STUDIES IN HUMANISM.

BABBITT, MORE, and AMERICAN CRITICISM.

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PREFACE.

"Studies in Humanism" is a discussion of the philosophy called the New Humanism which played so important a part in the development of American twentieth-century critical literature. The founders of the New Humanism were Irving Babbitt, for thirty-five years professor at Harvard University, and Paul Elmer More, lecturer at Bryn Mawr and Princeton, and literary editor of several journals. Their Humanistic theories drew little attention while the naturalistic trend in literature was at its height, but their following gradually increased. The movement attained its greatest prominence in a critical debate which occupied the energies of most American critics and periodicals during the years 1929-30.

The New Humanists concern themselves with a wide range of criticism, in philosophical, literary, social and religious fields and their plan of reconstruction is in accordance with their Humanistic principles. Humanism, as they see it in its general sense, is concerned with those distinctly human qualities of man, and they propose to put back into modern life the high standards which it has lost in its denial of truly human values.

The first chapter is concerned with the background of the New Humanism. Babbitt and More have chosen their principles from among

several philosophies; those of Plato and Aristotle chiefly, but of Confucius, Buddha and Jesus also. The main source of the New Humanism and on which the philosophy is patterned, is the Humanism of the Golden Age of Greece. The Humanists studied keenly the culture and civilization of this period, and from the Greek ideal of human character, formulated their philosophy for development of man as an individual. From Plato and Aristotle they adopted the aim of co-ordination of human virtues to be gained through knowledge, reason, and will. Like the Greeks their philosophy was based on a belief in moral and religious dualism, which calls for discipline of the lower, instinctive nature in man, and a development of his higher, rational self. Discipline in the humanistic sense implies a pursuit of moderation in all things, a conformity to the "middle way" rather than to extremes.

The chapter follows the shift in emphasis and change of values through Christianity, the Renaissance, and the neo-classic period, and points out that the characteristic features of Humanism were not obscured. In protest against Romantic tendencies still prevalent to-day, the Humanists have declared six necessary tenets as a sort of creed. These, broadly, are an emphasis on purely human qualities; a belief in moral dualism and in man's ability to self-direction and his freedom of will; an insistence on a faculty of restraint, and recognition of humility as a truly Humanistic quality. As in Greek Humanism, they seek a balanced individualism.

Mr. Babbitt, who was the first to formulate the New Humanism, believes that the future of civilization depends upon a return to Humanistic standards. He condemns thoroughly the Romantic influence in philosophy, literature, society and religion, and holds it responsible for most modern weaknesses. He divided being into three planes, the religious, the humanistic, and the naturalistic, and upholds the humanistic attitude towards life as strongly as he attacks the naturalistic.

His introduction of the "higher will" as a restraint on man's impulses and desires is his personal contribution to the philosophy. Like Aristotle he refers all judgments and actions to a centre, a constant standard based on what is most consistently human, and which man perceives through his insight among the changing factors in life. An ethical development which makes use of humility, decorum, and the lessons taught by tradition, is his greatest concern.

Three Romantic traits in literature which Mr. Babbitt attacks are, a love of the wonderful, a search for adventure, and an overkeenness of sensation. The whole spirit of emotionalism in its various manifestations is contrary to the highest standards of art, he believes, and only a return to a sound judgment which is selective rather than sympathetic can overcome the present feminism and confusion.

The naturalistic trend in society is evident in humanitarianism, which appears to him to be undermining the strength of society and cloaking purely utilitarian ends. Only by the development of proper leadership can a true democracy be attained. Babbitt's religious theory has no connection with dogmatic religion, but attempts to

formulate for the rationalist a religious philosophy which may ultimately lead to Christian theology.

In chapter three Mr. More's theories are analysed in the same way as Mr. Babbitt's, showing how he applies Humanistic principles to life. He bases his viewpoint on the experience of human nature, which he maintains is dualistic. Naturalism and its three systems, pragmatism, science and rationalism, he regards as the enemy of mankind. Its companion, irresponsibility, is our greatest modern failing, he insists. Mr. More is a strong traditionalist, and believes that the Greek tradition, in particular, has valuable lessons for the improvement of modern civilization and culture. Like Mr. Babbitt, he attacks Romanticism, though not as bitterly, and would substitute Humanistic values for its intuitive and irresponsible ones. An analysis of his Shelburne Essays reveals many of his critical standards as he applied them to various artists. A short study of Mr. More's social philosophy makes clear his meaning of natural aristocracy, his interpretation of justice, and his defence of property as the basis of civilization. Humanitarianism is criticized severely as an extreme social feeling. In education he urges a restoration of classical subjects to the curriculum as a foundation for social teaching and a means of fitting the young for future responsibility.

The Greek Tradition is the development of Mr. More's faith in Christianity. He progresses from a Platonist to a Christian interested in maintaining the vitality of the Christian church. Neither

an infallible church, like that of Rome, nor a purely individualistic religion is the solution to the modern religious dilemma, he feels; but an authoritative church which insists only on the Incarnation as the basic dogma of Christianity.

The story of the critical debate of 1929-30, and the reaction of American critics to the New Humanism, is recounted in chapter four. Under the influence of Babbitt and More, American criticism progressed from mere polite inquiry to a literature which raised new and important issues. The two books which opened these arguments to the public were Humanism and America, by the Humanists, and A Critique of Humanism, by their opponents. The chief opponents of Humanism were T. S. Eliot, Hugh Fausset, C.H. Grattan, Lewis Mumford and Van Wyck Brooks. In sifting the criticism, Humanism is found charged with un-American tendancies, of being Puritanical, negative, and dogmatic, and of having little understanding of either art or the artist. Writers criticize Babbitt and More for preoccupation with moral theories at the expense of art, and for lack of actual experience; they deplore also the Humanists' neglect of contemporary writers. They feel that Mr. More's social theory is really a defence of the privileged classes, and its unconcern with the lot of the masses removes it from the heart of the problem. Mr. Babbitt's religious philosophy is regarded as merely a poor substitute for religion or an evasion of religious responsibility.

The summary in chapter five evaluates both the philosophy and the criticism against it, and concludes that a modified Humanism

deserves recognition as an independent philosophy. It is somewhat austere in its applications and does not make enough allowance for several modern problems, but it offers a great deal of constructive organization which its opponents cannot justly discard. There is freedom from the biting sarcasm which mars much of the other critics' work, and its sound common sense appeals to the average individual who is seriously concerned with true values of living.

CHAPTER I.

THE BACKGROUND OF HUMANISM.

There is nothing very new about Humanism; its spirit has existed in much the same form for many centuries. For, after all, Humanism is that difficult and elusive art of being human, and exhibiting to the best of one's ability those qualities which distinguish man from the rest of creation. Such tendencies have manifested themselves in slightly different ways, according to the interpretations and varying shades of meaning of the word human. It might almost seem, in such circumstances, that there would be as many variations as there were individuals, but there are several theories which are generally accepted by all humanists and which may be labelled "humanistic". To find complete unanimity of opinion upon all issues is not to be expected, for invariably there are disagreements upon minor points. Then, too, the spirit of an age, its differing needs and tendencies shape the form and emphasis of the philosophy, so that one may well wonder if there are any permanent values which may be used as standards of judgment or measurement. Let us examine some of the great humanist thinkers and groups to find their criteria of the universal.

Irving Babbitt, a modern humanist, points to two great Eastern philosophers as early humanists from whom the Western world might learn much. Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, stressed the moral nature of man; and his teachings have become a guide to human conduct. Buddha, the Indian philosopher, emphasized spiritual values and stands for meditation, as well

as for self-discipline. Yet both were seeking the same end---- the best self-fulfilment of which human nature was capable.

Greek Humanism has been, ever since its inception, the source and pattern of later humanistic revivals. The principles set forth by Plato and Aristotle are much the same that humanists have maintained ever since. If one should doubt the possibilities or benefits of a humanistic society, one has only to observe the remarkable achievements of the "Golden Age" of Greece. Rarely, if ever, has any country in any age equalled the literary accomplishments of Greece. The striking characteristics of Greek literature are its sanity, its clear logical thinking and its refinement. While their religious teachings lacked the power of Christianity, they created ethical standards which remain secure to-day. Their society was a model of co-operation based upon individual effort to achieve a high norm of human conduct. They created an ideal character of man, dedicated to the knowledge and practice of the finest and most distinctly human qualities. "An ideal which has the cardinal features of a great moral system, which is disinterested, progressive, free from narrowness, and which compels men to accept, desire and pursue it." (1) Only under conditions of perfect freedom of thought could such a philosophy have been formulated.

Since Greek Humanism was constructed against a Pagan background and modern Humanism against a Christian, modern Humanism

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(1) Sir R.W.Livingstone, Greek Ideals and Modern Life (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), p.73.

shows certain distinctive differences. But the basic idea of both may be summed up in the words of Pope, "The proper study of Mankind is Man"; and it is with this concept that we are at the moment concerned, namely, the problem of the true nature of man and those qualities and powers peculiar to man alone. Plato and Aristotle declared that the object of life is to achieve a co-ordination of human virtues and to attain the full development of which man's nature is capable. Plato does not minimize the difficulties of such a program; he believes that men must first attain knowledge of virtue, and learn discipline, as a safeguard against vain desires and distractions which deflect them from what is truly and purposefully human.

In Aristotle's hierarchy of man's attributes, Reason is the supreme virtue (ἀρετή). He makes of it an almost divine quality, but on the human level insists that it is superior to that part of self which feels--emotion--or those lower attributes common to both man and animal----instinct and habit.

Accompanying this doctrine of the supremacy of reason is that of the autonomy of the will, which Aristotle maintains is indispensable to virtue. Since man is free to act as he wills, he should be trained to act according to the dictates of his reason; for when he ceases to do this and gives way instead to emotion or instinct he becomes less human and more animal. All true virtues are backed by reason; for example, courage is only true courage when dictated by honour or duty, products of reason and autonomy of the will.

One of the most important and most debated questions is that of moral or religious Dualism. This is the belief that there are in man

two opposing natures, a higher rational self which is to be encouraged and developed, and a lower instinctive self, not to be suppressed but to be educated and controlled. The Humanist philosophers upheld this theory and opposed it to Monism, which declared that there is a unity in man's nature from which all other elements are derived.

Such a discipline as the Humanists approved would not crush individuality, but would inculcate moderation in all things. The mean rather than the extremes of human thoughts and feelings is the goal to pursue; for example, neither boastfulness nor a sense of inferiority, but high-mindedness and self-respect.

Modern Humanism, or the "New Humanism" has adopted the artistic ideals of Aristotle as presented in his "Poetics". Chief among these principles is the arrival at a wider truth through a veil of illusion. Mere realism in its ordinary sense is not broad enough in scope to portray the variety of experience in nature, especially human nature. "From what we have said it will be seen that the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e., what is possible as being probable or necessary. The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse ...., it consists really in this, that one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be". (2)

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(2) Aristotle, De Poetica; translator, Ingram Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p.43.

