross in Haiti they found hundreds of thousands of the gentlest creatures on the earth, and within half a century they had reduced them to a handful of broken and diseased slaves...When Pizarro kidnapped Atahualpa, ruler of the Incas, and burned him to death, he had the support of the friars....

....Christendom never endowed ordinary people with a living discipline which they could make the hub of their private concentration, as Hinduism did in India. It became a 'literary' society where 'thought' came to mean a localised brain-event with no necessary connection with the rest of the organism....

....The Archbishop of Camara from Brazil said that the armies of Latin America operated in close contact with the Pentagon and that this association had introduced a new social order of violence....

....He said that London Weekend had offered £350 for

for the world rights on three books by one of his authors, to provide a children's serial covering at least thirty-nine weeks. He said he had laughed and changed the subject.....

....They have sent out a new series of such bestial violence that even the public has protested. The Independent Television Authority has had to step in. The writers, directors, producers, actors involved are necessarily involved in criminality. They live by the dissemination of the doctrine of crime. The series, by being protested against, has achieved its purely PR end (win the big audience). The PR work has been done free. The Press helped by giving more free PR coverage. One columnist said, 'Say what you like about this thug, he will be in the Top Ten this week.' These PR methods were all quite clearly set out in the first ~~place~~ place by Goebbels.....

....They are also putting out a series called Murder. A different one each week.....

....My father, who watches the commercial channel from six till eleven every evening, starts if I come into the room ~~xxx~~ unexpectedly, peeps round the corners of doors tremulously, peers into the dimness of the little hall.....

....I went out to the Teddington studios. I looked at their faces in the restaurant for signs of the bestial violence you see on their 'programmes', but they seemed no different from anybody else.....

....I am beginning to see that the insecurity in which I live is part of the bargain---a price and even a guarantee of the freedom.....

....I said that ~~the~~ nature is 'intimate' and not 'conceptual', and that following the dangerous science of mathematics in practical experiments might produce a dangerous 'pageant' science. I said that the concept of infinity while a ~~xxx~~ usual one in mathematics could not be realised in space and time (where we happened to live) for the simple reason that it was by definition beyond space and time. I said that the accepted concept of 'two parallel lines meeting at infinity' could not be realised because parallel lines by definition are those which never meet. Grand experiments ~~xxxxxx~~ based on the idea of the universe as a mathematical concept can lead to great disasters, first in

the weather and then in less obvious ways. I said this had already begun.....

.....Christianity simply threw a veil over the barbarian. Christian Burgundians and Venetians tore the Veil of the Sancturary in Santa Sophia in Constantinople, and smashed the altar of the Virgin.....

.....Quick switches of subject stimulate visual attention. It is a technique used in films, newspapers, magazines. In a TV script you 'cut for shock'. It is of fascist origin. The first clear sign of it was the German magazine that appeared in the Twenties, called Der Querschnitt.....

.....The ache for pleasure comes from a previous ache of pain. Mass self-indulgence naturally followed a period of mass self-torture in two world wars.....

.....He said that a few years back he had walked up to the Cassino monastery with General Alexander and they knocked on the door and the abbot came, and Alexander held out his hand with, 'Good morning. I bombed this place.' The story had such a disarming ferocious barbarity that I gasped. Marino Marini was tapping his foot. I was glad he understood so little English. I started talking to him about his latest piece, a horse and rider become all but one machine, all but launched from a launching pad.....

.....Hitler was invented, constructed, not only by the Germans but the whole world. The Germans were simply the pioneers of the fearful operation, as they so often are. The famous passivity of the Germans, their toleration of the most obvious political abuses, has been repeated in people after people since, notably in those who 'defeated' them.....

.....I asked Montgomery if he would have bombed Cassino and he said quietly, 'Of course not. I would have gone round the back. They had to anyway.'.....

.....The stagnation resultant from American money was precisely the same as the stagnation in Eastern Europe from Russian occupation, not because of the wickedness of the more powerful states but because of the failure of the subject peoples (outnumbering by far the 'occupying' peoples) to understand what was happening to them. They had no system by means of which to absorb the highly evolved 'rational' system being applied to them.....

.....The 'rational' conduct of life in the money-society does not mean 'reasonable' or even 'cool'. It implies no value, being simply a type of operation. It may be