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NEW CLIMATE OF OPINION

THREE hundred years ago, a man whose wisdom is easily recognized, today, but whose opinions on certain subjects are still shunned as "medieval," coined a phrase which stuck fast in the modern vocabulary ever since Alfred North Whitehead restored it to circulation—the phrase, "climate of opinion." Its author, Joseph Glanvill, was deeply sympathetic to the views of the Cambridge Platonists of seventeenth-century England, and he fought a losing battle in behalf of philosophical rationalism against the rising popularity of Cartesian Mechanism. Of all things, Glanvill took upon himself the defense of "ghosts" and wrote a treatise to prove "the existence of apparitions, spirits, and witches." Yet Lecky, the great nineteenth-century historian, said that "the predominating characteristic of Glanvill's mind was an intense scepticism"! How a "sceptic" could believe in ghosts and apparitions, to say nothing of "witches," may be a considerable puzzle to the modern reader, but a little attention to Glanvill's view of the formation of human opinions may be of help in understanding this strange combination.

If he lived today, Glanvill would probably be classed, among other things, as a semanticist. His attack on scholasticism was mainly a criticism of Aristotle, who, he argued, pretended to explain things merely by naming them. In his first book, *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*, he accuses Aristotle of merely restating problems in terms of "qualities," "sympathies," and "antipathies." This amounted to a veto on further inquiry. He similarly charged the medieval schoolmen with hiding the issues of science in clouds of verbosity. They left the world, he said, *intellectually invisible*—a handy phrase to characterize every sort of over-simplification which ignores real questions. Glanvill was also a relativist of sorts, for he is aware of the conceit which makes men suppose that their own age has reached the summit of knowledge. It is this sense of "history" in human thought which made him write:

> . . . they that never peep'd beyond the common belief in which their easie understandings were at first indoctrinated, are indubitably assur'd of the Truth, and comparative excellency of their receptions . . . the larger Souls, that have travail'd the divers *Climates of Opinions,* are more cautious in their *resolves,* and more sparing to determine.

Glanvill is a good man to have in mind in a time like the present, for he, also, lived in an epoch of rapidly changing opinions, the difference between his time and our own being that the movement of opinion is now in an opposite direction. It was during the seventeenth century that the assumptions of modern materialism were firmly seated, gradually creating the modern "climate of opinion" that has prevailed throughout the past hundred years. As a modern zoologist, William Ellis, who has given some thought to these questions, has put it:

> . . . the anti-metaphysical trend of present-day thought is based on logical, not biological grounds. But, had it not been for the success of science, above all of the science of living things, no one would have thought of using logic as a stick to beat metaphysics. If Descartes had not said that animals are machines without souls, and if modern biologists had not worked on that assumption, we should have no logical positivists to tell us that the idea of the soul is meaningless.

In Glanvill's time, the trend of opinion was away from belief in or even thought about the soul. In our own time, the trend has been reversed. Our present interest is to examine the new direction to see a little of what may be causing it. We propose, not so much an "analysis" of this trend, but an informal census of its various expressions and the backgrounds from which they have emerged.

First, then, we take from a current *Time* a paragraph of review devoted to Ardis Whitman's *A New Image of Man*, a book which may be said to embody the new mood of popular rejection of statistical method in the social and psychological sciences, and also the new interest in individualism

and nonconformity which has had its most impressive expression in the writings of David Riesman. Mrs. Whitman is completely fed up with the baby book and child development version of how one grows up to a wholly predictable maturity. That *Time* writes so easily on the content of her book illustrates how well born its thesis is:

> On lecture tours she [Mrs. Whitman] has long attacked this slowly hardening concept of man as "a million divided by a million." Even a belief in the existence of the "common man" can be dangerous, for men are apt to believe as they are expected to, and the common man may become deadly common—conformist putty in the hands of science and society. He does not want to stick his neck out or get his feelings "mixed up" in things. He knows that strong feelings are as dangerous as disease, having read articles like "Emotion Can Give You a Running Nose." He is a pragmatist, a materialist, a "healthy sceptic," a "tough realist"—and Author Whitman warns—he is "as inadequate to our time as a bow-and-arrow on a 20th century battlefield."
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> Her dream man is the common man's opposite number, a lively unpredictable fellow, unashamed to be crotchety, who keeps himself free to judge society as society is free to judge him. He is guided by intuition and feelings as well as custom and intellect, is as concerned with the mysteries of religion and the unconscious as with the certainties of science. He might even become telepathic—there's no telling what he might do.