Here Aristotle seems to anticipate a modern inclination among artists when he insists that the artist, instead of representing the local or temporary in human nature, should represent what is universal. He realizes the artist's tendency to lose sight of those characteristics which are common to humanity in all ages, in his delight in individual phenomena. In making man the measure of all things he would first ascertain that "man" meant "universal man". "Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singular". (3)

Nor were philosophy and the arts the only subjects which Greek thinkers scrutinized. They developed scientific thought from vague speculation to a point where the virtues of science were declared to be a passion to know, a belief in the ruling power of reason, and such attendant qualities as modesty, caution, patience and industry.

To sum up the general meanings of Greek Humanism. "It is the belief that man is more important than his environment or his possessions, and that his fundamental business is not to understand nature----though that is one of his problems----nor to earn a livelihood----though that is one of his duties----but so to direct his life as to make the best of human nature, especially of what is characteristic of, peculiar to and highest in human nature; or as the Greeks put it, to achieve the ἀρετή of man". (4)

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(3) loc. cit.

(4) Livingstone, op. cit. p.88.

With the advant of Christianity the emphasis on the purely human side of man's nature changed to an emphasis on the spiritual. The chief manifestation of this was the subordination of man's will to the will of God. The doctrine of original sin impressed the Christian with a deep humility, a truly humanistic trait, and never before or since has man been so completely aware of the battle between a higher and a lower nature in himself. The chief virtue of Hellenism, wisdom, was replaced by Christian Charity or Love. This caused a great change in values, for no longer was the highest ideal limited to the small number capable through natural endowment of obtaining it. The will to follow Christian teachings, and the grace of God, put the greatest virtue within the Christian's grasp. Another truly Christian virtue was that of renunciation, which Jesus stressed in his teachings as indispensable to peace and brotherhood.

The next Humanistic period was the Renaissance. In retrospect it seems as if life awakened suddenly after a sleep of five hundred years. Exploration and discovery were not limited to those who sailed the seas, for in the realm of philosophy and literature men re-discovered the learning of ancient Greece so long buried by mediaeval scholars. Plato and Aristotle were read and discussed, and their humanistic teachings spread everywhere. Truly, as a humanism it was less human than that of the Greeks, and less spiritual than that of the Christians. But it was a naturalistic humanism that broke away from the confined and one-sided rule of the monasteries and the pointless reasoning of a Duns Scotus, to a revival of freedom and independence of thought. It was at this time that the term Humanism was applied to the study of classical literatures.

Vergil was held up as the model for Renaissance literature to the extent that a sort of Vergil-worship permeated it. Also, Julius Caesar Scaliger's translation of Aristotle's "Poetics" made Aristotle a Renaissance "discovery". Scaliger codified rules which were extracts from Aristotle, and developed critical theorizing. In 1570, with Castelvetro's commentary on the Poetics, appeared the formulation of the Three Dramatic Unities. This fixed the authority of Aristotle, and instead of being accepted as guides, his theories eventually became hard and fast rules.

Gradually, writers won independence of Greek and Latin literature, but by this time the fire and vitality of the Renaissance had burnt itself out, and neo-classic dogmatism and rationalism tyrannized alone over all forms of literature. The neo-classic objective was a static perfection of art which critics aimed to develop through devotion to exacting rules. They devised a rigid form of poetry and gave too insufficient recognition to the rôle of the imagination.

Neo-classic writers adopted the critical intellectual spirit that characterized the great writers of Greece and Rome, but lacking the sympathy and imagination to rise above mere rules, writing soon developed an elegant formalism and an entirely artificial precision. The Humanistic rule of conformity to centrality of experience and to good sense was enforced to the extent that the intellect was emphasized at the expense of the imaginative spirit, and writers strove to repress emotion and enthusiasm. Even Aristotle's idea of the universal was mis-interpreted by eliminating from it the imaginative element. "Moreover, they hoped to achieve their universal not so

much by the direct imitation of 'nature' (in the Aristotelian sense, human nature in purposeful action) as by the imitation of models, of those writers whose reputations were consecrated by a constant and general admiration....'"(5) In their own case, much of their work degenerated into mere copyism. In short, only the form was classical, and since the movement repudiated so much that was truly classic it became known as falsely classic, or neo-classic. As may well be expected, the artificiality of their literature was only a mirror-view of the artificiality of their society----an artificial humanism.

Between eighteenth century pseudo-classicism and the revival of humanism in the twentieth century, philosophy and the arts passed through a period of violent revolt; revolt against the smug tyranny of uninspired Victorian conventionality. In their zeal for total reform, the Romanticists, as these revolutionaries were called, attacked and finally discarded most of the humanist doctrines. This was evident in their substituting belief in a naturalistic monism for the Greek dualism; in supplanting Aristotelian 'imitation' with spontaneity or momentary inspiration; and in their return to the romantic Middle Ages for subject matter and reference, rather than to Classical antiquity.

Now that the vehemence of the Romantic Movement has subsided, though not entirely disappeared, the twentieth century is being besieged by multitudinous philosophers, each bent on converting the

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(5) Irving Babbitt, On Being Creative (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), p.14.

public to his own personal theories, and, in truth, knows not where to lay her head. Mr. Fausset declares that "Three circumstances in particular have dictated the modern consciousness and hastened the reaction from a weak aestheticism. Industrialism has instructed men in ugliness, science in a regard for fact and war in the nakedness of pain". (6) The last century has been characterized by a fanatical pursuit of material comforts, an attitude for which scientific industrialism has been largely responsible. Even creative work has felt the stranglehold of the mechanistic spirit. Nor can we fail to notice that in the struggle for social equality there is the tendency towards a general mediocrity. Many men, especially men of genius, have felt this and in order to maintain their individuality have cultivated a self-assertive and sophisticated individualism.

Reacting from the false narrow respectability of the Victorians, writers have aided in a loosening of conventional moral standards, and under the waning influence of the church, character has been neglected for personality. As Mr. T. S, Eliot writes ".....when morals cease to be a matter of tradition and orthodoxy----that is of the habits of the community formulated, corrected and elevated by the continuous thought and direction of the church----and when each man is to elaborate his own, then personality becomes a thing of alarming importance". (7) The danger lies not in personality itself, but in its confusion with character.

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(6) Hugh Fausset, Studies in Idealism (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1923), p.275.

(7) T.S. Eliot, After Strange Gods (London: Faber & Faber Ltd. 1933) p.54

Whereas a man's character is his true self, that is, the tendencies which he possesses in varying degrees in common with other men, personality on the other hand is really his uniqueness, or that which separates him from his fellow men. Carried to the extremes which our own century is obviously encouraging, civilization would be directed toward a rampant individualism in which a common basis of understanding would be impossible. Irving Babbitt wrote, "To use words as disagreeable as the things they describe, literature is in danger of being vulgarized and commercialized and journalized". (8) Combine with this P.E. More's expression, "The futility of modern literature", (9) and you have the darker side of the picture of modern literature.

To what shortcomings do we owe these weaknesses? Primarily to a loss of standards and discipline we are told. Modern literature, and especially critical literature is still under the spell of the Romantic spirit. The chief evidence of this is the yielding to the impression or mood of the moment, and the willingness to accept it as the basis of expression or judgment. Many fine artists and critics are sincere in the belief that pre-conceived criteria rob art of imaginative freedom and make criticism pedantic and unappreciative. As a result, both tend to rely instead on a too-flexible impressionistic analysis, which has resulted in confusion and chaos. Typical of modern art are three 'isms', Impressionism, Symbolism and Surrealism. Of the latter two, Mr. More says that

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(8) Irving Babbitt, Masters of Modern French Criticism (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), p.354.

(9) Paul E. More, On Being Human, "New Shelburne Essays" Vol. III (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936).

their underlying principle can be expressed by the phrase, "....the lust of irresponsibility". (10) The general tone of modern literature has a hardness and a tautness that show the price man is paying for his high-pressure mode of living.

Many critics believe that the standards upheld by the Humanists are the most likely correctives for this modern malady. When Humanism was revived at the beginning of the twentieth century, it failed to arouse much enthusiasm, and then public interest was soon occupied by a more pressing problem--war. Since the First World War, however, it has gained popularity under the title of 'The New Humanism'. During the last decade some of the best critics of both Europe and America have been either directly or indirectly concerned with it. In America, Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More have been its leading exponents and interpreters. Not all who style themselves Humanists are fully agreed on its more debatable issues and some explanations and definitions of Humanistic ideas are open to accusations of vagueness and misinterpretations. There are, however, six basic theories upon which the adherents of Humanism are generally agreed.

1. The Humanists are against all monistic philosophies and uphold very firmly the dualism of Plato and Aristotle. As has already been pointed out, there may be many varieties of Humanism, and in all of them the focal point is humanity. A broad outlook on the whole problem would include thinkers who repudiated dualism yet by the aim of their philosophy might be called Humanistic. Among the New Humanists,

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(10) Ibid, The Modernism of French Poetry, p.7

however, dualism definitely plays a major rôle, and it is over this philosophical or psychological problem that the fiercest battles have been waged in literary circles.

2. As in Greek Humanism the emphasis is on those qualities in man which are most human. Thus they oppose any form of Naturalistic philosophy. "In a word, the Humanist is one who simply takes his stand on being human". (11)

3. Humanists object to the view that man is merely the plaything of an unconscious and often unkindly law of nature; instead they hold, that man as an individual has the ability and the liberty to act as he wills, and that whether his choice be good or ill, he alone is responsible.

4. To keep man's desires and impulses under control and to guide him in his direction of them, the Humanist points to the faculty or power of inhibition, a sort of negative conscience (often referred to as a "frein vital") which acts as an inner check or selective power. This is in protest to those who regard man as a centre of conflicting instincts and sensations without a guide.

5. Man is not left weaponless in the battle of life declares the Humanist; he has been given the faculty of self-direction and with this and his own strength of purpose he is capable of forming his own character.

6. The Humanist protests against the romantic belief in the natural goodness of man. Man is accountable for his shortcomings,

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(11) Ibid, On Being Human, p.3

and any attempt on his part either to minimize the magnitude of his errors or toward self-complacency is un-humanistic. "....Self-complacency is the deadliest foe to human excellence". (12)

On the whole, the prevailing emphasis is as much on mental and moral effort as the Romantic philosophy was on individual and emotional freedom of expression. The former constitutes an effort to remedy a too hasty rule of impressionism and individualism, the latter a remedy for conventional and a hardened formalism. It seems only natural that after experiencing the excesses of both intellectualism and emotionalism, the Humanists should select the middle course, a balanced and truly human individualism acquired through and supervised by personal effort.

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(12) Ibid, p.8

CHAPTER II.

Irving Babbitt: Leader and Teacher.

In the historical survey of Humanism from Greece to America, it is apparent that leadership, for the present at least, lies in the hands of American critics and philosophers. First of these was Irving Babbitt, founder of the New Humanism.

Mr. Babbitt was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1865. He graduated from Harvard in 1889, and attended the Sorbonne during the years 1891 and 1892. French scholarship is clearly evident in all his work, and many now characteristic terms which he employed are derived from French authors. When he returned to America he received his M.A. from Harvard, and then started his career as teacher of French, at Williams College, and then as assistant Professor at Harvard. In 1912 he occupied the chair of French. By 1923 his fame as philosophic critic had spread to both continents and he was invited to lecture at the Sorbonne. He died in 1933.

