

**PORTRAITS -**  
**POWER AND GLORY**  
**VIS-À-VIS**  
**FORM AND CONTENTMENT**

**JOHN O'LOUGHLIN**



# PORTRAITS

POWER AND GLORY VIS-À-VIS  
FORM AND CONTENTMENT

By

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Of Centretruths Digital Media

CDM Philosophy

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## BIOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTE

## PREFACE

Comprised of thirty-three biographical sketches of some of the twentieth-century's most influential and powerful people in both politics and the arts, including Hitler, Stalin, de Valera, Mussolini, de Gaulle, André Malraux, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Aldous Huxley, *Portraits – Power and Glory vis-à-vis Form and Contentment* (1985) seeks to provoke as well as praise, and should prove of interest to those who are curious to learn how various exceptional men – and one exceptional woman – measure up to a Social Transcendentalist analysis or, more correctly, to the scrutiny of someone who approaches life from a specific ideological standpoint with a view to measuring the achievements of others in relation to it.

Although I have dealt with some of the subjects before (see *Becoming and Being*), my treatment of them here is much more subjectively critical and thus a reflection, in large measure, of the way my thinking had progressed in the intervening three years since the earlier excursion into biography which, characteristic of the more relativistic approach to literature colouring my writings at that time, also embraced a series of autobiographical sketches. No such relativity applies here, however, although the choice of both politicians and artists is anything but absolutist!

John O'Loughlin, London 1985 (Revised 2022)

## *Malcolm Muggeridge*

I have read most of this great journalist's writings, and have derived, besides pleasure, much useful information and knowledge from them. I particularly admired *Chronicles of Wasted Time, Vol. II*, which mainly dealt with his wartime experiences in Intelligence and Administration. I also admired *The Diaries*, which span the greater part of his adult life. He has an amazing facility with words, spinning them with seeming effortless across vast tracts of the imagination in a style both fluent and complex, graceful and robust.

Few people could have been more fluent or articulate in speech either, and I always found it a pleasure to listen to him on Radio 4's 'Any Questions'. His was one of the few voices to enliven the programme, and not simply in his tone-of-voice but, more importantly, in what he said with it. For, unlike most people, Malcolm Muggeridge spoke his mind and, again unlike most people's, it was an intensely individual mind, which made it all the more worth hearing.

Few people have exploited free speech like him; for, indeed, few people truly know the meaning of free speech. It takes both intelligence and courage, intellectual courage, to speak one's mind freely and frankly, and this great man had both. His death was a great loss to both letters and freedom. For of all the major public personalities of his time, he came the closest to being a guru and God's Englishman. Not for me to begrudge him that!

## *Arthur Koestler*

Few people could have been more admired in print and less known in speech than this British citizen of Hungarian Jewish extraction who, not surprisingly, spoke English with a markedly foreign accent. But if he was unattractive, and thus secretive, in speech, he was more than adequately compensated for this disadvantage in prose, spinning, for a foreign-born

journalist, some of the most word-perfect, complex, imaginative, and enlivening prose ever recorded in English letters.

First and foremost a philosopher, Koestler pursued his evolutionary and 'holonic' theories with a rigour, consistency, and patience seldom encountered in British philosophical writings. In this respect, he was closer to the French, particularly Sartre, with whom he was friendly for a time during his Paris years. But, for all his personal literary brilliance, Koestler was flawed, perhaps partly on account of his foreign origins, by pedanticism, by too great a respect for past thinkers like Darwin and Freud, and never really broke free of them to establish himself as a major thinker in his own right.

Yet I cannot deny that, for a time, his influence on me was considerable, even in politics, and I owe my own ideological position in part to his thinking, which served as a springboard to my intellectual freedom. Of all his books, probably *Janus – A Summing Up* (which I read, incidentally, before his much earlier *The Act of Creation*) had the most influence on me, though I also admired *From Bricks to Babel*, the more recently-published selective anthology spanning several decades. Koestler may not have been a genius of the first rank, but he was arguably one of the cleverest men of his time.

## *Jean-Paul Sartre*

During my youth Sartre was, for a while, my favourite author, particularly with regards to *Nausea*, his first and, in my opinion, best novel, which I must have read at least eight times by the age of 22, identifying, in some degree, with its antihero, Roquentin. Of all French authors, Sartre probably came closest to being a guru and hero of French youth. Unattractive in appearance, he was yet attractive in prose, both fluent and profound, though not always true.

As, for instance, in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, his little book against anti-Semitism, wherein I read of the Jews as Israelites! Israelites? But there was, at the time, no Israel in existence and hadn't been so for some two millennia! How, therefore, could Jews be identified with a non-existent

nationality? In such fashion, starting from a bogus premise, Sartre, as a Frenchman, completely fails to grasp the cold logic of an anti-tribal, closed-society perspective, as developed by the Nazis, and consequently came out against anti-Semitism.

Well, in spite of that, I am not encouraging people, here, to become anti-Semitic – far from it! An open society does not permit of a supertheocratic opposition to tribalists ... except on the basis of a lunatic fringe, a basis that can entail serious penalties if taken too far! No, but in relation to Nazism, which was the relationship Sartre was mostly writing about at the time, anti-Semitism was a logical ideological procedure, even if cooked-up for the benefit of the masses in some crasser, more tangible guise that makes no reference to Jews as tribalists (though the expression 'submen', also applicable to Gypsies, autocrats, priests, and communists, whether Russian or Polish, carries approximately the same weight).

