



The Fear of America Within Us: & Other Essays On Politics & Society

Jens Bjørneboe

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THE GREAT Norwegian writer Jens Bjørneboe (1920-1976) was an iconoclast, a troubled soul, an urgent voice of protest. He is best known for his trilogy of novels called collectively "The History of Bestiality," a monument that aspired, no less, to account for all the cruelties, tortures and abominations of human history from the conquest of the Americas to the gas chambers of the Third Reich, and on beyond to the postwar exploitation of the Third World. Lesser known are his plays, such as SEMMELWEIS (1968) and AMPUTATION (1964 & 1970), which focus on conventional society's conventional suppression of the talented individual. Least known outside Norway are his essays, which until now have not been widely available in English translation.

This Xenos e-book edition collects a dozen of Bjørneboe's essays on social and political themes. While expressing the same concerns as do the novels and plays, these brief works speak in a gentler and more personal tone, the voice of the author. As elsewhere, he is preoccupied with man's inhumanity of man, the application of laws and penalties to nonconformists and outsiders, and the constant need for rebellion in the aim of justice. However, as a teacher at the innovative Rudolf Steiner school in Oslo from 1950 to 1957, Bjørneboe here reveals a tender concern for the nurture and education of the young. Although written between the years 1952 and 1973, these essays have not lost their relevance for today, when educational programs are in turmoil and the incarceration of young and old in America has reached record levels.

ESTHER GREENLEAF MÜRER is the translator who introduced Bjørneboe's stunning "History of Bestiality" to the English-speaking world. The trilogy of novels consists of MOMENT OF FREEDOM: The Heiligenberg Testament (1966), POWDERHOUSE: Scientific Postscript and Last Protocol (1969) and THE SILENCE (1973). She also translated his last novel, a seafaring masterpiece, THE SHARKS (1974). Here, in new or newly revised translations, she brings his social and political essays to the electronic medium. Included among the dozen are "The Good Pupil," "The Treatment of Young Lawbreakers" and his most famous article in Norway, "Concerning the Minder Type" ? a cutting analysis of the authoritarian personality. The title essay records the reaction of Europeans to postwar American visitors flushed with military victory, new wealth and a superiority complex.

XENOS EDITOR Karl Kvitko provides a brief introduction, "The Need to Rebel." Table of Contents is linked.

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Eun Russell:

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