

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Task of the Intellectuals...

Mann, Klaus

Nutzungsbedingungen

Bei zahlreichen Dokumenten auf monacensia-digital.de sind die Urheberrechte bereits abgelaufen. Sie sind gemeinfrei und dürfen ohne weitere Rücksprache mit der Monacensia weiterverwendet werden.

Bei den Dokumenten, bei denen noch Urheberrechte bestehen, müssen für eine Weiterverwendung stets die Rechteinhaber*innen angefragt werden sowie eine Publikationsgenehmigung der Monacensia eingeholt werden. Das Zitatrecht bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Zur Erteilung einer Publikationserlaubnis wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus
Literaturarchiv
Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Terms of use

The copyrights for numerous documents on monacensia-digital.de have already expired. They are in the public domain and may be reused without further consultation with Monacensia. In the case of documents for which copyrights still exist, the copyright holders must always be contacted for further use and publication permission must be obtained from the Monacensia. The right to quote under copyright law remains unaffected by this. To obtain permission for publication, please contact:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus:
Literaturarchiv
Address: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Task of the Intellectuals....

The first task of an intellectual, whether in peace or war, is - not to indulge in vague and grandiose ~~the~~ rhetorics but to be precise, truthful and realistic. Particularly in a time of crisis, it behoooves all of us to avoid pretentious clichés ~~as they appear so lavishly in the editorials~~ - which are apt to confuse an issue, rather than clarify it - , but to ~~edit~~ ^{as} consider and define, thoroughly and conscientiously, every term we employ.

We have, therefore, to ask ourselves, first of all:

→ Who is an intellectual?

Is he just a man equipped with the average amount of ~~brain~~ ^{intelligence}? - Obviously, this definition is insufficient. For

~~Not~~ take it for granted that the majority of ~~the~~ men possess ~~enough~~ ^{this} of that valuable substance - called brain - ~~to pay~~ ^{in a sufficient quantity} their taxes, to compose a love letter or an editorial.

Is an intellectual", then, a person who ~~has a little~~ ^{to enable} ~~more~~ happens to be somewhat brighter than the bulk of his fellow-citizens?

Not quite satisfactory either. For, undoubtedly, there are truck drivers who match or even surpass many a judge or college professor as far as wit and common sense are concerned. Yet, we would be inclined to recognize the professor as "an intellectual" - not the truck driver.

It seems that "an intellectual" is an individual who makes his ^{living} ~~life~~ by using his intellect rather than his ^{as does} ~~hands~~ - like a working man - , his feet - like a foot ball champion - , or his charm - like a movie star.

150,
An intellectual is an individual who makes his living by using his intelligence.

This sounds like a satisfactory formula. - But, again, how about such men who depend on their fists and muscles as well as on their ~~brains~~ ^(intelligence or imagination)? A sculpturer, for instance - or a surgeon? Are they "intellectuals"?

How about businessmen? Undeniably, they are people who live on their wits. Yet, for one reason or another, they don't quite fit into our ~~and~~ scheme. It is not exactly their money-making astuteness we have in mind when ~~referring~~ speaking of "intellect." - - Nor seems our term - "intellectual" - really appropriate ^{to} ~~when~~ describing a type of people, whom we expect to have vision and imagination rather than a sharp, discriminating intellect. Pure artists - painters, musicians, even certain lyrical poets - hardly belong to the category of intellectuals; for ~~the intellect~~ their reactions are not primarily determined by intellectual considerations. Needless to say that every creative type of man should ~~be or is necessarily~~ combine both sensibilities - emotional and intellectual. Yet, ~~there~~ is the question of primacy: Which of these two basic forms of reaction predominates in a particular character? - the emotional or the intellectual? - - A musician is likely to be primarily emotional - while in the character of a writer both elements should be balanced, ^{- perhaps} with a slight predominance of the intellect.

turns out -3-

You see, it ~~seems~~ to be more ticklish and intricate than we may have presumed - to define just one seemingly simple notion as ~~we employ it constantly~~ ^{constantly and thoughtfully} which we ~~employ~~ employed on all possible or impossible occasions, and ~~constantly employ ourselves.~~

I suggest, however, - ~~As~~ ^{at least partly} we ought to come to a conclusion that an intellectual in a man, - fully aware of his own identity and his responsibility toward the society ~~to~~ to which he belongs; a man - concerned, in a professional way, with the promotion or distribution of certain aesthetic, ethic or scientific values, and whose concern with these values is of an unselfish, idealistic nature.

