High School and Early College Reading

I did a lot of reading in the 1950s which helped form me politically and intellectually. In Junior High I read all of the Sherlock Holmes stories. I loved the logic involved and how Holmes saw things that no one else was aware of. I read everything I could by John Steinbeck and was particularly moved by *Grapes of Wrath*, *The Pastures of Heaven*, *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Pearl*, and *East of Eden*. His novels helped build in me a sense of outrage. I also read books such as *Spartacus* by Howard Fast.

Later I began reading novels like *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, *Looking Backward* by Edward Bellamy, *Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo, and *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. They gave me some ideas on how societies could or should function. By the time I was a senior in high school I was reading *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac and other beat writers. Brautigan was always one of my favorite writers.

In the late 1950s I read *The Affluent Society* by John Kenneth Galbraith, Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, William White’s *The Organization Man*, C. Wright Mill’s *The Power Elite*, and J. D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*. I was beginning to see what alienation from our current perceived life style was even as I was living a life of privilege. These were all essential readings in the development of a new left in the United States.