



## All Art Is Propaganda

By George Orwell, Keith Gessen

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As a critic, George Orwell cast a wide net. Equally at home discussing Charles Dickens and Charlie Chaplin, he moved back and forth across the porous borders between essay and journalism, high art and low. A frequent commentator on literature, language, film, and drama throughout his career, Orwell turned increasingly to the critical essay in the 1940s, when his most important experiences were behind him and some of his most incisive writing lay ahead.

*All Art Is Propaganda* follows Orwell as he demonstrates in piece after piece how intent analysis of a work or body of work gives rise to trenchant aesthetic and philosophical commentary. With masterpieces such as "Politics and the English Language" and "Rudyard Kipling" and gems such as "Good Bad Books," here is an unrivaled education in, as George Packer puts it, "how to be interesting, line after line."

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## All Art Is Propaganda By George Orwell, Keith Gessen Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Before he was a renowned novelist, George Orwell was a masterful essayist. Spanning the 1940s, this companion to *Facing Unpleasant Facts: Narrative Essays* showcases Orwell in an often unexpected cavalcade of observations on diverse subjects—in the literary field alone as varied as T. S. Eliot, Charles Dickens, Henry Miller, Graham Greene and Kipling. But since this is Orwell, the book takes on a range of subjects with gusto: power and bully worship and the deleterious influence of Catholicism on literature. Orwell's withering observations on professional academic criticism (Politics and the English Language) are tempered by his sly Confessions of a Book Reviewer (constantly *inventing* reactions towards books about which one has no spontaneous feelings whatever) and Good Bad Books (the supreme example being *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). Not to be overlooked is a freewheeling take on the naughty postcards of Donald McGill. Overall, this collection highlights the work of a writer who always put his money where his mouth was, reiterating frequently the importance of clarity of expression in enabling independent thought. (Oct. 13) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library Journal

George Orwell (1903–50) is best remembered for his dark and prophetic political novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949). In addition to four other novels, he also produced some of the best book-length nonfiction of the modernist era, including *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and *Homage to Catalonia* (1939). Harcourt is now republishing in two volumes his collected essays, compiled by Packer (*The Assassin's Gate: America in Iraq*). What is most astonishing about these essays are their continuing freshness and relevancy more than half a century after Orwell's death. All are worth reading for some combination of literary, historical, or cautionary merit. His criticism of art and politics (and sometimes both) remains spot-on, and the "unpleasant facts" he considers, including war, poverty, homelessness, lack of adequate medical care, and even schoolboy bullying, are unfortunately still familiar topics. Orwell's crisp and clear journalistic writing style remains highly accessible to 21st-century readers, with the occasional, now obscure reference illuminated by Packer's notes. Essential for academic libraries; highly recommended for public libraries.—Alison M. Lewis, formerly with Drexel Univ. Lib., Philadelphia Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From the Back Cover

*The essential collection of critical essays from a 20th-century master*

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"Reaffirm[s] the author's status as one of the definitive essayists in English literature."--*Los Angeles Times*

**GEORGE ORWELL** (1903–1950) served with the Imperial Police in Burma, fought with the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, and was a member of the Home Guard and a writer for the BBC during World War II. He is the author of many works of nonfiction and fiction.

**GEORGE PACKER** is a staff writer for the *New Yorker* and author of *The Assassin's Gate: America in Iraq* and other works. He lives in Brooklyn.

**KEITH GESSEN** was born in Russia and educated at Harvard. He is a founding editor of *n+1* and has written about literature and culture for *Dissent*, the *Nation*, the *New Yorker*, and the *New York Review of Books*. He is the author of the novel *All the Sad Young Literary Men*.

Also in this series: *Facing Unpleasant Facts: Narrative Essays*

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**Eddie McCoy:**

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