The quality, then, through which the intellectual differs from the average citizen, is not so much an exorbitantly developed intelligence, but rather his attitude towards intellectual and moral values. While in the career of a businessman ~~on the~~ money assumes the central, predominant part - : while the life of a sailor, a farmer or a prize-fighter ^{or} is almost completely determined by the conditions of his body, ~~or by weather conditions~~ - in short by the natural conditions - ~~not by spiritual forces of nature rather than by the forces of spirit~~ -

it is the duty and the privilege of an true intellectual to devote his energies and talents, more or less completely, to such efforts and endeavours that do not warrant any immediate practical or economic result but are, none the less, vitally important, indeed, indispensable for the sake of certain cultural traditions and spiritual postulates.

moral requirements

According to this formula,
 a successful writer of movie
scripts in Hollywood, does not
 belong to this peculiar
 species, that we call "intellectual"
 but rather to the category
 of the business man — which
 an anonymous little teacher
 — somewhere in the State
 of Washington or the State
 of North Carolina, must be
recognized and respected as
a true intellectual — provided
 that ~~taxes~~ he takes the
duties and implications of
 his profession as seriously as
 they deserve it.

There may be — / or rather,
 there are certainly and / — time
intellectuals among the lawyers
and physicians, the ingenueers
and the radio commentators —
 let's hope, ~~that are "intellectuals"~~
 even among politicians ...

However, the two types we
 are particularly concerned
 with are

Teacher

Writer.

Partly we are most familiar
 with these two professions

(you = teachers;

I = writer; family
 of writers ...)

Even great-grand mother...

Partly because the definite
resemblance I find in the
respective task and the
respective position of these
two human types — :
writer — educator.

— Identical in days of
antiquity. the sage
The wise man is teacher and
proprietor; baron and magistrate.

— What they have in common is
to influence public opinion;
to educate ... :
pedagogical mission.

" Pedagogical mission " ...

Another one of those
big words ... Damquans.

What it amounts to:

You — educators — have
to teach youngsters how
how to spell correctly — and
in what year George Washington
died

We — the writers — try
to sell a story to "Esquire"
or "New Yorker" or, if we
are very lucky, to
"Saturday Evening Post."

Or we have a play produced on
Broadway — which usually closes
after two performances —
or ^{write} ~~the~~ novels — ~~not~~ most
of which are forgotten after a
couple of years ...

Yet, the sum of these
modest activities and humble
efforts is something very
important - most vital to
the life and well-being of
[Native peoples]

th. life was
A maximum
Persistent witness, ~~1933~~
[] direction. Not only that
their skill and worthless
methods — organization etc. —
keep German youth under
the sway of their influence
that

But I dare say that
the ~~school~~ the conditions
in German school,
even in times of
Weimar Republic,
were instrumental in
bringing Hitler to power.

-g-
I know what I am talking
about - ! Personal sorrows
Spirit of hate;
revenge.

- At the same time, in
France - England:
extreme pacifism.

French teachers,
Oxford students.

Educators agreed with
pupils:

WAR - ghastly anachronism.

No romantic spell any more.

- Old slogans and cliques
list a nation ... Good.

But: contrast -
untenable.

- Especially in the democracy
But: no new card to

replace them.
Same situation in the
realm of literature.

Scepticism - following
hysteric enthusiasts.

"Disillusioned"
generation: X

Series of failures:
Russia - had failed;
League of Nations -
Democracy; ...: stale

Frustration.

Playing dictator's game.

FAITH - on the wrong
side...

- B-a

~~The educator~~ ~~is~~, ~~as~~

It is the educator's task,
as well as the writer's,
to bring home to his
listeners the ~~was~~ unique

character and the

vast implications of
the present war and, at the same
time, to keep alive the loss of PEACE

The educator, too, finds
himself confronted suddenly
with a new situation

- ~~a new~~ with new

topics to discuss -

new questions to answer

It may be that just

the brightest and the

keenest ones among his

opponents are most bewildered

Certainly Exciting but not
not easy task to
explain the meaning of events
to youngsters - who don't
know enough to understand,
but already too much too
much to be satisfied with
evasive ~~set~~ slogans...

I can well imagine the
embarrassing cross-examinations:

"Why is there another war?
The last one didn't make
any thing better..."

"Because Hitler wants to
→ take over and destroy the world."

"Why did we allow him to
become so big?"

