



Anglo-Saxon Attitudes (New York Review Books Classics)

By Angus Wilson

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Gerald Middleton is a sixty-year-old self-proclaimed failure. Worse than that, he's "a failure with a conscience." As a young man, he was involved in an archaeological dig that turned up an obscene idol in the coffin of a seventh-century bishop and scandalized a generation. The discovery was in fact the most outrageous archaeological hoax of the century, and Gerald has long known who was responsible and why. But to reveal the truth is to risk destroying the world of cozy compromises that, personally as well as professionally, he has long made his own.

One of England's first openly gay novelists, Angus Wilson was a dirty realist who relished the sleaze and scuffle of daily life. Slashingly satirical, virtuosically plotted, and displaying Dickensian humor and nerve, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* features a vivid cast of characters that includes scheming academics and fading actresses, big businessmen toggling between mistresses and wives, media celebrities, hustlers, transvestites, blackmailers, toadies, and even one holy fool. Everyone, it seems, is either in cahoots or in the dark, even as comically intrepid Gerald Middleton struggles to maintain some dignity while digging up a history of lies.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Originally published in 1956, Wilson's novel is a comedy of social class and manners in English society. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Review

"After Evelyn Waugh, what? The answer is Angus Wilson, a master of mimicry, diction, intention and wit." —Edmund Wilson

"One of the five greatest novels of the century." —Anthony Burgess

"...brilliant and ambitious...In every generation one or two novelists revise the conventional picture of English character. Mr. Wilson does this." —V.S. Pritchett, *New Statesman and Nation*

"It's Dickens for the smart set, or Edmund Wilson with a dash of savage silliness." —Susan Salter Reynolds, *The Los Angeles Times*

"So read this splendid novel and you will find yourself not only entertained and at times vastly amused, but actually wiser about human nature. You will not only experience vicariously some interesting slices of postwar English life, but you will be conducted into a world of fine moral and ethical distinctions, which are this novelist's particular forte. Much wisdom and humanity are to be found in the pages of *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*." —Martin Rubin, *The Washington Times*

About the Author

Angus Wilson (1913–1991) worked as a deputy superintendent of the British Museum Reading Room before establishing a reputation with a collection of short stories, *The Wrong Set*. A novel, *Hemlock and After*, one of the first English books to describe the lives of gay men, brought more success, and Wilson began a prolific career as a writer of fiction, criticism, and reviews. He was a professor of English at the University of East Anglia and spent his last years in France.

Jane Smiley, winner of the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, is the author of many novels and other works. In 2010 she published *Private Life*, a novel; *A Good Horse*, a book for young adults; and *The Man Who Invented the Computer*, the first volume of the Sloane American Inventors series.

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