Where has come the courage to embrace what were yesterday's foibles and fancies—for, we think, neither a book like this nor the *Time* review of it could have been produced in the nineteenth century? What has so lessened the vigor of the "brave-new-worldism" of a generation ago, that it is now becoming not only possible, but popular, to speak of attitudes only twenty or thirty years old as though they had lost all claim to serious attention? Lecky has some wise words on questions of this sort. In his introduction to the *History of Rationalism in Europe*, he notes that opinions which are allied with existing interests die only through struggle, but that—

> much more frequently civilisation makes opinions that are opposed to it simply obsolete. They perish by indifference not by controversy. They are relegated to the dim twilight land that surrounds every living faith; the land, not of death, but of the shadow of death; the land of the unrealized and the inoperative.

Lecky here has in mind the gradual decline of belief in the more supernatural of the dogmas of religion, but what he says applies equally to a class of allegedly "scientific" assumptions which have formed the basis of most of what is termed scientific materialism, or "scientism." To have lived through this decline, as have all who remember the dominant opinions of the 1920's and then to recognize rather suddenly that it has taken place, is a rather surprising experience, since practically no one really thought so radical a change in outlook would be possible in so short a time. What has happened is an authentic "breakthrough" from the conventional scientific world-view or "climate of opinion," and there seems no doubt about the fact that another world-view, as yet far from explicit or ready for definition, is on the way.

But if the change is coming more as a transformation of mood than as a logical development—"reasoned" from premise to conclusion—there is ample logical ground for a revision of opinions. Even if the materialistic dogma was never more than an anti-theological prejudice, set up, as Bertrand Russell once remarked, not "by men who loved dogma, but by men who felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked," the scientific opinions which once made materialism seem plausible to those who wanted to believe in it no longer exist, just as the number of those who want to believe in it on controversial grounds has enormously diminished. Finally, the communists have turned materialism into a kind of politico-theological orthodoxy, which eliminates from its doctrines the glamor of a pioneering credo supported by a few hardy souls who dare to brave public disapproval. There are, in short, no "moral" reasons, any more, for being a materialist. In the seventeenth century, or even in the eighteenth and nineteenth, there were many.

The real "arguments" against materialism, however—should there be a value in assembling them—began to accumulate in recognizable form at about the end of the nineteenth century. First of all, there was the dissolution of matter into bits of

energy—a result of the discovery of radioactivity in 1896. Early in the twentieth century, one of the best of the scientific thinkers, Karl Pearson, gave up any hope of "defining" matter, and Einstein, a generation or so later, said simply: "Matter is where the concentration of energy is great, field is where the concentration of energy is small. . . . There is no sense in regarding matter and field as two qualities quite different from each other." This was really only a rhetorical reduction of materialism, since despite its name, materialism depends upon a theory of causation rather than a theory of matter. But hard upon the discovery of radioactivity came the electron theory of matter, then the quantum theory of the behavior of subatomic particles, and with quantum theory and the Heisenberg principle of uncertainty, even cause and effect took leave of modern physics. As Bridgman dolefully reported in 1929:

> The same situation confronts the physicist everywhere; whenever he penetrates to the atomic or electronic level in analysis, he finds things acting in a way for which he can assign no cause, for which he can never assign a cause, and for which the concept of cause has no meaning, if Heisenberg's principle is right. This means nothing more or less than that the law of cause and effect must be given up.

Robert A. Millikan reported the score in 1932 in a brief essay, *Time, Matter, and Values.* After summarizing all these developments, including the Einstein Theory, he wrote:

> Result, dogmatic materialism in physics is dead! If we had all been as wise as Galileo and Newton it would never have been born, for dogmatism in any form violates the essence of scientific method, which is to collect with an open mind the brute facts and let them speak for themselves untrammeled by preconceived ideas or by general philosophies or universal systems.

Even if what Millikan here proposed is quite impossible—brute facts are voiceless without some context of theory to lend them meaning—his conclusion about dogmatic materialism seems just enough. We may leave the science of physics at this point, and turn to biology.

Materialism, or "mechanism," in biology began to be seriously questioned when, in the pursuit of the details of evolutionary processes, biologists began to examine in detail the problem of *form.* By this time, the old war with the creationists was no longer "hot" and a non-controversial calm permitted the cytologists and zoologists and embryologists to confess their difficulties. What are the actual processes of evolution? Nobody really knows. The changes in species, as geneticists point out, come from mutations, but what causes mutations? Cosmic rays? Artificially induced mutations are usually bad, even lethal, for the organisms tested. Then there is the further question of how the organic instructions locked in the genes get transmitted to the developing organs. Again, nobody knows.

Nineteen years ago, a leading botanist, Prof, Edmund W. Sinnott, wrote in *Science:*

> Living things are well termed organisms. The activities of their manifold structures are so integrated and coordinated that a successfully functioning whole individual develops. As to how this is accomplished very little is known.