Thus Mr. Babbitt was well prepared to analyse and prescribe for the weaknesses of modern literature. His extensive learning in philosophies and literatures not only of the Western world, but also of the Eastern has been universally acknowledged by critics. Indian and Chinese culture played an integral part in forming the ideas of both Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More.

He felt very deeply the shallowness of modern life in its religious, social and literary spheres. As he has stated several times,

> "The price the man of to-day has paid for his increase in power is, it should seem, an appalling superficiality in dealing with the law of his own nature." (1)

It is precisely this "law of his own nature" which he has striven to interpret in humanistic terms to his readers and students. Nor is he content with mere theorizing, however plausible. His aim is a definite working philosophy which the ordinary man can apply to himself. To express the epitome of humanistic morality he has adopted a quotation from Cicero: "The whole praise of virtue is in action."

Equal to the purposefulness of his humanism is the emphasis laid on the importance of the individual man. Mr. Babbitt shows throughout his writings a distrust of philosophies which attempt the improvement of the group first; again and again, he points out that behind all movements, however co-hesive, is ultimately the individual, and it is with him that the construction or direction must start.

In general, he adheres to the humanistic principles as presented in our introduction, but his terminology and definitions are so expressive of his personal ideas as to need further explanation. His own definition of Humanism is very broad and general. "....to be a good humanist," he says, "is merely to be moderate and sensible and decent;" (2) and, "The aim of the humanist, and that from the time of the ancient Greeks, has been the avoidance of excess." (3). He holds that there are three distinct planes of being, from each of which is

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(1) Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p.364-65

(2) Ibid., Introd., p.xx-xxi

(3) Ibid., On Being Creative, Introd., p.xiv.

derived three separate views of life, namely, the religious, the humanistic and the naturalistic. The first he never discusses completely, and he never openly expresses a personal philosophy concerning it; the last he attacks bitterly as the basis of modern confusion. He is completely concerned with the humanistic plane, and is determined to keep it separated from the naturalistic. In this he is a thorough-going dualist. Of his opponents, the monists, he writes:

> "But let us have a wholesome distrust of aesthetic monists, as well as monists of every kind. Monism is merely a fine name that man has invented for his own indolence and one-sidedness and unwillingness to mediate between diverse and conflicting aspects of reality." (4)

To ignore dualism is to ignore the necessity for discipline which, to Mr. Babbitt, is a basic necessity in the working out of any worthwhile philosophy.

By what standards are we to judge the quantity or degree of Humanism in a writer and his works? Here Mr. Babbitt turns to the criterion of the Greek Humanists -- the humanity of man. Throughout history there has been found an abiding element in life, a principle of unity that has survived the conventions and changes of time. To pattern one's conduct upon this element is to discover the humanistic "Centre", and in perceiving it is to find Wisdom. Modern confusion, he contends, is really a direct result of failure to perceive any centre in life; men have lost sight of it in the speed and constant change of things. In his own words, they are unable to find the "One" in the "Many". To lose awareness of unity, that is, of the "One", is to fall

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(4) Ibid., The New Laokoon, p.226.

prey to anarchy in judgment; to disregard the presence of change and differences, that is, of the "Many", is to become a dogmatist or absolutist, and to fail to adapt oneself to life. Wisdom, Mr. Babbitt declares, is found in a mediation between the abiding and the changing. "The essence of any true humanistic method is the mediation between extremes, a mediation that demands of course not only effective thinking but effective self-discipline; and that, no doubt, is why true humanists have always been so rare." (5). In his books this point is constantly reiterated. Mediation then, or the via media, is the pathway of humanistic thought.

According to Mr. Babbitt, man possesses three powers. First, his imaginative power, the part that conceives; secondly, his analytical or reasoning power, the part that discriminates; and thirdly, his power of control, the part that perceives and possesses insight. These three factors the individual should learn to relate correctly to one another. For many years the first two, namely imagination and reason, have waged a battle for dominance, with the third, control, a more or less inconspicuous factor. The Humanists have exalted it as a distinctly humanistic and human trait, and insist on its importance to the well-rounded mentality.

Imagination, they declare, gives a sense of unity in life; reason determines the bounds or limits of imagination; perception, or insight, is the recognition of an inner restraint which man needs to control his appetites. In Mr. Babbitt's terminology, this controlling power is called the "higher will" or "frein vital". This point cannot be

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(5) Ibid., p. 189.

over-emphasized; it is Mr. Babbitt's largest personal contribution to the formulation of the "New Humanism." The higher will is an instrument of self-limitation, concentration and selection. Imagination alone, or reason alone tends towards one-sidedness, but when used together in just proportion and as companions of the higher will, lead to perception of what is universal, inclusive, and central in our human nature.

It is just such a balance between imagination and insight, tempered with reality, or the concrete example, that characterizes the humanistic view of life. This is what Babbitt and the humanist school mean when they insist that we should "view life with imaginative wholeness." (6) Both life itself and the observer contain elements of the "One" and the "Many", or "a oneness that is always changing", and to sift out the highest reality, insight must be employed.

Again and again Mr. Babbitt stresses ethics and ethical principles of humanistic conduct. No problem, he asserts, can be solved with the highest regard to man's happiness through other than ethical methods. If man is capable of self-direction and is free to exercise moral choice, and Humanism affirms that he is, an "ethical will" should be developed in him as an ever-present guide to conduct. There are three factors in the development of an ethical will in the individual; humility, decorum and traditional control. The first determines his attitude; the second his conduct; the third is his example.

Babbitt approves Burke's statement that "The whole ethical life of man has its root in humility.", and even enlarges on it to state that

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(6) Ibid., Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 203

it is the ultimate root of character. He defines it as "....the inner obeisance of the spirit to something higher than itself." (7) Since the disappearance of the renunciation which characterized Christian teachings, man has lost, to his detriment, his sense of responsibility and duty to a power greater than his own. His sense of personal value has become distorted and has manifested itself in egotism and self-assertion. Humility would counteract this, and give perspective and greater meaning to life.

Humility maintains decorum, which is a sense of proportion, or a normal mode of conduct accepted by man as a check upon his impulses and desires. It discourages undue display of uniqueness or temperament and is regarded as the supreme virtue of the humanist. One might call it the external demonstration of humanistic accord.

By "tradition" Mr. Babbitt does not mean an uncritical acceptance of conventions of the past, but a selective imitation of the best that has been thought and done by the best minds in all ages. Like the Greeks, he would have men supplied with a sound model to aid in selecting what is universal and in controlling imagination. Nevertheless, he insists that they use it in a modern manner, that is, with their eyes upon life, and with their critical powers awake. Unless this condition is fulfilled the tradition may become unprogressive and rigid. He points to the neo-classic age as an example of how "A purely traditional humanism is always in danger of falling into a rut of pseudo-classic formalism." (8). Also, man's individualism would serve the

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(7) Ibid., The New Laokoon, p. 211.

(8) Ibid., Democracy and Leadership, p. 35.

same purpose as his modernity, that of keeping tradition renewed, for Mr. Babbitt claims that to be individualistic, positive and critical is to be a true modern.

In spite of his tenets for humanistic living, Babbitt warns his readers that rules are merely guides, and that only by personal searching, not by imitation, can one adapt the rules to his needs and so formulate a personal philosophy. "The true humanist," says Babbitt, "that is the man who is sympathetically selective, has his standard within him, living, flexible, intuitive." (9)

II BABBITT'S LITERARY VIEWS

Babbitt: Romanticism and Humanism.

The most obvious, consistently emphasized fact in all Babbitt's writings, is his almost fanatical dislike of Romanticism and everything pertaining to it. To put his criticism in a few words, Romanticism is everything that Humanism is not. This description arises partly from the fact that his humanistic theories were intended directly to combat those of the Romanticists and their effect upon modern philosophers and writers. In "Rousseau and Romanticism" he tends to argue most forcefully that the uncertainty and extremes of modern literature are the direct results of the naturalistic excesses which Rousseau's doctrines have encouraged. "The Greeks...humanized nature; the Rousseauist naturalizes man," (10) and these two opposing forces are irreconcilable because one is a mediator and the other an extremist.

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(9) Ibid., Masters of Modern French Criticism, p. 374.

(10) Ibid., Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 269.

Elsewhere he declares,

> "The characteristic evils of the present age arise from unrestraint and violation of the law of measure, and not, as our modernists would have us believe, from the tyranny of taboos and traditional inhibitions." (11)

Again,

> "The confusion with which we are troubled may be traced to two main sources, emotional unrestraint and pseudo-science; and both these sources of confusion take their rise in an excess of naturalism." (12)

His objection to naturalism is that such an immersion of man in nature leads to the serious danger of man's denial of reason, and to the obscuring of the sense of a dualism between man's natural self and his higher will.

Mr. Babbitt points out three traits which the Romanticists have in common, and which distinguish them from other literary theorists. First, they exhibit a love of the wonderful rather than of the probable. That is, they ignore reality in their pursuit of phenomena which are unusual enough to arouse in them a feeling of wonder. Second, they opposed strangeness to universal truth. That is to say, they portrayed the peculiar event or character rather than the usual. Third, they have an almost pathological keenneas of sensation, amounting at times to hyperaesthesia. Against these three evils and their attendant weaknesses, Mr. Babbitt has waged a continuous battle.

Concerning the first trait, love of the wonderful rather than the probable, when comparing it with the Greek ideal of reality

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(11) Ibid., On Being Creative, p. 214.

(12) Ibid., The New Laokoon, p. 216.

through illusion, Mr. Babbitt states that the Romanticists would go to the opposite extreme and have their illusion without reality; they would achieve wonder at the expense of common sense.

> "In short, a renascence of wonder, if not necessarily a sign of decadence, is in any case an ambiguous event. The question must always remain whether it stands for a poetical gain or a loss of rationality; whether it is a mark of imaginative vigour or a debilitated intellect. The probable, says Boileau, is a great enemy of the wonderful; and so indeed it is." (13)

In Wordsworth, he points out, the love of wonder led to an exaltation of childhood, and in others, to reading religious significance into phenomena of the natural order. But reason often refuses to accept a renascence of wonder.

> "Wonder has a large place in the scheme of things, but it is after all only a sorry substitute for the law of measure of the humanist or for the religious virtues -- awe, reverence and humility --." (14)

Mr. Babbitt has reserved some of his most scathing denunciations for the second Romantic characteristic, pursuit of adventure rather than true action. In their desire to show their originality, he says, the Romanticists would sacrifice the normal sequence of cause and effect in favour of adventure. Their drama became melodrama, and in their quest of the strange and unexpected they did not stop short of superlatives. In fact, they sought to be <u>unique</u>. The same is true of the characters they portrayed. Instead of searching for the universal in human nature they sought remoteness from normal human character, and would sacrifice truth to surprise. Surprise, says Mr. Babbitt, should not be won at the expense of motivation. The whole

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(13) Ibid, p. 71

(14) Ibid., <u>On Being Creative</u>, p. 120

argument holds the essential contrast between Classicism and Romanticism, that is, between judgment and imagination. Whereas Classicism would have imagination tempered and subdued by reason or insight, Romanticism would give imagination the ascendency over reason.