Sensible to deny mistakes.

"Why should we risk our lives
for the sake of those who are
responsible..."

"- For your own sake; own future."

Fantasy: Then you may begin to ask questions:

" " What would it be like if Hitler wins. " "

" Not so good. " "

" " Will you leave the job of defeating him to others. " "

" It's all England's fault. " "

" Nobody guiltless. We are not guiltless. " "

" What's so good now. " "

" It could be worse. " "

And then ~~for~~ you have to show him what is fine about this threatened civilization of ours. — and

what should be kept alive. Patriotism. — no jingoism. Greatness of this country.

the intricate and ambiguous nature of that particular crisis. For, in 1813, even the most brutal Germanic jingoism was somehow impregnated with a truly democratic flavour - foreshadowing the progressive impetus of 1848 and, at the same time, the diabolic outrages of 1933 and 1940. Goethe was fully aware of this dark and dangerous mixtures: hence his apprehension, his disgust, his silence.

Crisis inevitable. Intellectuals
negation - y. Brunders of
The crisis we have to face, in 1941, is undoubtedly more dangerous and may have more far-reaching consequences than any single event in the XIX th. Century - indeed, than any historical emergency since the end of the Roman Empire. *Goethe*

We have to grasp, soberly and precisely, the scope and fatal impact of this vast tribulation, before venturing on a discussion of what the *intellectually* writer should or could perform with regard to such colossal happenings.

The terrific novelty of the present crisis is ~~that~~, in my opinion, that it involves and threatens, not only certain aspects of our civilization, but the basic structure and tradition of everything man has called "civilization" for three-thousand years.

True, it has happened before that the civilized world was confronted with the deadly challenge of barbarism: Athens was menaced by the Persians, Rome - by the Vandals, the Christian culture of the Middle Ages by the Huns and Turks. But in all these instances the inimical forces invaded the realm of civilization from without - a savage tribulation and appalling challenge to the cultural developments within. This time, however, in this year of 1941, the mortal enemy rises from the very heart of the

civilized world itself - equipped with tremendous microphones, poisoned gas, stream-lined tanks, changeable propaganda-slogans, brandnew movie cameras and the appetite of a tiger.

What we have to emphasize and to repeat, over and over again, is this: that the present war does not represent a collision between two antagonistic schemes of civilization, with one side being more discriminating in the choice of their methods than the other. The ~~Nazis~~ Nazis must not be confounded with those who accept ugly means for the sake of inspiring ends, as did the Jesuits, the French Jacobins or the Russian terrorists. ~~In the case of the Nazis, there are no moral standards that could be sacrificed, nor is there any goal to justify such an offering.~~ - - There is, indeed, no incongruity between the aims of the Nazis and the methods they employ in pursuing them - for the simple reason that there are no aims. Destruction can hardly be called an "aim" : it is the consequence of an aimless furor.

The Revolution of Nihilism is not an attempt to reform or to transform our civilization; it is, by definition, an attempt to annihilate it.

Let's consider what is at stake for the writer.

~~Obviously, this a type of crisis - sweeping and catastrophic enough to reach and to move even the most protected Ivory Tower. In fact, if there is any particular type of man, any special profession hated ~~by the Nazis~~ even and persecuted by the Nazis even more relentlessly than they hate and persecute the human race in general - : then it is, indeed, the type of man we usually call "the intellectual" and the profession known as that of a "writer."~~

An average citizen - a dentist, ingeneer, or salesman - may hope

- erroneously, to be sure! - that he may come to bearable terms with the totalitarian dictatorship. 'After all' - such plain people might be inclined to say - 'why should I not go on fixing teeth, driving a motor, selling stockings or candies - no matter what sort of a government it is, to which I owe my safety - and my taxes...'

/ - Even painters or musicians may fool themselves - thinking that no dictator could possibly be disturbed by ~~their~~ the still-lives or the symphonies they produce. But a writer has no right to fool himself. ~~For, in fooling himself, he also fools the others.~~ In his particular case, ^{the} ~~a~~ lack of clarity and determination is not only a shortcoming or a mistake: it actually amounts to a crime.