Real progress in the study of the morphology of living things began only with the development of the concept of the "field" as applied to life. Einstein had written: "The electro-magnetic field is, for the modern physicist, as real as the chair on which he sits." Something like this statement is now implied by workers in various departments of the life sciences. Electrical polarity seems to be the governing principle in all cells. "Electrical gradients closely correspond with the metabolic, levels of high metabolic rate being electronegative to those of lower." But, as a botanical authority, Edmund Wilson, has said:

> Fundamentally, both the nature and origin of polarity are unknown. We know only its visible expression, which in most cases is both structural and functional, appearing on the one hand in a polarized grouping of the cell-components, on the other in differences of functional or metabolic activity with respect to the axis thus marked off.

Similar "field" phenomena prevail in the study of forms of animal life. In 1935, Prof. Hans Spemann won the Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine for his discovery of an "organizing" principle in living forms. He found that the elaboration of embryos into complete organisms is

controlled by "organizers" which exist in various parts of the embryo. The bit of protoplasm called an "organizer" has the power to induce a "field" in the surrounding tissue and regulate the multiplication of cells into highly complex organs. Experimenting along these lines, Prof. Nelson Spratt of the University of Rochester concluded: "Development of the forebrain [of a chick] and eyes seems to be the expression of an already existing but invisible structural organization."

Then, at Yale University, in the late 1930'S, Drs. Burr, Nims, and Lane originated a full-blown field theory of living things, based on work done with the vacuum-tube microvoltmeter:

> In the growing embryo, the electrical pattern develops hand in hand with the development of the whole organism. All else in the body undergoes constant change; the individual cells of which the body is made, excepting the germ cells grow old and die, become replaced by other cells, but the electrical architect remains the only constant throughout life building new cells and organizing them after the same pattern of the original cells, and thus, in a literal sense, recreating the body. . . . each species of animals and very likely also the individuals within the species have their characteristic electrical field, analogous to the lines of force in a magnet. The electric field, having its own pattern, fashions all the protoplasmic clay of life that comes within its sphere of influence after its image, thus personifying itself in the living flesh as the sculptor personifies his idea in stone.

This is obviously some sort of organicist mysticism, except for a name. Yet the facts are there, and while professors may remain cautious, leaving it to scientific journalists to wax eloquent over the implications of such discoveries, the day of "mechanical" or "materialistic" explanations of living processes seems done. Meanwhile, there has been another sort of progress in other areas of investigation.

As so often suggested in these pages, the psychotherapists have been chiefly responsible for the new conceptions of human "wholeness" in modern psychology. Academic psychology has been entirely imprisoned in theories inherited from nineteenth-century physics and biology, with the result that the doctrines of non-clinical psychologists have been almost ridiculous in their failure to attempt any account of what a human being really is. But the analysts and psychiatrists have developed what might be termed ample "field theories" of their own in relation to human behavior and thought and feeling. Within the past ten years or so, a genuine emancipation has come to both psychology and philosophy as a result. Here, the work of Dr. Rhine at Duke University has been of decisive importance. The phenomena of thought-transference are as indifferent to the familiar physical rules of cause and effect as the subatomic particles. Telepathy, whatever it is, is plainly *non-physical*, and one non-physical reality implies another. Thus ideas of the soul, of transcendental process and possibility, are no longer forbidden by scientific authority to the thoughtful men of our time. From the other end of investigation—that of the social sciences, concerned with human conflicts and problems—has been meanwhile born an eagerness for new explanations, a hunger for approaches to life which involve originality and courage and inspiration, all qualities which have no possible existence in a mechanistically determined scheme of things. So,the uprising tide of research meets the questing minds who are *looking* for reasons to abandon a barren and no longer useful materialism, and the result is a mood typified by the volume reviewed in *Time*—Ardis Whitman's A *New Image of Man.*

We have skipped over the ground of this transition rapidly, but not, we think, unsoundly. Perhaps the most encouraging thing about the recent past in the world of modern thought is what it promises in the way of similar developments in the immediate future.

REVIEW
ERASMUS

THE May issue of the British magazine, *Encounter*, contains a particularly noteworthy article in a series titled, "Men and Ideas." This series, remark the *Encounter* editors, "seems to have developed a very nice momentum of its own," and if other contributions offer as many opportunities for instruction and reflection as H. Trevor-Roper's "Desiderius Erasmus," it should, indeed, "gain momentum." For the story of Erasmus is, at least in part, the story of every man today whose intellectual integrity forbids his factional alignment on the major ideological issues of our time.

Erasmus did not set out to advance a particular point of view, nor did he seek popularity. He was simply a man who possessed a strong love of wisdom; yet, since there are always *some* who are attracted to the quest for knowledge, and since faith in reason was preparing to emerge from its fifteenth-century hiding places, many were finally drawn to Desiderius Erasmus as a man bringing Enlightenment. The factionalists, of course, tried to appropriate Erasmus, but without success. Luther, for one, adopted many of the criticisms penned by his scholarly contemporary, and, when he made his frontal attack on the Roman Church, quite expected Erasmus to stand by his side. But Erasmus declined. Rome, in turn, looked to Erasmus for support against Luther, and was similarly disappointed. TrevorRoper notes that "from 1519 onwards both sides began to court Erasmus: each hoped that the greatest uncommitted spiritual writer in Europe would declare roundly against its adversary."