The result is what one would expect, he says. Romantic imagination without a check became wild, visionary and extravagant. The Romanticists repudiated any check upon imagination, and any such idea as a unifying centre seemed arbitrary and artificial. Imagination was to be regarded as an impulse; as spontaneous feeling unhampered by analysis or imitation, an élan vital. A doctrine of spontaneity took the place of the humanistic doctrine of insight.

> "The evident drawback of linking creativeness with spontaneity rather than with imitation is that it leads to a loss of the representative quality." (15).

An imagination that relied on spontaneity would be too erratic and emotional to be trustworthy. What, then, would be the qualities of a humanistic imagination, one might ask. Babbitt has stated very clearly what these qualities and aims should be.

> "To be prosaic and sensible, and at the same time imaginative, like so many neo-classicists, is comparatively easy; to launch forth into a world of pure imaginative illusion, like so many of our romanticists, is also not extremely difficult; but to show one's self a true humanist, that is, to mediate between these extremes and occupy all the space between them; to be probable or convincing to both the imaginative and the understanding; to satisfy the standards of poetry without offending the standards of prose, -- this is a miracle that has been achieved only by the great poets." (16)

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(15) Ibid., p.15

(16) -------, The New Laokoon, p. 71

The crux of the solution is not the opposition between judgment and imagination, but the opposition of one quality of imagination to another. The kind of imagination desired by the Humanists is one disciplined to fact. It should be a power unifying the truths of nature, humanity, and the spirit. It should inspire awe, reverence, and restraint, and not repudiate the bounds set by good sense.

The third chafacteristic Babbitt affirms Romanticists have in common is a keenness of sensation which amounts, at times, almost to hyperaesthesia. The Romantic writer's interest is not so much in the intellectual and philosophical, as in the emotional aspects of his work. In other words, they substitute emotionalism for thought.

> "The writer of Rousseauistic type is no longer a thinker or a purposeful agent who is trying to give an account of his thoughts to others, but an exquisitely organized mechanism for registering impressions and conveying them suggestively." (17)

Even true meditation became for them an emotional recollection, a reverie, and though Babbitt admits that reverie may be used for occasional solace in life, his objection to the Rousseauistic use of it is that they tried to make it a substitute for religious meditation. He also links this emotionalism with primitivism, as exemplified in Wordsworth's poetry. Wordwworth's choice of subject, unselective sympathy, and naturalistic tendencies, combined with his description of poetry as emotion recollected in tranquillity, make him a target for much of Babbitt's criticism. Two chapter divisions of his book "Rousseau and Romanticism"(18) show that he regards Romanticism

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(17) Ibid., p. 147

(18) ------, Rousseau and Romanticism, Titles of Chapters 4 and 5.

on the whole as a continuous conflict between the "Ideal" and the "Real". The Romanticists built an ideal world in which emotions were theif motivating force, and when they clashed and failed in contacts with the feal world, they took refuge in dream worlds, such as their Arcadian Utopias, and contented themselves with "wailing more or less melodiously from their towers of ivory." (19)

The humanists have denounced most severely this modern spread of impressionism. Babbitt admits that vivid impressions have a large place in the life of literature, but asserts that they must be subordinated to the thought they are intended to colour.

> "With the spread of humanism, literature has lost standards and discipline, and at the same time virility and seriousness; it has fallen into the hands of aesthetes and dilettantes, the last effete representatives of romanticism, who have proved utterly unequal to the task of maintaining its great traditions against the scientific positivists." (20)

More action, as opposed to reverie, is what he prescribes for modern writers. As for modern surréalisme, Babbitt, foresees the time when each artist will carry his symbolism to a point of complete unintelligibility and make communication between the artist and his public impossible. Such extremes of self-expression are not in accord with humanistic representation of the universal.

Mr. Babbitt has devoted his book entitled "The New Laokoon" to a criticism of the neo-classic and romantic disposition towards a mixing of the arts -- poetry and painting, music and painting, music

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(19) Ibid, The New Laokoon, Preface, p.xiii

(20) Loc. cit.

and sculpture, and so on. His term for it is "mélange des genres." The neo-classicists fell into this confusion of arts through their over-imitation of models; the romanticists through a desire to heighten the effect of sensations or sounds, like the artist who declared that he didn't know whether he saw perfumes, or breathed sounds or tasted colours. "Naturalists, both sentimental and scientific," says Babbitt, "tend to reduce everything to terms of motion, to see everything passing over into everything else by almost insensible gradations, to refuse to accept any firm line of demarcation." (21) His objective is a "genre tranché", or clear-cut type of art; and the artist will be guided in his decision of what is needlessly confused or what is true to its own form by tact and a sense of proportion, rather than by any fixed rule.

III HUMANISM IN LITERATURE.

Like most other groups of critics, the Humanists ask that a literary work possess beauty. There are differences, however, in definitions of beauty, and Babbitt has stated his ideas on the subject very clearly. He believes that a person's ideas of beauty will differ according as his attitude towards life is naturalistic, humanistic, or religious.

Most important is his assertion that the problem of beauty is inseparable from the ethical problem; and that to attempt to divorce them reduces beauty to sterile aesthetics. The aesthete,

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(21) Ibid., p. 214.

from Mr. Babbitt's viewpoint, rests beauty on feeling, rather than on a combination of the attributes of good literature, and thus leaves no scope for any criticism of beauty (by making it too elusive and dependent upon mood). In the same way, he criticises Keats's statement that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", in that it is truth that suffers through being made synonymous with aesthetic beauty. This is disproved for practical purposes. The highest beauty portrays only what is ethically true.

> "Any sound analysis of beauty will always recognize two elements,--an element that is expansive and vital and may be summed up by the term expression, and in contrast to this an element of form that is felt rather as limiting and circumscribing law." (22)

Two factors there are, then, in the dualism of beauty. Like moral dualism within man, these two can never actually be merged, but they can be reconciled. Babbitt gives form precedence over expression. To reverse the order is to encourage a predominance of the "feminine" over the "masculine" virtues -- a romantic or Rousseauistic error that has been an important factor in the corruption of Twentieth Century literature. Good literature has an innate pattern which has its foundation in tradition, and combines excellence of form with soundness of substance.

Babbitt recognizes the fact that art cannot survive without the keenest intuitions of sense, but insists that true art "has a restrained and humanized intensity." (23) It must be restrained by intuitions higher than those of the senses; it must

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(22) Ibid., p. 226.

(23) -------, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 202.

have humane purpose; and above all, it must be selective in its choice of emotional expression. Even in its vitality there will be form and symmetry. Babbitt's hope is that "....man may combine an exquisite measure with a perfect spontaneity, that he may be at once thoroughly disciplined and thoroughly inspired." (24) Also, the writer of high literary standing will be unique, personal; yet he will make his readers feel that permeating his uniqueness is knowledge and understanding of their common humanity. Only if he fulfils in some measure these standards can he hope for his work an enduring appeal.

The place of criticism and the critic in modern literature looms very large in Babbitt's estimation. Most modern criticism, he declares, is either impressionistic or scientific. The impressionist denies that there is any element of absolute judgment in criticism, and instead allows his temperament or personal reaction to be the judge. This was the tendency in Rousseauistic criticism and is still prevalent. In reaction to narrow neo-classic criticism, the Romantic, and now the modern critic, is inclined to explain rather than conclude, and to be appreciative and sympathetic rather than derogatory. So judgment still continues to be swallowed up in sympathy and comprehension. Humanistic criticism insists that there is a standard based on the judgment of the keen-sighted few in the present and supported by the judgment of the keen-sighted few in the past. This has been set forth by Babbitt in his views on tradition.

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(24) -------, The New Laokoon, p. 250

> "Through neglect of this truth criticism has tended in its development during the past century to become first a form of history, and then a form of biography, and finally a form of gossip." (25)

Also criticism is labouring under confusion and ambiguity of terms, many of which mean one thing to one critic and something quite different to another. The remedy is not only more stringent criticism but clarification of terms and more logical defining, after the manner of Socrates. The whole purpose of criticism, he feels, should be to establish once more the broad, clear distinction.

The critic's object then is to temper impressionism, in both literature and life, with judgment. He will be more concerned with acquiring a sense of proportion in things, a sense of values, rather than making criticism a medium of self-expression. Insight will be his most valuable agent, yet he will have discipline, power of selection, and traditions of the past to be, in a measure, his guide. His chief virtues will be authority and judgment.

> "The humanistic critic does not cultivate exclusively either the truth or the counter-truth, but mediates between them; only, according to the special conditions with which he has to deal, he may lean to one side or the other." (26)

In "Masters of Modern French Criticism", after a discussion of the qualities of some leading French critics, Babbitt states that his ideal critic would need to combine the breadth and versatility and sense of differences of a Saint-Beuve with the elevation and insight and sense of unity of an Emerson.

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(25) -------, Masters of Modern French Criticism, p. 339

(26 -------, On Being Creative, p. 29

IV. HUMANISM IN SOCIETY

Much of Babbitt's work, including his book "Democracy and Leadership", is devoted to social and political problems of the day. To those who take their civilization more or less for granted, he says,

> "Civilization is something that must be deliberately willed, it is not something that gushes up spontaneously from the depths of the unconscious. Furthermore, it is something that must be willed first of all by the individual in his own heart." (27)

The true test of civilization is whether or not the individual has developed a sense of law that governs life; not a law imposed upon him by his government, but the law that necessarily governs relationships between men in society.

It is because a naturalistic society such as Rousseau inspired tended to weaken the power of this primary law of civilization that Babbitt has attacked it so severely. Instead of fulfilling the greatest need by reconciling society and the individual, Rousseau set them farther apart. He created a dualism between them by suggesting that the evils lay with institutions rather than with individuals. In doing this he raised the alternative of sacrificing either the individual to society, or the society to the individual. Since romanticism as a whole stood for exaltation of individualism, it was therefore society that was sacrificed. His doctrine had two main influences on the individual; it filled the proletarian with pride in himself and suspicion of those who were socially or economically superior to him. On top of these aroused feelings he spread the

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(27) Ibid., p. 229

soothing doctrine of peace and brotherhood among men. Babbitt's effort is to prove that such a sentimental doctrine was, and is, incompatible with utilitarian elements in the world and with the true nature of man.

The naturalistic movement in its social aspect, according to Babbitt, may be defined as humanitarianism, and it is this social principle (28) that he denounces as one of the greatest weaknesses of modern times. The humanitarians have carried their Christian ideal of service to a point where it has become mere meddling, and is undermining national qualities of strength and self-reliance. What is needed to-day is not <u>service</u> but <u>example</u>. Moreover, humanitarianism has been used to disguise all manner of imperialistic and utilitarian ends. Any ideal which is based on the supposition that the ego, with its fundamental will to power, can be held in check or even softened by pity or disinterested good-will toward mankind, is a social fallacy. There is an incompatibility between the law of cunning and force and the ideal of sympathy and brotherhood that makes any form of altruism impossible in truth.