It is, indeed, the intrinsic mission of a writer - or, to use a less grandiose expression, it is simply his job, to be more sensitive, more vigilant, and more acute than the rank-and-file citizen has to be. The writer, in both his qualifications as an observer and a pedagogue, has the duty to recognize and to formulate the most dangerous and the most promising tendencies of his time, before an obtuse public realizes the essential meaning of certain inconspicuous signs, certain gradual changes. It is has frequently occurred in history that writers have been instrumental in bringing about certain major events - merely by articulating the vague trends and ~~the~~ blurred desires of their contemporaries. In fact, every revolution has been prepared for by intellectuals, often even by professional writers. ~~Sometimes, as in the case of the case French Revolution, the writers - Voltaire, Rousseau and so on - laid a theoretical basis and left the practical execution~~

~~to the politicians like Danton and Robespierre. In the Russian Revolution, on the other hand, the political leaders - Lenin, Tretzki, Lunatcherski, etc. - were themselves also writers.~~

The Fascist Revolution, with its conscious attack on the intellect, seems to be the one exception to this rule. Yet, even in the career of this openly ^{intellectual} ~~anti-literary~~ movement, which is National Socialism, literature played a certain rôle: I admit it only blushing, as I belong to the guild of writers myself. Paradoxically enough, that notorious hostility to the intellect, which is now an essential part of the Nazi political programme, was started by the intellectuals ^{themselves} ~~themselves~~. This is true, above all, for Germany, which produced figures like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who in their emphasis on the will and their attack on Christianity, undermined - almost unknowingly! - the foundations of occidental culture. ~~The connection between tyranny and literature are even more obvious in Italy, where D'Annunzio and, after him, the so-called "Futurists" were the most frantic of Mussolini. We have to differentiate, of course, between these corrupt and irresponsible intellectuals who sold their souls actually to the Devil - which is, to Fascism - and others, who were distorted and abused by their disciples. Needless to say that Nietzsche or Richard Wagner would be horrified, if they were in a position to watch what Dr. Goebbels does to their ideas and their vocabulary. Yet, it is undeniable that - if there is any consistency in the Nazi viewpoint - you can trace it back from Goebbels to Rosenberg, from Rosenberg - to Spengler, from Spengler to Nietzsche and certain earlier romanticists.~~

However, the fact that ~~the~~ certain writers and philosophers are partly and indirectly responsible - whether on purpose or not! - for the present disaster, is one reason more to make them participate ^{now} actively and firmly, in a ~~spiritual~~ general effort of self-defense, that must eventually develop into a counter-attack.

The term "self-defense" seems, ~~by the way,~~ especially appropriate to describe the attitude of a writer, who tries to warn his fellow-citizens against the imminent dangers of Nazism and to re-affirm certain intrinsic concepts of the democratic creed. What side should a writer take - if not the side of freedom and civilization? Under the dictatorship of a boisterous fool he is doomed - immediately and completely. It is not by chance that the vast majority of all German writers of any significance ^{- whether Jewish or not -} went into exile without hesitation, when Hitler came to power, ~~- even before the Jewish bankers or the officials of the Social Democratic Party thought of exile.~~ They left, because they realized that Nazi dictatorship and culture are two incompatible notions. No doubt, Herr Hitler hates an independent German writer even more than ^{he hates} Winston Churchill and Dorothy Thompson combined. Those who remained in the Reich and tried to make their peace with the ruling party, made the most depressing experiences. They had to find out that this indescribable régime ~~a~~ profoundly distrusts any one, who may be - at least theoretically and according to his natural capacities - in a position to describe the crimes, the looks and the vices of those ghastly rulers. Ignorant people are usually suspicious of other people who happen to be a little less ignorant than they are. Ignorant tyrants, therefore, have always been in the habit of killing writers, who dare to criticize them - which is undoubtedly the most

The lot of American writers would be as earnest as that of those ghastly rulers.

of their German colleagues if we want to condemn the 100% of it

This is common

convenient method ~~to~~ ~~refute~~ their seditious arguments...

But those who escape? who survive? or have never lived, thanks to the right of their birth, under the sway of stupid tyranny? What is their task? What are their chances?

What can a writer do, for his modest part, to defend the comparative Good against the absolute Evil?

They are many - and by no means the worst! - who can do nothing at all - simply because their grief and their disgust are such that it silences or literally kills them.

What, do you think, killed Ernest Toller, who took his own life in a New York hotel room? He cannot speak any more - nor can Virginia Woolf, that most delicate writer of contemporary English literature. She disappeared, only some weeks ago; and then her frail body was recovered from a river near her home. However, she left a note - a note for her husband, that read:

X I have a feeling I shall go mad. I cannot go on any longer in these terrible times. I hear voices and I cannot concentrate on my work.

