

The Paradise Eater



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著者:John Ralston Saul

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作者介绍:

John Ralston Saul, CC (born June 19, 1947) is a Canadian author and essayist.

As an essayist Saul is particularly known for his commentaries on the nature of individualism, citizenship and the public good; the failures of manager-, or more precisely technocrat-, led societies; the confusion between leadership and managerialism; military strategy, in particular irregular warfare; the role of freedom of speech and culture; and his critique of contemporary economic arguments.

Biography

Born in Ottawa, Saul studied at McGill University in Montreal and at King's College London where he earned his Ph.D in 1972. After helping to set up the national oil company Petro-Canada, as Assistant to its first Chair, he turned his attention to writing. Dr. Saul gave the CBC Massey Lectures for 1995. He is married to former Canadian governor general Adrienne Clarkson.

As a novelist

The Birds of Prey, was an international best seller. He then published The Field Trilogy, which deals with the crisis of modern power and its clash with the individual. It includes Baraka or The Lives, Fortunes and Sacred Honor of Anthony Smith, The Next Best Thing, and The Paradise Eater, which won the prestigious Premio Letterario Internazionale in Italy. De Si Bons Americains is a picaresque novel in which he observes the life of modern nouveaux riches Americans.

As an essayist

Voltaire's Bastards, The Doubter's Companion and The Unconscious Civilization. His philosophical essays began with the trilogy made up of the bestseller Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West, the polemic philosophical dictionary The Doubter's Companion: A Dictionary of Aggressive Common Sense, and the book that grew out of his 1995 Massey Lectures, The Unconscious Civilization. The last won the 1996 Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction Literature.

These books deal with themes such as the dictatorship of reason unbalanced by other human qualities, how it can be used for any ends especially in a directionless state that rewards the pursuit of power for power's sake. He argues that this leads to deformations of thought such as ideology promoted as truth; the rational but anti-democratic structures of corporatism, by which he means the worship of small groups; and the use of language and expertise to mask a practical understanding of the harm this causes, and what else our society might do. He argues that the rise of individualism with no regard for the role of society has not created greater individual autonomy and self-determination, as was once hoped, but isolation and alienation. He calls for a pursuit of a more humanist ideal in which reason is balanced with other human mental capacities such as common sense, ethics, intuition, creativity, and memory, for the sake of the common good, and he discusses the importance of unfettered language and practical democracy.

Reflections of a Siamese Twin

He expanded on these themes as they relate to Canada and its history and culture in Reflections of a Siamese Twin. In this book, he coined the idea of Canada being a "soft" country, meaning not that the nation is weak, but that it is has a flexible and complex identity, as opposed to the unyielding or monolithic identities of other states.

He argued that Canada's complex national identity is made up of the "triangular reality" of the three nations that compose it: First Peoples, francophones, and anglophones. He emphasizes the willingness of these Canadian nations to compromise with one another, as opposed to resorting to open confrontations. In the same vein, he criticizes both those in the Quebec separatist Montreal School for emphasizing the conflicts in Canadian history and the Orange Order and the Clear Grits traditionally seeking clear definitions of Canadian-ness and loyalty.

On Equilibrium

His next book, On Equilibrium (2001), is effectively the conclusion to his philosophical trilogy. It is about six qualities that all of us possess: Common Sense, Ethics, Imagination, Intuition, Memory, and Reason. He describes how these inner forces serve us, how we can use them to balance each other, and what happens when they are unbalanced such as when one is used in isolation such as when there is a "Dictatorship

of Reason".

The Collapse of Globalism

In an article written for Harper's magazine and published in the magazine's March 2004 issue under the title The Collapse of Globalism and the Rebirth of Nationalism, he argued that the globalist ideology was under attack by counter-movements. Saul rethought and developed this argument in *The Collapse of Globalism and the Reinvention of the World* (2005). Far from being an inevitable force, Saul argued that globalization is already breaking up into contradictory pieces and that citizens are reasserting their national interests in both positive and destructive ways.

Speaker

Saul delivered the J.D. Young Memorial Lecture “A New Era Of Irregular Warfare?” at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario on February 4, 2004.

Activities

John Saul is co-Chair of the new Institute for Canadian Citizenship. He is Patron and former president of the Canadian Centre of International PEN. He is also Founder and Honorary Chair of French for the Future, Chair of the Advisory Board for the LaFontaine-Baldwin Symposium lecture series, and a Patron of PLAN (a cutting edge organization tied to people with disabilities), Engineers Without Borders (Canada), and the Canadian Landmine Foundation. A Companion in the Order of Canada (1999), he is also Chevalier in the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France (1996). His 14 honorary degrees range from McGill University and the University of Ottawa to Herzen State Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg, Russia. From 1999 until 2006 when his wife Adrienne Clarkson was Governor General of Canada he was Canada's vice-regal consort.

Bibliography

Fiction

The Birds of Prey (1977)

Baraka (1983)

The Next Best Thing (1986)

The Paradise Eater (1988)

De si bons Américains (1994)

Non-fiction

Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West (1992)

The Doubter's Companion: A Dictionary of Aggressive Common Sense (1994)

The Unconscious Civilization (1995)

Le Citoyen dans un cul-de-sac?: Anatomie d'une société en crise (1996)

Reflections of a Siamese Twin: Canada at the End of the Twentieth Century (1997)

On Equilibrium: Six Qualities of the New Humanism (2001)

The John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture (2004)

The Collapse of Globalism and the Reinvention of the World (2005)

Joseph Howe and the Battle for Freedom of Speech (2006)

Honours

Italy's Premio Letterario Internazionale, for The Paradise Eater (1990)

Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres de France (1996)

Gordon Montador Award, for The Unconscious Civilization (1996)

Governor General's Literary Award for Non-fiction, for The Unconscious Civilization (1996)

Gordon Montador Award, for Reflections of a Siamese Twin (1998)

Companion of the Order of Canada (1999)

Pablo Neruda International Presidential Medal of Honour(2004)

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