Some of Trevor-Roper's best passages then follow:

> What was Erasmus to do? He could not support Luther whose philosophy he rejected and who was seeking to disrupt the Church. On the other hand he could not denounce him completely, without repudiating his own criticism of the Church—in other words, without ceasing to be Erasmus. The more he was pressed, the more he refused to commit himself, or use his unique position to endorse the rage of either party. He urged the Elector of Saxony to protect Luther against the Catholic fanatics; he urged Luther to persevere "against the tyranny of the See of Rome and its satellites, the mendicant monks"; on the other hand he disavowed the heretical views of Luther. But the proper answer to Luther, he insisted, was not condemnation, for "the accusations of Luther against the tyranny, the rapacity, the corruption of the Court of Rome" were only too true—"would to God," he wrote to the Pope's chaplain, "that they were not." The true remedy for Lutheranism was not denunciation, it was "to cut the roots from which the evil continually springs: of which one is the hatred of the Court of Rome, with its intolerable avarice and tyranny, and another certain human ordinances which weigh heavily upon Christian liberty." These "human ordinances" were of course monasticism and mechanical devotions.
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> To this philosophy of reform Erasmus remained constant. He sacrificed to it his comfort, his influence, his friends, his peace of mind. He has often been accused of timidity, but in fact his refusal to take sides is a sign rather of consistency.

Trevor-Roper's short account of the life of Erasmus tells us precisely how a man not personally impressive nevertheless became one of the greatest heroes of the sixteenth century. If his point of view, that of reason as opposed to faith, force, dogma and belief, had prevailed—and for a time there was at least a chance that it might—subsequent centuries of religious warfare might have been averted, and history books made pleasanter reading. But fratricide and factionalism won the hour, with the result that even Erasmus himself, after his death, was converted to "wartime use."

Erasmus' closest friend was Sir Thomas More, yet the rival churches did not even allow preservation of the truth about this relationship. As Trevor-Roper points out, during their lives More and Erasmus had *never diverged* in basic opinions. Both had been admirers of Pico della Mirandola, and each recognized the considerable debt owed the other. But in a few years these

inseparable allies were misappropriated in the following manner: More was converted into a Roman saint, while Erasmus was completely disowned by the same Rome—and finally accepted as a Protestant.

Why does the tale of a mild and unaggressive scholar make such heartwarming reading? The quotation from the *Encounter* article indicates the integrity with which Erasmus, though hating turmoil and threats, stood for what he believed to be true—showing him a source of that perennial inspiration afforded by all men who have *thought* bravely. Bravery is usually associated, in Western culture, with defiance of physical danger. Erasmus' bravery was of the usually unsung sort. He was personally both timid and comfort-loving, desirous of nothing so much as the opportunity to pursue scholarly works undisturbed. The first threat to his peace was the printing press: his arguments against pomp and tyranny in the Roman Church brilliantly synthesized the appeals of more-ambitious reformers, and the printing press sought Erasmus as a "best seller." His mind provided the spark which fused the most auspicious movements of thought in his day—the currents of Italian Scholarship, Florentine Platonism, and scholarly biblicism. As Trevor-Roper puts it: "He was the first great writer whose works publishers competed to commission, to print and to distribute. They did so because he had discovered, as none other had done, a universal idiom."

So the fame Erasmus enjoyed was not what he sought, yet his genius took him farther and farther away from the seclusion which suited his temperament. Nor was his popularity limited to publishers. His reputation caused him to be perpetually sought by kings and princes. The rulers of France and Portugal vied to secure his presence, the Pope conferred honors upon Erasmus, offering him a cardinal's hat. Thus grew the reputation of a man whose ability to reason was enthroned by a time wherein reason was in the ascendancy. But *a bare twelve years* after the peak of his worldly glory, the age of Erasmus ceased to worship reason, even though Erasmus did not. When faced with the choice of many comfortable and profitable partisanships, he passed every such opportunity, retiring to a republican city of Switzerland. So the world found him, feted him, forsook him—and worshipped him again after his death—while Erasmus himself never forsook that peculiar intellectual integrity which was responsible for *both* his rise and fall.