> "Perhaps a reason why the standards of the humanist are less popular than the ideals of the humanitarian is that these standards set bounds to the acquisitive life, whereas it seems possible to combine a perfect idealism with an orgy of unrestricted commercialism". (29)

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(28) Babbitt defines humanitarianism as "....the idolatry of humanity and its future progress". <u>Masters of Modern French Criticism</u>, p. 132

(29) -------, <u>On Being Creative</u>, p. 231

Not only is this true of commercial life but of national life. Never has this been more clearly emphasized than during the last thirty years. A frenzied nationalism has proven far stronger than a desire to establish love of humanity as a guiding principle. The world sees Nietzscheism parading under the guise of humanitarianism.

How, then, is the correct attitude towards society and its problems to be developed? Throughout his philosophy, Babbitt has reaffirmed that the solution lies with the individual. It is not a disciplined collectivism or an unorganized individualism that is needed, but a middle path between them, that is, a sound, sane individualism.

> "To be a sound individualist, one needs, as I take it, to retain one's hold on the truths of one's inner life, even though breaking more or less completely with the past." (30)

To meet this standard, the individualist would need the humanistic qualities which Babbitt has enumerated, particularly a critical outlook, a centre of judgment and an ethical will, that will enable him to follow the truths of a life apart from his egotistical self.

Another point continually emphasized by Babbitt is the importance of the individual's recognizing that he must, of necessity, set a limitation to his desires. It is not the <u>desires</u> of one man alone, however compelling, that can force a community or a nation to go beyond what is ethically just; it is the spirit of expansion and desire for personal power and greed in a group of individuals. It

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(30) -------, <u>Democracy and Leadership</u>, p. 8.

is the duty of each separate individual to make certain that his personal wishes do not transcend those of either his community or of humanity. Education of the citizen would consist, first in personal adjustment to the law of the community and then the gradual realization of its application to the wider law of humanity.

> "The remedy for the evils of competition is found in the moderation and magnanimity of the strong and the successful, and not in any sickly sentimentalizing over the lot of the underdog." (31)

Politically, such an individualism starts not from rights but from duties. Man has talked so much about his rights and what society owes him, that he has obscured the fact that he owes any debt to society for the maintenance of his social benefits. So it is with liberty. Man is willing to die for liberty, but his knowledge of true liberty is limited to a purely selfish understanding. Mr. Babbitt affirms that liberty is a struggle within the individual, an adjustment between self-assertion and self-limitation. It should not be a vague ideal, undefined and unassuming.

> "A liberty that is asserted as an abstract right, something anterior to the fulfilment of any definite obligation, will always, so far as the inner life is concerned, be a lazy liberty." (32)

Our liberties should be in direct proportion to the obligations we are willing to assume and to fulfil.

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(31) Ibid., p. 205.

(32) Ibid., p. 223.

Babbitt sees his country as a unit which has broken away from the old traditional controls and which is attempting to find a new set of reins to guide it. Gone also is the unanimity of spirit which existed under the restraining authority of one Church. The question is, what is to be the authority and how is it to be adjusted to democracy? The humanistic solution is a strong social unity composed of individuals who are positive and critical to both human and natural laws, and capable of using their veto power, or sense of discrimination. The democratic form of government should be an embodiment of these attitudes.

Again, Babbitt chooses the "via media" between totalitarian government and unlimited democracy, which latter he claims is akin to the cult of ruthless power. In fact, he laments the "levelling process of democracy" and quite frankly states, "I have said that the hope of civilization lies not in the divine average, but in the saving remnant." (33) This, accompanied by an earlier assertion that "In a final analysis, the only check to the evils of an unlimited democracy will be found to be the recognition in some form of the aristocratic principle," (34) determines Babbitt's democracy as a conservative and perhaps aristocratic one. However, he considers the form of government of less importance than the leaders that administer it.

> "In the long run, democracy will be judged, no less than other forms of government, by the quality of its leaders, a quality that will depend in turn on the quality of their vision." (35)

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(33) Ibid., p. 278

(34) Ibid., p.61

(35) Ibid., p.16.

Here he emphasizes that the modern trouble is not lack of vision but sham vision. The true leader will set bounds to his desires, especially his desires for power and domination. The true leader will be humble; for he will be a man of character, and the basis of character is humility. The present dilemma is due to either lack of responsible leadership or of a finer type of leadership. Concerning the situation as a whole, Babbitt suggests that a general need is moral gravity and intellectual seriousness.

Justice is the greatest of worldly virtues, Babbitt affirms, and, like liberty, is something that comes from within. He does not believe in any idyllic "social justice", but a will to justice in the individual that is fostered and developed from childhood.

> "For the conscience that is felt as the still small voice and that is the basis of real justice, we have substituted a social conscience that operates rather through a megaphone." (36)

The recognized end of a social philosophy is happiness, and Mr. Babbitt defines happiness in terms of work. For the humanistic worker there is an all-important condition to be fulfilled, namely, that he carry on his work in accordance with the human law; in short, what Mr. Babbitt terms "ethical efficiency." Unethical aims result in misery, not in happiness, for the worker. That is the reason why materialistic and purely scientific ends, without any ulterior humanistic or religious purpose, result in covetousness or avarice and in unethical science. Babbitt claims that a one-sided devotion to science

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(36) Ibid., p. 200.

engenders unethical aims. The humanistic worker acquires through his work a habit of right-doing, which gives him a sense of satisfaction and of increasing serenity. His self-constraint requires less effort and he becomes less conscious of his moral dualism. This is the practical solution which makes happiness possible for any worker in any social class. Babbitt also declares that social status should be dependent on man's work, not on his material possessions.

> "It is in fact the quality of a man's work that should determine his place in the hierarchy that every civilized society requires. In short, from the positive point of view, work is the only justification of aristocracy." (37)

Babbitt's modern Utopia, then, would be a humanistic, democratic society composed of responsible individualists whose positions would be determined by the quality of their work, and whose guides would be leaders of exceptional insight and self-restraint.

V. HUMANISM AND RELIGION

In all of his books Babbitt shows great reluctance in declaring his personal views on religion. He refrains from any discussion of the supernatural except as it concerns his humanist philosophy. Yet it is obvious that he was a deeply religious man, and that modern ideas on the subject (or lack of them) greatly troubled him. He says,

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(37) Ibid., p. 202.

"Perhaps no age was ever more lacking in otherworldliness or showed a greater incomprehension of religion." (38) The age has suffered ethically also, for men have confused mechanical and material progress with moral progress. The central conflict is between science and faith, because the power of science has led people to believe that it knows all the answers, and they refuse to accept any longer what cannot be scientifically or experimentally proved. With the weakening of religious control, the principle of force has been freed from its only valid restraint.

> "The true reproach it has incurred," Babbitt declares "is that, in its drift towards modernism, it has lost its grip not merely on certain dogmas but, simultaneously, on the facts of human nature. It has failed above all to carry over in some modern and critical form the truth of a dogma that unfortunately receives much support from these facts -- the dogma of original sin." (39)

Babbitt's own attitude on this dogma is very decided. Since, to him, it is the basis of man's humility, the discarding of it is such a harmful loss that the future of civilization may rest on the recovery of at least its principle.

The first fact to be made clear is that Babbitt takes no stand for, or against dogmatic and revealed religion. His basis is a Humanism which, unlike naturalism, may transcend humanity and take on a spiritual outlook. Between religion and humanism are some binding similarities and many differences. They are similar in that both rest on a recognition of a moral and religious dualism within man, and his power

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(38) Ibid., p. 195

(39) -------, On Being Creative, p. 211.

to life himself above his physical nature. Applying Babbitt's term to this, both must recognize the presence of a "higher will." But here, again, this term in its religious significance needs clarification.

> "I differ from the Christian, however, in that my interest in the higher will and the power of veto it exercises over man's expansive desires is humanistic rather than religious. I am concerned, in other words, less with the meditation in which true religion always culminates than in the mediation or observance of the law of measure that should govern man in his secular relations." (40)

He shows the alliance between the two in his belief that if humanism may be religious, religion may have its humanistic side. And both require introspection or meditation to sustain the inner life, for without it, man tends to become a materialistic standardized creature; and this, to foreign observers, is the chief American danger.

> "Humanism should have in it an element of religious insight; it is possible to be a humble and meditative humanist." (41)

Babbitt also acknowledges, in its modern interpretation, the most fundamental principle in traditional Christianity; that is, grace. In place of the religious view of grace as a gift from God to man, he sees the modern equivalent as a sort of psychological awareness in man that his blessings have their source in some higher power. He frequently emphasizes the importance of this doctrine of grace.

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(40) Ibid., Democracy and Leadership, p. 6

(41) -----, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 380

One of the differences which he mentions is that while Christianity would renounce worldly desires, Humanism would merely moderate and harmonize them, aiming at restraint and balance with the view to developing better character to meet changing conditions in a changing world. But this is not the distinguishing difference. It is the fact that whereas many fine people find it impossible to accept dogmatic and revealed religion, humanism offers them a controlling force, less powerful than that of religion but above naturalism, which, through consistent submission to the higher will, may come to have a religious aspect.

> "The higher will has been identified wih God's will, its operation, with the doctrine of grace. In that case, it may be urged, if the humanist seeks support in something higher than reason, he must needs turn to Christian theology. I have no quarrel with those who assume this traditionalist attitude. At the same time I am unable to agree with those who deny humanism independent validity, who hold that it must be ancilla theologiae or at least religionis. What has at bottom undermined dogmatic and revealed religion is the growth of the positive and critical spirit. My own somewhat limited programme -- for I am not setting up humanism as a substitute for religion -- is to meet those who profess to be positive and critical on their own ground and to undertake to show them that in an essential respect they have not been positive and critical enough." (42)

Modern life most undeniably lacks purpose, Babbitt declares, but to those who argue that purpose is only supplied through Christian orthodoxy, he points out the example set in this matter by the Greeks. He feels that humanistic or even religious purpose in life is not the monopoly of Aristotelian philosophers or traditional Christians, but may also be accessible to those who, combining insight with the use of the higher will, call themselves humanists.

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(42) -------, On Being Creative, Introd., pp. xvii - xviii.

CHAPTER III.

PAUL ELMER MORE -- PHILOSOPHER and CRITIC.

The life of Paul Elmer More is the story of a keen and sensitive intellect in its struggle to find, among the conflicting and confusing beliefs of his generation, a philosophy that would be acceptable to his remarkable critical faculties. As the preceding chapter has examined the work and ideas of Irving Babbitt, his closest friend and fellow-humanist, this chapter proposes to follow the development of Mr. More's thought in philosophic, literary, social and religious fields. In view of the close relation and progression of these elements in his life, the divisions may seem very arbitrary, but are necessary for purposes of comparison.

Paul Elmer More was born in St. Louis in 1864 of educated and religious-minded parents. With a large library of all types of books at hand he became an incessant and omnivorous reader. Paul More early came in contact with the new scientific and rationalistic knowledge of the Victorian age, and upon reading the theories of men such as Darwin and Huxley, renounced the narrow, positive Calvinism of his parents, and became a complete sceptic, abandoning belief in Christianity altogether. Later, under the influence of Coleridge and the German Romanticists, and impelled by the desire to seek refuge from the industrialism of the day, he became an extreme Romanticist. Although Romantic tendencies outwardly influenced his writings for some years, he soon came to the realization that in many ways they conflicted with scientific rationalism.