I fought against it. I cannot fight any longer.

I cannot go on any longer in these terrible times... That is the way they felt - many of the best writers, who committed suicide, in Vienna, in Prague, in Holland, Belgium, France...: ~~in~~ all the countries invaded by the barbarians. - - The eminent Czech writer Karel Capek died - a few days after the Führer had entered the golden city of Prague; the great philosopher Henri Bergson died - while the S.A.-troops paraded on the Place de la Concorde. James Joyce fled from Paris where he had lived so long but did not want to stay any longer, with the Swastika waving from the Arc de Triomphe. Penniless, almost blind he reached Switzerland, ~~to~~ as he wanted

to die in a country whose air is not yet poisoned with the lies of Nazi propagandists and the screams of Nazi victims.

W Undoubtedly, it is one of the essential functions of Naziism to humiliate, silence, or murder the writers. But what is the function of the writers in ~~the~~ our desperate struggle against Naziism?

There is, of course, no all-bountiful answer to so intricate and involved a question. Everything depends on the circumstances involved - one of which is the particular character of the writer's talent. For we must ^{not} take it for granted that every writer has the ~~capacity~~ capability of commenting - ~~directly~~ in a journalistic fashion - on the daily events. A great poet or inspired playwright may do a very poor job when he attempts to write editorials - in which case he'd better stick to his original form of expression. - - On the other hand, it would be a mistake to think that a writer, who deals - openly and passionately - with the burning issues of this time, condescends, necessarily, to the depths of journalism. ^{St. Erwan's} "There shall be no Night" is a fine play and, at the same time, first-rate political propaganda; (or, rather, it is first-rate propaganda for our cause because it happens to be a good play.) - Novels like "For Whom the Bell Tolls" or "The Grapes of Wrath" are topical, in a direct and exciting ^{way} ~~sense~~; yet, those epic pictures of the political and social crisis possess also that lofty objectivity characteristic of all great narratives from Homer to Balzac and Tolstoi. - - - The recent verse by Edna St. Vincent Millay or certain creations by Archibald MacLeish have the sweeping eloquence and immediate appeal of high-class journalism. But it would be absurd to claim that all

poets ought to adapt themselves to this grandiose and somewhat simplifying pathos of these lyrical manifestos.

(Not every author has the power of constructive thinking and - the bold intellectual vision, that makes H.G. Wells so imposing a figure in the midst of a general confusion and moral disintegration.)

(In other cases, a writer's contribution may be less conspicuous but ^{no} less important. The living example of a great personality - the conscientiousness and self-discipline, the integrity and fervour manifest in all his utterances, cannot but inspire and encourage those who are weary, sceptical and uncertain.)

There is, indeed, no universal postulate except this: that no responsible intellectual - no creative mind can afford, or should try, to escape the tremendous problems of this crucial hour. His is the right to choose the ^{particular} form of his contribution: he may cease writing poetry or novels and produce nothing but political manifestos; he may renounce literature altogether and become a pilot, if he feels that only the matters military count while literature is a luxury for more peaceful times (a point of view, which one can discuss, but which I personally deem erroneous!) He may transform his warnings and his appeal in poetic images or may present them in an historical disguise; he may found a magazine with the purpose of collecting an American and international vanguard to discuss

the crucial topics of our time and keep alive the imperishable traditions of our culture; (this is, by the way, what a few friends and myself try to do at this moment...):

However, the notion of responsibility that I have mentioned before, is to be the leading thought behind and beyond all our activities and statements. The feeling of our responsibility should make us at once proud and humble; cautious and daring, realistic and confident. The seriousness of this hour is great - is, indeed, overwhelming. The Swastika waving from the Mount Olympus - Hitler approaching the Acropolis: what symbols could be more sinister, more frightening?!

Educational
of the intellectual
The writer's task and function in the Present Crisis does not differ essentially from the task and function of any citizen - although his situation may be more delicate and involved. For *intellectual* her, the writer, has not only to live up to certain moral and political postulates, but also has also to formulate them, not only must he have faith himself, but must also inspire it. Economically as well as morally he is most painfully affected by the crisis; yet, it is his privilege and meaning to clarify the meaning of a drama from which he suffers himself.

Not only must he have faith but must also inspire it - as long as he has fortitude and strength enough to believe, to live and to write.

to know and to believe
with which
not only
that is
Both writer and educator are not only threatened but also that is