We conclude quotation from Trevor-Roper with the following, which is self-explanatory:

> What does a humanist do when bigotries swell, black and red, on either side? There are some today who say that intellectuals should line up on either side as a species of army chaplains to encourage the troops. But I do not think that Erasmus, if he had yielded to political pressure and joined the Gadarene stampede of Lutherans or monks, would have had so lasting and beneficent an effect in the history of thought as he did by continuing to advocate peace for the diffusion of unarmed sense. Intellectuals may be citizens; they may even, as such, have to become soldiers; but it is not their business to be recruiting-sergeants. If their rational message is not heard in their time, let them still utter it rather than turn it into a battle-cry: it may still be heard tomorrow. For history, closely considered, suggests that opposite sides in an ideological struggle, for all their high-sounding abstract slogans, are not so opposite as they think that they are. The humanist message in fact can be understood by both. It may take a long time and a devious route; it may have to survive by stealth; but there is no proper alternative to it.

COMMENTARY
CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

WE have just finished reading Edmund Wilson's article on "The Dead Sea Scrolls" in the *New Yorker* for May 14. For those who do not have the habit of browsing in the *New Yorker,* the Dead Sea Scrolls are Biblical manuscripts dating from around 100 B.C., turned up, in the first instance, in 1947 by some Bedouin boys who belonged to a party of smugglers traveling from Transjordan into Palestine. The finding of the manuscripts and the determination of their genuineness as a record of the learning and tradition of the Essenes, an ascetic brotherhood which occupied a monastery on the shore of the Dead Sea, makes a long story—considerably more than half the article. While reading it, you keep wondering when the rockets will start going up—*what,* actually, the find may mean to Christians and others of the twentieth century.

Well, it seems that the documents unearthed, after they reached the hands of the right scholars, have been shown to represent some two and a half centuries in the life of a Messianic movement carried on by a brotherhood of Jews who separated themselves completely from the orthodox Jews. The manuscripts confirm most other accounts of the Essenes, except for the fact that the Dead Sea Scrolls require the members of the brotherhood to hate their enemies—which, as Wilson notes, is far from the spirit of gentle forgiveness supposed to be characteristic of the Essenes. Wilson thinks the Essenes acquired this mood in their later phase—the time, perhaps, when Jesus, as many have believed, was among their number. There are so many parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and portions of the New Testament that one scholar at least feels that the prototype of Jesus appears in the Scrolls as "The Teacher of Righteousness." Wilson comments:

> But what was the relation of Jesus to the ritual and doctrine of the sect, which the Gospels so persistently echo? Could he have been actually a member of the sect during those early years of his life when we know nothing about him—where he was or how he occupied himself—or was his contact with it, as Albright believes, chiefly by way of John the Baptist? We must remember that Bethlehem itself is not very far from the monastery.

Wilson himself is apparently persuaded of the Essenian origins of Jesus' inspiration:

> We can see how the movement represented by the Essenes stood up for perhaps two centuries to the coercion of the Greeks and the Romans, and how it resisted not merely the methods of Rome but also the Roman ideals. We can guess how, about half a century before its refuge was burned altogether with the Temple of the Jewish God, this movement had inspired a leader who was to transcend both Judaism and Essenism, and whose followers would found a church that was to outlive the Roman Empire and ultimately be identified with Rome herself: Under the pressure of these harrowing centuries, the spirit of the Essene brotherhood, even before its expulsion from its sunken base, had already thus made itself free to range through the whole ancient world, touching souls with that gospel of purity and light to which the brotherhood had consecrated itself, and teaching the contempt of those eagles {the Roman eagles} which they had noted—with evident astonishment—that the army of their enemy worshipped. The monastery, this structure of stone that endures, between the bitter waters and precipitous cliffs, with its oven and its inkwells, its mill and its cesspool, its constellation of sacred fonts and the unadorned graves of its dead is perhaps, more than Bethlehem or Nazareth, the cradle of Christianity.

So many manuscripts have been dug up in the general environs of the monastery that the most optimistic estimate is that it will take at least ten years to piece the fragments together and translate them all; others say fifty years.

Mr. Wilson is interested in the reasons why so few scholars display an interest in the practical implications of the Scrolls for contemporary religion. Actually, only one expert, Dupont-Sommer of the Sorbonne, a man who is personally without theological commitments, has made a real effort to reconstruct the history of the period represented by these manuscripts and laid the result before the public. "The whole subject,"

says Wilson, "though the first announcements made news in 1948 and 1949, has largely since been hidden from general knowledge in periodicals and monographs."

Most Biblical scholars, Wilson points out, suffer religious inhibitions when dealing with material on the origins of Christianity. The Jewish experts, he thinks, fear that the authority of the Masoretic text of the Jewish Bible may suffer from comparison with these ancient documents. There is also resistance to the idea that "the religion of Jesus could have grown in an organic way, the product of a traceable sequence of pressures and inspirations, out of one branch of Judaism."

The same applies—and even more so—to proud or jealous Christians, who feel that if Jesus obtained his ideas from the Essenes, the splendor of a miracle involving the descent of the Son of God to earth may be somewhat dimmed, or even regarded as unnecessary, since the sublime ethics of the New Testament now seem to have been "the creation of several generations of Jews working by and for themselves, in their own religious tradition." As Dr. William H. Brownlee of the American School of Oriental Research has said, "The uniqueness of Christ is at stake."