In 1887 he graduated from Washington University and became teacher at Smith Academy, in St. Louis, which position he held for five years. One year out of this five he spent studying at Oxford University in England. In 1891 he started an earnest study of Greek and Latin literature, and in 1892 received his M.A. from Washington University. Classical studies led him to realize most clearly the limitations of scientific naturalism, and the accidental reading of a German religious treatise turned him toward a study of religions. He determined to study languages to fit himself for this work, and spent three years at Harvard for that purpose, receiving a second Master's degree in 1893, and holding the post of Assistant in Sanskrit during 1894-95. It was here that he met Irving Babbitt who exerted the strongest influence on him during these years, and who finally was instrumental in leading him away from Romanticism and towards Classical literature.

In 1895 he was instructor in Sanskrit and Classical literature at Bryn Mawr University and during his stay there wrote his first paper on religion. Gradually, however, the pressure of teaching left little time for free study, so he took a small cottage at Shelburne, New Hampshire, in the White Mountains, with a determination to come to some definite conclusion about his philosophy. Critics have interpreted this seclusion in various ways; those who were antagonistic to his philosophy regarded it as a typically Romantic gesture. Mr. More himself rarely makes any reference to it. In 1899, after two years at Shelburne, Mr. More started his career as essayist and critic. From 1901 - 1903

he was Literary Editor of the Independent; from 1903 - 1909 he was Literary Editor of the New York Evening Post; He was appointed Editor of the Nation for 1909 - 1914, and then continued in the post of Advisory Editor. It was during this period that most of the Shelburne Essays were written. Mr. More gave up this post in 1914 to settle in Princeton where he might carry on his writing undisturbed. Since then he has lectured in many places and has continued to write for reviews and periodicals. He died in 1937.

Viewed as a unit, Mr. More's work is an attempt to discover a connecting thread and a meaning in the natural history of humanity. Of the purpose of Humanism he says, broadly, that it is "to put back into life the values of which a false psychology has emptied it." (1) The whole development of his own philosophy has its foundation in Plato's teachings, and he would, if possible, awaken modern readers to the importance of the influence of Platonic ideas and their power to build a richer life. With Mr. Babbitt, Mr. More upholds the six main tenets of the New Humanism. Their arrangement in his own scheme of things, and his personal method of applying them to life constitute the chief differences. The conclusions he comes to are significant to-day because Mr. More has felt the force of every current of thought that has moulded modern consciousness, science, rationalism, and naturalism in particular.

Whatever criticism may be made of Mr. More's philosophy, it could never be on grounds of inadequate definition and illustration

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(1) Paul E. More, "On Being Human", New Shelburne Essays, Vol.III, p.15

of his basic principle. In practically every essay one is made conscious of his insistence on dualism as the only standard possible for a just valuation and balanced interpretation of life. He believes in a Platonic dualism which is at once contemporary and constructive, but which rests upon the age-old experience of the race. Modern knowledge and life only serve to fortify the truth of dualism; it is an instinctive belief that cannot be ignored without revealing a crude knowledge of human nature or contradicting the facts of consciousness. Mr. More's strong feeling on the question of this philosophy is illustrated by the following statement of his: "If a man denies this dualism of consciousness there is no argument with him, but a fundamental difference of intuition which will follow into every view of philosophy and criticism." (2) It is always from the point of view of the experience of human nature that Mr. More bases his judgment. From his exhaustive survey of humanity, both Oriental and Occidental, he came to the conclusion that only by repudiating that vast panorama of thought and action was it possible to hold to any other belief.

Consequently he attacks most vigorously the opposing philosophies current at our time, namely, monism and pluralism, and pragmatism as it was upheld by William James. From the standpoint of a firm dualist, monism seems to him like an attempt to merge two irreconcilable human attributes. By its denial of any sense of change in life and any knowledge of evil, it also denies the concrete experience of humanity, and attempts to replace it by an abstract unity of reason.

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(2) Paul E. More, "Definitions of Dualism", Shelburne Essays, Vo.VII, p. 249

He declares that to him it is merely another word for monomania. In his book the Demon of the Absolute, in which he criticizes the evils of certain absolutist philosophies, the results of an unlimited rationalism, he has this to say of monism:

> "I should assert that our vacillating half-heartedness is the inevitable outcome of the endeavour, persistent since the naturalistic invasion of the Renaissance, to flee from the paradox of life to some philosophy which will merge, no matter how, the mechanical and the human together. I should assert that the only escape from our muddle is to overthrow this idol Unity, this Demon of the Absolute, this abortion sprung from the union of science and metaphysics, and to submit ourselves humbly to the stubborn and irreducible fact that a stone and the human soul cannot be brought under the same definition." (3)

On the other hand, Mr. More attacks almost as severely the opposing theory of pluralism, or, as more recently stated, pragmatism. Instead of uniting the various aspects of life into a vague "One", the pragmatist would see only a state of universal flux, or the "Many". The dualist does not deny either side, but also does not give either total validity; life to him is made up of both, in which insight into the nature of the universe lies in perceiving the "One" in the "Many". To Mr. More, as sure as monism results in an empty vagueness, so the doctrine of pure flux results in confusion and chaos. It gives no constant norm of classification, as does dualism, but eludes the grip of those who would cope with it by flowing from one relative to another. Pragmatism is also another cloak for the Demon. Mr. More says,

> "That is the new thing, so far as there is anything new in the world to-day; not indolence and conceit,

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(3) Paul E. More, "The Phantom of Pure Science", New Shelburne Essays, Vol. I, p. 51

> which are as ancient as humanity, but the philosophy which justifies them under the title of absolute relativism. That is the present disguise of the Demon as he stalks abroad, instilling his venom into the innocent critics of the press." (4)

It is this dangerous theory at the basis of scientific philosophy which leads him to attack science. From a close scrutiny of the effect of science on life and culture of the Victorian age, Mr. More concludes that science has a position that cannot be ignored or deflected, but that its position is below humanism. Modern scientists have erred in reversing the order, and in attempting to give pre-eminence to scientific philosophy. Mr. More declares that the meaning of the world is not to be found in theoretical formulae, nor can it be limited by neatly-labelled classifications. The duty of science is in the field of natural phenomena. Darwin's "Origin of the Species", and the theorizing of lesser scientists, impressed a philosophy of unending change, and evolution, upon the Victorian mind. People were faced with two worlds, which they could not rationally reconcile, a world of time and evolution, and one of eternity and changelessness. A compromise seemed the only solution, but it was secondary to the predominantly scientific influence of the age. Victorian culture reflected the feeling of instability and uncertainty which accompanied the loss of permanent standards within continuous change.

However, Mr. More recognizes pragmatism, science, and rationalism as three aspects of one greater and inclusive evil ---- naturalism. On the spiritual plane the naturalist denies any revealed authority or

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(4) Ibid., "Literature", p. 29.

supernatural intuition; on the human level he denies the existence of what the humanist affirms is the normal standard of measurement, those strictly human attributes which raise man above the animal. He acknowledges both reason and instincts or emotions in nature, but his incompleteness leaves the way open to the tyranny of either one. And so man to-day is sure sooner or later to come under the thumb of either the pure rationalist or the pure emotionalist, unless he is self-assured and determined enough to oppose opinion, with all the consequences which that entails.

Socrates' assertion that happiness comes from right action and misery from wrong-doing is adopted by Mr. More, with the belief that if man would find happiness in life he must be capable of directing his own destiny. The Humanists maintain that man possesses a faculty that aids his moral choice.

"And the problem of philosophic dualism", Mr. More declares, goes back to the same instinctive belief in human responsibility. If a man is responsible for his acts, then he must have been free to choose between conflicting impulses; and, as we have seen, this freedom can exist only by virtue of an inhibitive power of the soul, the so-called will to refrain, entirely distinct from the positive will which is determined by the final predominance of one impulse over another." (5) There is in man, he contends, as companion to the flux of life, some inner check which makes itself felt as an inhibition upon an impulse. It does not simply block one impulse by another;

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(5) Paul E. More, Platonism, p. 155

it does not stop action or thought abruptly; it prevents its prolongation in activity and causes a pause. This "attention" gives the will time to choose between right or wrong. The purpose of dualism can be summed up in Mr. More's interpretation of Platonic philosophy.

> "Philosophy, as Plato expounded it in the groves of the Academy, was thus the fullness of life, moving ever to higher and richer planes of knowledge and feeling. Yet it was a life, also, conditioned by the moral law, consciously present as an inner check setting limits to the grasp of reason, staying the flow of desires, governing the imagination, bringing not stagnation and death, as some foolishly suppose, but offering the true liberty wherein alone is the fruition of our nature, and opposing that license whose end is the faction and disease of the soul." (6)

The inner check, then, through its co-operation with the moral law, is one of the greatest factors which make for human happiness.

There is another idea which the Humanists oppose to those who see life only as a series of changes and contradictions. They affirm that all the witnesses of religion, all the self-revelation of poets, and the life of the individual man show that there is some central and permanent thing in the flux; some quality or higher value which the thinking mind must recognize. This is the Humanistic centre or standard. Mr. More wastes little time with those who would deny that there are standards, but goes on to a more essential problem.

> "The real question is not whether there are standards, but whether they shall be based on tradition or shall be struck out brand new by each successive generation or by each individual critic." (7)

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(6) Ibid., pp. 301-302.

(7) -------, "Literature", New Shelburne Essays, p. 11.

And it is just here that a very important part of Mr. More's work enters. That is, his firm stand on the necessity of conserving the past if man is to save himself and his culture from relapsing into sheer barbarism. Like Mr. Babbitt, he would not make this the work of the pure traditionalist, or antiquarian but of the man who recognizes the value of tradition as a complement to the limitations of the individual, and who is able to see beyond his own age the long experience of the race. He feels that modern man is the inheritor of the realities of the past; that his individual destiny is bound-up with those of the rest of humanity. Man does not feel their sensations and passions as they actually were, but as enlarged and transmuted by Time into something greater and more significant. No man can afford to discard or ignore such a heritage. The aim of culture is, as Mr. More sees it, "to hold the past as a living force in the present." (8)

More's Literary Views.

Unlike Mr. Babbitt, Mr. More does not launch a savage attack at Romanticism directly, although he understands it to contain theories in direct opposition to those of Humanism. But indirectly, through naturalism he attacks its underlying philosophy, which he contends is the greater evil. He does not completely damn Rousseau, although he recognizes him as the prophet of a false doctrine, and even gives

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(8) Paul E. More, "Criticism", Shelburne Essays, vol. vii., p. 237.

the Romanticists honour where it is due. The theories which constitute Romanticism are not modern originations, they have been expressed earlier in history. The spirit which enlivened Alexandria, where Oriental mystical religion and Western philosophy first met and joined, was the self-same one which moved Romanticists of the 19th century. As a Greek scholar, Mr. More testifies that the same romantic qualities present in historical Romanticism are to be found in Greek poetry. Romanticism, as a philosophy in itself, came to power only after the stronger ties of first Classicism and then Christianity had given way to the undercurrent of naturalism. What, then, are the dangerous manifestations of naturalism in Romantic Literature, one may ask.