Well, Sartre was certainly wrong in his own logical position, which is, after all, only to be expected from a French bourgeois writer of Protestant descent, since many French, along with most Britons and not a few Americans, usually prove themselves ethnically and ideologically incapable of coming to intellectual grips with extreme ideological positions, particularly when, as in the case of National Socialism in Hitler's Germany, such positions are of a supertheocratic bias, albeit one that was seriously flawed and therefore of no real credit to religion.

Yes, I read Sartre but, like all the other authors I shall be writing about, I eventually grew out of and beyond him. After all, the bourgeois is a dying breed.

### *Norman Mailer*

Although I haven't read everything of Norman Mailer's, I have certainly enjoyed most of what I have read, and that included *Barbary Shore*, *The Prisoner of Sex*, and, more recently, *Pieces and Pontifications*, which was by far the most interesting, if not always the most convincing. I have always felt sceptical about Mailer, particularly in view of his worldly success as one of America's most celebrated and best-paid authors.



The worldly and the spiritual don't go together to any appreciable extent, and it is no surprise for me to learn that Mailer is a staunch democrat – that worldly ideology *par excellence* – and has been married several times. Neither was I surprised to learn, again from *Pieces and Pontifications*, that he disapproves of plastic, indeed, equates it with the Devil! For how could such a naturalistic down-to-earth man possibly understand plastic, or things made of plastic, and see them in their true supernatural light? It is as though the Jew in him is too strong, too deeply ingrained, obliging allegiance to the Creator in some quasi-Judaic holy paganism with pantheistic overtones.

No, I was not bound to rave about Norman Mailer, though I will admit that he possesses a lively facility with words and an admirable ability to quickly spin ideas from them, which connotes with his fellow-worldly intellectual, Arthur Koestler, who was also Jewish. Probably his best idea, from my evolutionary point-of-view, concerns the metaphorical correlates or manifestations of the Devil and God in the world at any given time, battling for hegemony over it. Although he sees the Devil, so to speak, in the antinatural, particularly, of all things, in plastic products, he is none too sure about the metaphorical status of God, since his notions of the supernatural are hazy and constrained by worldly criteria, making him more partial to the natural, which is precisely the world, and, hence, the real.

Like most Jews, American or otherwise, he suffers from a blind spot concerning the supernatural; for were he to distinguish more objectively between the Devil and God, as between materialism and idealism, he would sooner or later find himself in the unhappy position of discovering that the last ideological manifestation of God in the world, appertaining to a crude approximation to the Second Coming, was Hitlerian fascism, and that this supernatural idealism was defeated not simply by the Devil ... in the guise of communist materialism, but by a combination of the Devil and the World (meaning the allied West), over whose democratic realism Nazism had for a time seemed so triumphant.

Needless to say, Mailer is not going to abandon his worldliness for the sake of a fascistic form of supernaturalism. Whether he would be prepared, in due course, to abandon it for a Centric transcendentalism ... must remain

open to doubt. I, for one, would be sceptical!

## *Adolf Hitler*

Curious that Hitler, for all his personal faults and professional shortcomings, should have appertained or, at any rate, struck me as appertaining to a crude approximation to the Second Coming in the world ... in the face of antichristic communism. Few people in the democratic West seem to realize that the real barbarism and evil afoot at that time was Soviet Communism, and I suspect one could cite the extent of Western decadence as if not an honourable factor in this respect, then at least an extenuating one. For the West was far gone in decadence even then, and when you get a falling away from realism towards materialism in a democratic context, it is almost inevitable that sooner or later a counterbalancing idealism will emerge to attempt to stem the decadence and save what remains of the soul from the jaws of ravenous materialism.

In England, people have long been conditioned to regarding National Socialism as an ideological manifestation of the Devil, purely and simply, with the denigratory epithet 'Nazi' reserved for all those who succumbed to what is perceived to have been one of the worst manifestations of barbarism of all time. Now, admittedly, to the extent that we take the title 'National Socialism' literally, there would be adequate grounds for considering it an indication of materialist barbarism. Yet the fact remains that, whilst a degree of literal nationalistic socialism may have accrued to the ideology, Hitler and most of his closest followers in the Party never took the idea of socialism too seriously, but, on the contrary, constantly fulminated against it in the name of idealistic values, values which diametrically opposed socialist materialism ... as represented, in particular, by the Soviet Union; communism being identifiable, in Hitler's mind, with out-and-out barbarism, an ideology only fit for those who stood lowest in the scale of civilization, the 'chalk' with which no mixture of fascist 'cheese' was possible, the German people no less racially superior to the Russians, in Hitler's eyes, than ideologically superior, no democratic-type compromise being possible between idealistic *übermenschen* and materialistic *untermenschen*, the Slavs having put themselves beneath the realistic pale through communism, and therefore not being entitled to the

more lenient, educative treatment accorded to defeated Westerners.

How, then, can one equate this National Socialist ideology with barbarism? And how explain why a people long regarded as one of the most cultured in Europe should suddenly descend, as though by wilful decree, into wanton barbarism? Is there not surely a contradiction here, a refutation of German tradition and reputation, such as all-too-many Western historians have been only too willing to overlook or, no less inexcusably, take for granted? Surely, if the facts of German tradition are properly taken into account, it is precisely this cultural and moral superiority over their decadent, democratic Western neighbours which led to the German people adopting National Socialism when they did, and in conjunction, one might say, with the Italian people's adoption of Fascism – the brother idealism of a no-less culturally superior nation. They were in a position to adopt it because democracy had never run that deep or had time to get a grip on the necks of the German people, thanks in large measure to autocratic tradition and the correlative absence, at least to any appreciable extent, of an overseas Empire, the very thing that, certainly in the case of Britain, encouraged the growth of liberalism by requiring the adoption of trade tariffs and, later, *laissez faire*, in order ...