New Testament scholars, Wilson reports, are boycotting the scrolls with hardly an exception. When one thinks of the countless volumes of speculation and guesses concerning historical mysteries which may now be filled in with facts, the pertinence of Wilson's comment is plain: "These new documents have thus loomed as a menace to a variety of rooted assumptions, from matters of tradition and dogma to hypotheses that are exploits of scholarship." They represent a dreadful anticlimax to the works of free imagination.

As we look at it, the possibility that Jesus may become a little more human and a little less miraculous as a result of these discoveries is all to the good. A special vote of thanks is owing to Edmund Wilson for writing about them in such detail, and to the *New Yorker* for printing what he wrote. How odd it is that a journal devoted to humor and entertainment should have the kind of regard for truth and impartial history that led, a few years ago, to publication in its columns of John Hersey's "Hiroshima," and now, Edmund Wilson's "The Dead Sea Scrolls." The *New Yorker,* a magazine which makes no pretense to being anything more than it is, may prove to have been one of the most civilized expressions of our time.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

FOR something over a year efforts to obtain a copy of Evan Hunter's *Blackboard Jungle* from the local library proved unsuccessful; our librarian likes pleasant language in her books, we suspect, and *BJ* hardly qualifies. By now, however, Hunter's rendition of the rather appalling adventures of a New York City vocational highschool teacher on his first job has aroused sufficient attention to bring the story to the public through two other media: Metro-GoldwynMayer's motion picture version and a 35-cent pocketbook edition.

We have no innate prejudice against a novel containing, with utter realism, unsavory language and proclivities. The question is simply whether sufficient purpose is served. After a few chapters of Hunter's book, we began to wonder if so great a quantity of crude language is really necessary, particularly since the high school teachers we know don't speak that way on their lunch hour, nor are any high school teachers apt to speak so all the time. Therefore, in this roundabout fashion, we allow a measure of sympathy for reluctant librarians.

On the other hand, something of the sordidness of *The Blackboard Jungle* certainly belongs where it is. Mr. Hunter seems to know whereof he speaks, having lived out most of the story himself. We also note a paragraph in *Saturday Review* (Oct. 9, 1954) in which Nathan Rothman attests that this unpleasant picture of a poorly run and poorly conceived school is no exaggeration:

> Evan Hunter's *The Blackboard Jungle* is the most realistic account I have ever read of life in a New York City vocational high school. I can testify to its accuracy, having had some years of experience in one of them, as has Mr. Hunter. His novel more than matches the sensations in some of the stories we have seen recently, in newspapers that have become happily school-conscious. But it is free of their distortions and dishonesty; it makes no easy moral assumptions nor does it arrive at righteous judgments. Mr. Hunter's North Manual Trades High—it is fairly typical—is a complex organism, the resultant of many forces, economic facts, social emotions, hostilities, suspicions. It can, if it is not to be considered irreparable, be handled only with understanding, courage, in the last analysis, humanity.

To our way of thinking, the most interesting passages in *The Blackboard Jungle* are devoted to a necessarily complex explanation of hostilities encountered by teachers in the classroom. The boys didn't like school, for they found there no challenges to the achievements in which they were interested. The school and the teachers were "phoney," and the closest thing to achievement which any adolescent could manage came by way of leadership in flouting authority. The boys didn't really hate the teachers, but they did hate the system, and the teachers were its handy representatives. Hunter describes the bifocal personality of these underprivileged and embattled adolescents:

> There were times when he [the teacher] simply did not understand. Like the afternoon four of his seventh-term, eighth-period students stayed after school voluntarily, helping him erase the boards and stack the books away in the closet. They'd asked him if he had a car, said they'd be happy to fix anything that was wrong with it. When he'd told them he didn't own a car, they'd seemed disappointed. They'd chatted with him about their own jalopies, and he'd found himself talking about Anne, and the baby to come, talking to these kids the way he'd talk to anyone else, treating them like the adults he felt they were. When they left him, they all waved and said, "So long, Mr. Dadier. See you tomorrow."
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> He'd felt a strange inner peace when they'd gone, a feeling of having made some inroad, a feeling of having taken a first wavering step toward breaking through the shell that surrounded them. He'd liked the kids that afternoon, and he couldn't wait to get home and tell Anne about how nice they'd been.
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> And then the very next day, those same four kids had raised all kinds of hell during the eighth period, creating a havoc he'd never had before in that seventh-term class. The same four kids, the same kids who'd listened sympathetically while he told them about his expected baby, the same kids who'd

> offered to repair his car if he had one, those same four were the worst bastards imaginable, shouting, yelling, disobedient, not caring for anything he said, not listening to any of his threats.
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> He could not understand.
>
> He simply could not understand. They didn't even seem like the same boys. What could you do when they ran hot and cold like that? Why even *try* to reach them? Why not throw in the towel and sit with your fat ass tight to the cover of the garbage can? Why not fool the system and fool the kids and fool yourself in the bargain? Why not collect a teacher's salary, and tuck the good vacations into your hip pocket, and all the while be an employee of the DSC?