Mr. More's first criticism is that the Romanticists have not only discarded the truly spiritual motives in literature, but have substituted for them inferior imaginative and emotional elements and attempted to endow them with values of first and greatest importance to humanity. In their hatred of any check upon desires or emotions, and their vaunting of individuality, they encouraged among laymen and artists the desire for irresponsibility which Mr. More declares has characterized our literature ever since. Among the Romanticists this irresponsibility of expression declared itself in a cherished spontaneity, which was to be the distinguishing mark of a great work of art.

> "And so you shall find them substituting untrammelled spontaneity for centralized control, endless expansiveness for obedience to the inner check, and an exaggerated

> sense of personal importance for the impersonality of the spirit." (9)

How often, he points out in his criticisms, when this spontaneity has wearied itself out comes the realization of utterly meaningless content beneath an outpouring of emotional beauty.

By their denial of any debt to tradition, the Romanticists revealed their egotism. They hoped to substitute an emotional expansiveness to replace the stabilizing influence of tradition; to enlarge their own emotions to represent those of humanity. Such a unity of intensely felt personality with the notion of infinity as an escape from limitations resulted in a rivalry for strangeness and wonder in their literature. They relied on lower intuition beneath reason instead of the higher intuition, an illusion of the senses which Mr. More says has dazzled the human mind in other ages as well as in the present. Although it gave the impression of overwhelming vitality, Mr. More sees in it a drift towards disintegration and disease; a crumbling away of any strong and stable support.

> "Naturalism may conceivably fascinate by the shock of surprise, or may conceivably interest for a while by the intensity of the emotions it excites, but surprise and intensity are the least stable factors of pleasure, and, if they appeal to the animal within us, they pass quickly to satiety and from satiety to disgust." (10)

Romantic immersion in nature is another symptom of naturalistic philosophy. In recoil from the realities of life and wishing to avoid the responsibilities of judgment, the worship of nature became less of

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(9) Paul E. More, Platonism, p. 296.

(10) --------, "Literature", New Shelburne Essays, vol. iii, p. 23.

of a pose than an actual refuge, and finally developed into a pantheism, and a vague longing to find in nature the secrets of the infinite. This is an underlying principle of romantic art;

> "..... that expansive conceit of the emotions which goes with the illusion of beholding the infinite within the stream of nature itself instead of apart from the stream." (11)

And modern verse has derived from it that same sentiment; a dissolving together of the human soul and nature is companion to wonder and strangeness; insight is replaced by vague reverie, and the true surprise of the supernatural is lost in pantheism. Mr. More accuses Wordsworth of making a poetical business of nature, and agrees with the reviewer Jeffrey's famous statement that "This will never do." And as for the inspiration and understanding which the poet can draw from nature he says,

> "....the meaning of mankind is better guessed in the clamour of society or in the still small voice of the heart withdrawn into its own solitude than in the murmur of the evening wind..." (12)

Mr. More also raises his voice in protest against the romantic conception of morality. He turns to the moral standards and ideals of Platonism and objects to its mockery in romantic philosophy where it is degraded from a virtue to a passion.

> "Without the heart, without deep feeling and strong desires, it is true that no great work is achieved whether for good or for evil; that is the express doctrine of The Republic. But to look for balance in the mere opposition of passion to passion, to make morality only one passion among many, is to preach a ruinous perversion of Platonism." (13)

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(11) Paul E. More, Preface, Shelburne Essays, vol. viii, p.xiii.

(12) ----------, "Wordsworth", Shelburne Essays, vol. vii, p. 47.

(13) ----------, Platonism, p. 292.

It was, again, the Demon of the Absolute, seeking a false, irresponsible freedom in the sphere of morals.

Whenever the question of the relation between art and morals is broached, the critic's mind inevitably turns to one of the greatest of literary issues of the past century; that is, Keats's identification of truth and beauty.

More's analysis of the relationship between ethics and aesthetics cannot be better expressed than in his own words,

> "The fact is that ethics and aesthetics are inseparable in art. Or, more precisely, just in proportion as the practice or criticism of art becomes superficial, ethics and aesthetics tend to fall apart, whereas just in proportion as such practice or criticism strikes deeper, ethics and aesthetics are more and more implicated one in the other until they lose their distinction in a common root. In this sense Keats' dictum, "Truth beauty is etc.," may be applauded as profoundly right; though the same dictum may be turned into a mischievous fallacy when taken, as it is too often taken by the shallower aesthetes, to mean that beauty may supplant truth, or to justify the theory that art exists for its own sake in its own world, and has nothing to do with morality." (14)

This latter idea is probably the one most current to-day. It is fairly plain that in this quotation, Mr. More has stated an important standard in his critical evaluation of literature. However, he assails those "shallower aesthetes" of whom he speaks, (and one can easily place them among the members of the Romantic School) for exalting beauty above truth, emotional grace above duty, and fine perception above action. An art which rests on no abiding principle outside of itself, and pursues merely the joy of the moment, is an

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(14) Paul E. More, "My Debt to Trollope", New Shelburne Essays", vol. iii, p. 108

insinuating hedonism that misses the enduring happiness of the world, and in its destruction of the true values of life is bound to end in decadence.

Many times Mr. More points out the similarity between the Romantic and scientific philosophies. It may seem strange that science, at whose rise to power the Romanticists objected so strenuously, should at heart be merged with Romanticism. The explanation is that both move in the same sphere---naturalism. Both are basically naturalistic, and each one specializes in a certain branch of naturalism; science in rationalism and Romanticism in reverie. And the reason for the failure of pantheistic romance to counteract the dangerous excesses of scientific naturalism is its inability to lift the imagination out of the very field in which both move. The mind is flung from one irritating extreme to another; from extremes of rationalism to extremes of romance. The scientist carries his law of change and flux into the realm of literature, recognizing no restraint and acknowledging no principle of taste. It is easy to deduce from that fact what type of literature he would foster. Mr. More states,

> "Yet it is a notorious, if paradoxical, fact that the effect of science on art and literature has been to reinforce a romantic impressionism, and that the man of scientific training when he turns to the humanities is almost always an impressionist." (15)

If, then, Romanticism has failed to meet adequately the demands of the modern spirit in literature, or to remedy its excesses, the question is, what has Mr. More to offer as a substitute? He believes

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(15) Paul E. More, "Victorian Literature", Shelburne Essays, vol.vii., p. 251.

that the ripening of literature depends on a recovery of Humanism. In his prescription for American literature he urges

> ".....the discipline of a classical humanism, which will train the imagination in loyalty to the great tradition, while cherishing the liberty to think and the power to create without succumbing to the seductions of the market-place or the gutter." (16)

Again we come to Mr. More's insistence upon tradition and, in particular, the Greek tradition. From his wide knowledge of literatures and cultures, Mr. More has chosen Greek writers as those who have embodied successfully in their work the highest and most enduring good of humanity. And to those who would push it aside in preference to contemporary ideas, he warns that they deceive themselves if they think the modern world can offer anything to take the place of that discipline.

When tradition is discarded, taste in literature suffers; modern literature has proved that fact. While there are no absolute rules or standards of taste, nevertheless certain criteria of taste do exist which approximate, more or less, to universality, and the history of literature shows that the least changeable fact of human nature is the law of taste. The appreciation of Homer has always been stable; certain artists by their true representation of human qualities will always be regarded as great men of literature, for example, Virgil, Shakespeare and Milton. The permanent value of these men, Mr. More declares, lies in their appeal to what is universal in humanity, rather than to what is temporary and accidental. True, there are two kinds of universality: the first is naturalistic and is

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(16) Paul E. More, "The Phantom of Pure Science", New Shelburne Essays, vol. iii, p. 76.

concerned with the animal instincts in man; the second is humanistic and, although conscious of instincts also, sees something above them, and in this something else looks for the meaning of life.

As the guidance by tradition and the standard of universality are Mr. More's chief offerings to modern literature, his strongest criticism is directed against its irresponsibility. His antipathy to irresponsibility pervades all his literary criticism and he considers it synonymous with those feelings which lead an artist to shrink from his duty to the high purposes of his art, and to take the easiest and surest way to public recognition by following the vogue of the moment. It is this attitude which is responsible for the futility of modern literature. The first manifestation of it is the attempt to create pure art; art that feels no obligations and no restraining bonds. Whether such art be in the realm of pure vision, pure creativeness, or pure aesthetics, Mr. More declares that this effort is nothing more than idolatry to a fetish of abstract reason,--the Demon again. Such a goal is non-existent and not humanly possible.

> "The point I would make is the falseness and futility of the logical deduction that art can therefore dispense with the stuff of humanity or nature, or can weigh anchor and sail off into a shoreless sea of unreality." (17)

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(17) Ibid., "Art", p. 36.

The second sign is the effort to make art independent of morals by putting the artist above blame morally and philosophically. This is merely to decree for him irresponsibility. Most artists recognize the fact that the majority of modern readers want only a sensational dressing up of the world they know, but only a shallow and superficial writer will neglect the elemental questions and problems of humanity. Sometimes, as Mr. More says of modern novelists and dramatists, they attempt to cover up their lack of moral standards by an outward show of concern, and

> ".....divulge their prurience under the guise of reform, and champion licence as the liberty of prophesying." (18)

Lastly, there is the attempt to standardize a purely aesthetic art; one which rests on reverie, or impression, or intuition. It may have several names, but its final goal is the separation of art from human nature. Mr. More deals briefly with them. The characteristics of intuitive art, such as he says are found in James Joyce's "stream of consciousness" literature, are submergence of free will; a glorification of uncontrollable temperament; a subjection to the bestial passions, and a naturalistic view of life as continuous change. Like Mr. Babbitt, Mr. More suggests that intuitive art, if dependent on reverie, will finally cease to rely on, or suggest, any subject whatsoever. These romantic and naturalistic artists dismiss the fact that the quality of the human experience put into it must count, and that representation is only part of art. Deliberation

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(18) Paul E. More, Preface, Shelburne Essays, vol. x., p. x.

is not, as they contend, the foe of liberation.

The "lust of irresponsibility",(19) however, reaches its climax in modern symbolism and surrealism. Here, surely, the artist can escape the prosaic demands of life! Mr. More writes:

> "The practitioners of the newest art call themselves surréalistes, super-realists; they flatter themselves, they are sub-realists. Art may be dehumanized, but only in the sense that, having passed beyond the representation of men as undifferentiated from animals, it undertakes to portray them as complete imbeciles." (20)

The humanist would remember that imagination and reason run parallel, and would put a check upon the spasms of eccentricity to the end that the imagination might be devoted to its work of genuine originality. Mr. More sums up his critique of irresponsibility in the following words:

> "That, then, the spirit of indolence and conceit is the animating cause behind the bitterness of those who proclaim against standards. It is the indolence, moral in some, intellectual in others, that revolts from such discipline as would enable a man to judge between the higher and the lower pleasure; it is the conceit that makes him cling tenaciously to his naked temperament as a better guide than the voice of tradition. Standards there are, and all men judge by them; but there is a vast difference between the standards of education and those of a self-satisfied ignorance." (21)

The true artist, Mr. More believes, is not one who sets himself up as a preacher, to rant at the failures and vices of the life he is portraying. Rather he is one who, by revealing his deepest sincerity, by his just appreciation of both the higher and lower emotions, and by

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(19) Paul E. More, "The Modernism of French Poetry", New Shelburne Essays, vol. iii., p. 111.