We have the impression that some group attitudes of at least a somewhat similar nature obtain in most schools throughout the country, especially in schools chiefly populated from lower income homes and by low IQ pupils; if so, it is small wonder that, under these psychological circumstances, delinquency continues to increase. Low IQ students, as *Blackboard Jungle* intimates, often get the poorest teachers, and are dimly aware that everything in their school is second class. In Hunter's story, the best teacher in the school almost gives up—but not quite. Finally he discovers that it is possible occasionally to "break through"; he even gets the same boys who had participated in the beating of two instructors to *want* to think and discuss.

The passages describing the way in which this "breakthrough" occurred are among the finest in the book, and every harassed teacher will gain pleasure from reading them. (A Heywood Broun allegory did it, when all carefully prepared lessons had failed—a story called "The Fifty-First Dragon." And the greatest wonder of all was that boys who weren't interested in learning anything else, *were* interested in talking philosophy and psychology, which one has to be interested in to discuss an allegory.) Perhaps this is another indication that some of the ancients were ahead of the moderns when it comes to reaching the young: myths, symbols and allegories stimulate the highest powers of imagination, leaving each person with the feeling that something rather exciting has been grasped, with more, perhaps, to be later revealed if further thought is expended. So, while *The Blackboard Jungle* is a story of violence, both psychological and physical, it finally developed a hopeful ending. The reader accumulates sympathy for both instructors and unhappily incarcerated students, and this, at least, is a good thing.

FRONTIERS

"Morale" Is the Issue

THREE weeks ago we printed here a letter from a German living in Berlin to General Cortlandt Schuyler of the U.S. Army, Chief of Staff of the NATO Forces in Europe. In this letter, the German quoted a newspaper report about a "Schuyler Plan," according to which the clearing of the roads of fleeing civilians (in the event of imminent atomic attack) would be accomplished by tanks assigned for this purpose. The German correspondent, who sent us a copy of his letter, asked General Schuyler to explain himself on this point, since the prospect of such measures against terrified civilians is far from appealing to Germans.

We have now received from this correspondent a copy of General Schuyler's answer. After urging that the SHAPE plan is intended to discourage aggression by an enemy, through formidable display of military power, the general replies directly to the questions raised. We quote from this part of his letter:

> . . . I come to the statements concerning the mass flights of refugees which are alleged to have been made by me in November 1954. They are completely and utterly without foundation. I have never made such statements nor had such thoughts. Of course we at SHAPE are aware of this problem and it has been under study for some time. No definite conclusions have yet been reached in this difficult matter but, in any case, our civilized traditions and the obvious responsibility of civilian authorities in this field would lead to full consultation before any firm plans are made.
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> In point of fact, we were so concerned with the publication of these alleged statements in a reputable German newspaper that we invited the editor to come and see us at SHAPE. I saw him personally 4 May and I am sure that he went away satisfied that a serious error had been made. I know you will reach a similar conclusion.

Our German correspondent was moved to carry the matter further. He wrote to the newspaper, the *Nuernberger Nachrichten,* in which the account of the so-called "Schuyler Plan" had appeared, and received this reply:

> We got the remarks of General Schuyler from the periodical, *Der Spiegel,* after making sure at the editorial office of *Der Spiegel* that these remarks were correct. The lecture of General Schuyler, with these remarks that you mentioned, was given to the Military Academy of SHAPE in the last week of November, 1954. General Schuyler, in his lecture, stated the following:
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> "In a future war, the chaos of traffic will play a part for which there are no historical comparisons. The large cities of Europe can today no longer meet this problem. If, upon the outbreak of war, millions take flight in motor vehicles, no prohibitions or proclamations will help. Our troops will suffocate in the masses. It will be impossible for them to perform operative actions; instead, they will be pushed along with the fleeing masses. This danger is at least as great as that of the atom bomb. The west is threatened by traffic death before the first bomb falls."
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> In connection with these statements Schuyler announced radical means of attacking this problem, as they are described in the notes of *Besinnung* [another German periodical in which notice of the lecture attributed to General Schuyler appeared]. The General further explained:
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> "If once the East attacks, we shall resemble a man who is resting in a dried-out mountain stream-bed. Suddenly huge masses of water come roaring along, and we have to try to hurry against these forces up the hill."
>
> . . . since the beginning of 1954, in all divisions of the Western forces there exist special groups which are organizing radical means of keeping the traffic channels open. . . .

We publish this correspondence to illustrate the dilemmas of modern war, and not to suggest that any special blame attaches to the military staff charged with the responsibility of defending Western Europe from attack. Whatever General Schuyler said in his lecture, we can naturally assume that it was in the interests of victory over a possible aggressor, and if we don't like what may be the necessary price of military victories in atomic war, then we should stop making the settlement of international problems dependent on them, and not blame the generals for planning to

carry out, as best they can, their increasingly difficult duties.

You don't have to be a military expert to understand the problem of mass population movements in the event of atomic war. You don't have to have special powers of imagination to see that an army bent on effective defense will have to clear the roads of civilians if it is to fight at all, even to protect—if we can any longer speak of "protection"—those same civilians. And a little common sense is all that is needed to realize that the "morale" of the civilians in a threatened country will not be improved by brooding on what may happen to nearly all of them when they try to escape from a city where atom bombs are likely to fall at any moment. "Morale," obviously, is not the least of General Schuyler's problems.

But "morale" is a problem everywhere, these days. In Las Vegas, an American gambling resort uncomfortably near the site of the H-bomb testing grounds in Nevada (seventy-five miles away), the local chamber of commerce started worrying about the tourists and gamblers when the tests were first announced. Would people still come to Las Vegas to play and leave their money behind? So the City Fathers planned a program which, they hoped, would add a light-hearted note to the whole proceedings. A public relations man explained: "The angle was to get the people to think the explosion wouldn't be anything more than a gag."

All over the world, the carefree approach to war is being cultivated. *Peace News* for May 20 has this brief review of a current movie:

> *The Dam-Busters,* an Associate-British-Pathe film . . . should aid RAF recruiting. Dehumanised, it constantly refers to bombing raids as "tours" and "shows" and represents war as an interesting, glorious adventure, which hardly concerns those who are bombed. While it can be sentimental about a dog, it ignores thousands of German men, women and children drowned when the dams were bombed.
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> Near the end of the film, the inventor (finely played by Michael Redgrave), hearing 56 members of the RAF have been killed in raiding the dams, says, "If I'd known it would cost so many lives, I'd never have invented the things." But Richard Todd reassures him and no one has the bad taste to mention the German victims.

Another interesting bit in this issue of *Peace News* is the intelligence that the German publishers of Erich Maria Remarque's latest book have eliminated from the German edition "all references made to Nazi crimes, Jewish relations and instances which might have prompted the reader to think twice on the raising of a new German army." When the publishers were accused of censoring the anti-militarist's novel, they replied that they had "checked the manuscript very closely, with particular regard to the correctness of the political values." (Incidentally, the London publishers of the book, titled *A Time to Love and a Time to Die,* issued the volume without cutting any of the passages left out of the German edition.)

Germans who approve of the Allied plans for a new German army have plenty of reason to worry about restricting the reading of young Germans to matter bearing the message of "correct political values." Theodor Blank, the man chosen by Chancellor Adenauer to organize the new army, is faced by the militant opposition of German youth. Even though Blank himself is known to have an aversion to Prussian militarism, and promises progressive reforms in the "new type" army, the young men of draft age are not impressed. Spokesmen for the Blank office who attempt to explain the admirable qualities to characterize the new army are shouted down by its prospective recruits, who seem to have learned well the lesson that, a few years ago, when the issues were different, people in America were saying would have to be taught to the Germans. They don't want to fight any more. An article in the *Reporter* for last Jan. 13 gives many illustrations of the opposition to another German national army:

> At a recent convention of Trade Union Youth, delegates representing 700,000 members adopted a

resolution opposing German remilitarization without one single dissenting vote.

When Theodor Blank himself campaigned with a group of fellow Christian Democrats in the Bavarian state elections he was repeatedly singled out as the target of wild demonstrations against rearmament. When he spoke in Augsburg, beer steins and soft-drink bottles were thrown at him. He abandoned the attempt to speak, and as he emerged bleeding from the meeting hall he was again attacked and beaten by young demonstrators.

While "resistance" which takes this form is hardly desirable, from any point of view, and may be as bad, in its way, as the "militarism" it rejects, it seems worth while to point out that these young men are very different from the "obedient" and conforming Germans we have heard so much about. The *Reporter* writer, Norbert Muhlen, points out that German sentiment against rearmament notably increased after the defeat of EDC, when it was decided in London and Paris that Germany would have a *national* defense force instead of participating in "a genuine European army." While few Germans want war or to prepare for war, the idea of a European Defense Community (EDC) was at least free of the nationalist idea. In 1953, when EDC was taken for granted, only 28 per cent of a cross section of German youth said they would not accept military service under any conditions. After the defeat, last November, of EDC, the number of those opposed to military service under any conditions rose to 44 per cent.

This is the mood of present-day Germany in regard to any future war, for any foreseeable reason. The concern of people like General Schuyler for German "morale" has ample justification.