(20) ----------, "Art", New Shelburne Essays, vol. i., p. 40

(21) Ibid., "Education", p. 28.

the persuasive power of his imagination, makes his followers always aware that universally human qualities, particularly the reasoning power, are masters of his passions. Thus true art is humanistic; and man endows with permanent value the work in which the artist subtly reveals his sense of the divine.

Since Mr. More is the author of eleven volumes of successful critical studies, his ideas on the subject of criticism and the critic offer much food for thought. Again he appears as the humanist standing for criticism, not for the thing as it is, as a work by itself apart from general experience, but in its relation to other things. No art, he insists, can be completely isolated from current life or completely merged in it, and the highest criticism would balance between the two. Here he speaks, as a traditionalist of the relation between creative and critical literature:

> "In its conscious creation of the field of the present out of the past it takes an honoured, if not equal, place by the side of those impulses, more commonly recognized as creative, which are continually adding new material for its selective energy." (22)

As a traditionalist also, he refutes those who, by dwelling on the errors of judicial criticism as if they would disprove the existence of traditional standards, are in reality merely attempting to establish their own right to independence of taste.

Literary criticism works in many ways; all scholars are servants of the critical spirit, and at a certain point it becomes almost identical with education, moulding the sum of experience to

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(22) Paul E. More, "Criticism", Shelburne Essays, vol. vii., p. 243.

man and each succeeding generation. By this standard one may judge the value of any study as an instrument of education.

The function of criticism, as Mr. More defines it, is a crusade against empty, unfounded faith; against stubborn prejudice or purposeful misrepresentation, and against purely arbitrary authority. It does not surrender to reverie, as the impressionists would have it do, nor does it shirk the burden of moral responsibility, but holds to a definite aim and works towards morality.

Mr. More attaches great importance to the critic, who, despits the contempt of creative artists, has always had a great share in directing human destinies. He defines the man of critical temper as one "....who weighs and refines, who is forever checking the enthusiasm of the living by the authority of the dead; and whose doctrine, even though in the end he may assert it with sovereign contempt of doubters, is still the command to follow the well-tried path of common sense." (23)

Perhaps the essence of his theories lies in his own critical essays. His criterions are fairly constant. He evaluates each work in the light of the history of humanity. The immense background that he has acquired enables him to realize what is significant and what is irrelevant. He emphasizes the basic problems and questionings of mankind, like dualism, faith, and morality. Much of his work is devoted to the life and teachings of Socrates, and Mr. More applies Socrates'

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(23) loc. cit., p. 219.

sceptical approach to knowledge to his own criticism. Lack of personal prejudice, and true disinterestedness temper all his analyses; there is no hint of attack on an artist for trivial or personal reasons, such as characterize much critical literature in current reviews and periodicals.

Although Mr. More always links an author's writings with his personal background and the age in which he lived, his human interest is not malicious, but serves only to further the demonstration and proof of certain defects or merits in the author's philosophy. The essays on William Beckford and Shelley are examples of this type of treatment. Mr. More's criticism of Tennyson shows knowledge of character and background, and perhaps reflects something of Mr. More's own attitude towards life around him. Of Tennyson he writes:

> "...he alone among the busy, anxious Victorians, so far as I know them, stood entirely aloof from the currents of the hour, judging men and things from the larger circles of time; he alone was completely emancipated from the illusions of the present, and this is the secret of the grave, pathetic wisdom that so fascinates us in his correspondence." (24)

How highly Mr. More values the critical spirit, in no matter what field of endeavour, is evident from his comment on the Socratic purpose:

> "...; for the supreme need of a man's soul is not that he should acquire a splendid system of philosophy, but that he should hold as an inexpugnable possession that spirit of scepticism and insight and that assurance of the identity of virtue and knowledge for which Socrates lived and died." (25)

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(24) Ibid., "Tennyson", p. 74

(25) -------, Platonism, p. 14.

More and Society.

Mr. More believes that the same essence of Romanticism which pervades modern literature and philosophy is evident in society and social education. He opposes the naturalistic philosophy which underlies humanitarianism and expfesses itself in materialism and sentimentalism. Aiding and abetting it is the romantic-scientific philosophy of laisser-faire which admits that because the physical world unrolled itself by its own expansive forces, so human society will progress by some universal instinct, and without any need of restraint or insight. Because of a fatalistic feeling of irresistibility it seems useless to check any tendency however extreme, or to attempt rational direction of policies for the future. Any voluntary will to shape character appears powerless. Many people who believe that instinctive sympathy is a capable substitute for restraint and the inner check, forget that sympathy is a vague ideal which fails to provide for the variety and differences in personal feeling. Such an abstract conception of humanity which slurs over the true distinctions among men, Mr. More defines as humanitarianism. He declares that sympathy, in the ambiguous form in which Rousseau presented it, is merely an extension of self-love, which in a clash of interests will turn out to be pure selfishness. It can never take the place of discipline and justice as controls. Mr. More does not object to the compassionate effort to improve conditions of life, nor the development of instinctive fellow-feeling.

A certain good can be credited to humanitarianism; it has softened the brutality of former centuries and made us responsive to the sufferings of others. He does object, however, to setting up "social sympathy" as the sum of all virtues, and to the materialism inseparable from every attempt to convert humanitarian zeal into a species of religion. Social sympathy, he feels, weakens resistance to temptation, relaxes the fibre of character and nourishes passions at the expense of reason and will.

The individual should place his obligation to society second to his personal integrity, but much modern literature (particularly novels) reverses this order. False humanitarian doctrines result in the weakening of obligations, and indeed, irresponsibility has become the keynote of society as well as of literature. The happiness of a people, Mr. More feels, depends on their acceptance of duties, and their common recognition of the law of just subordination.

Social equalitarianism belongs in the same category with humanitarianism as an extreme social feeling. The attempt at lowering humanity to a dull uniformity is not only a contradiction of scientific and human knowledge, but by destroying the individual sense such a progressive externalization of life will eventually cause a relapse into barbarism. It is one-sided, based on an exclusive appeal to the feelings, and is contrary to our sense of justice.

Mr. More divides humanitarians into two groups: sentimentalists who view the plight of humanity through a haze of indiscriminate pity, and those theoretical socialists who take their stand on the brotherhood

of man, and whose intolerance prevents them from seeing the truth of humanity. Where he attacks, in the Shelburne Essays, the socialism of Mr. G. L. Dickinson, Mr. More points out that socialism often works in disharmony with the principles of industrialism instead of co-operating with them, and also that socialists, by trying to make man's distinction commensurable with labour-value, are robbing democracy of much intangible, yet true eminence. He remarks chiefly on the contempt of industrialism for the inestimable works of imagination:

> "The common distrust of socialism among those who really cherish literature and the arts is soundly based; and the socialists, in replying to that distrust, have fallen into the vaguest generalisations, or have frankly avowed that no scheme of socialising this form of production without destroying its inspiration has yet been devised." (26)

Yet much of the danger lies with the journals that are supposed to stand for higher things, but flirt with schemes subversive of property and constitutional checks, and who, in their clamour for the brotherhood of man, neglect justice.

Mr. More is appalled by the feeling of supreme discontent gnawing at the heart of civilization. This discontent, he feels, is basically religious. The idealist's longing for a religious ideal is an indefinite faith, without guidance; and he easily falls prey to the dominant party of discontent.

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(26) Paul E. More, "The Socialism of G. Lowes Dickinson," Shelburne Essays, vol. vii., p. 179.

Indistinguishing sympathy is becoming a religion and the theme of serious literature; if literature is to be a true social guide it must emphasize distinctions, judgment, and the responsibility of the individual man for the conduct of his own soul.

The success of democracy, Mr. More agrees with Mr. Babbitt, depends upon the quality of its leadership. For too long a period the public has been too willing to place the burden of responsibility upon men ill-fitted for administrative power, and they, in turn, have been too willing to soothe the people out of a sense of responsibility for errors. The situation has become so precarious that capable men of wisdom and understanding have withdrawn in disgust from the political field to more obscure positions, where their opposition to the emotion of the hour will bring fewer howls of indignation from an undiscerning public. The remedy is in bringing the people to respect and follow their right leaders.

> "The cure of democracy," Mr. More believes, is not more democracy, but better democracy." (27)

Mr. More prefers to call it a "natural aristocracy", and regards it as the culmination of a true democracy. He is careful to distinguish it from an inherited or money-made aristocracy, and points out that it refutes any idea of basic equalitarianism in man.

> "It calls rather for some machinery or some social consciousness which shall ensure both the selection from among the community at large of the "best" and the bestowal on them of "power", it is the true consummation of democracy." (28)

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(27) Paul E. More, "Natural Aristocracy", Shelburne Essays, vol.ix., p. 29

(28) Ibid., p. 30

The "best", he explains, is not a sharply defined class; the word signifies a tendency rather than a conclusion. From such a nobility of character and intellect, noble service would be expected. They would try to ensure among the rest of the people the proportioning of powers and benefits to the scale of character and intelligence.

In the same volume with his discussion on natural aristocracy, Mr. More deals with the subject of justice. Our sense of justice, he states, is something apart from the natural world altogether; it is supernatural. Justice he defines as

> ".....that government and harmonious balance of the soul which arises when reason prevails over the feelings and desires, and when this dominance of the reason is attended with inner joy and consenting peace; it is the right distribution of power and honour to the denizens within the breast of the individual man." (29)

Social and personal justice are both measured by happiness. The great cause of unhappiness and discord is the injustice arising from the multitude of unrestrained desires and the clash of egotisms. Men must be taught, Mr. More insists, that their true happiness depends on each individual in society having his place and responsibility. Thus the work of the lawgiver and teacher is one of mediation; and social justice becomes a shifting compromise.

Mr. More attacks Nietzsche's theory that social progress guided by strength and reason alone would be towards the higher

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(29) Ibid., "Justice", p. 110.

life. But to base so much theoretically on the claim of reason is to neglect any supernatural quality in the sense of justice. He attacks equalitarian justice because it lacks proportionateness. To quote his definition,

> "Social justice, then, is neither Nietzschean nor equalitarian. It is such a distribution of power and privilege, and of property as the symbol and instrument of these, as at once will satisfy the distinctions of reason among the superior, and will not outrage the feelings of the inferior." (30)

However, every man must be taught that social justice contains a considerable amount of the natural law which seems to them unjust, but which they cannot change. This is the only injustice, and there is always some of it in relations between man and the world. Justice, it is recalled, concerns only the human, not the natural side of life. No one can enforce justice on Nature. The law of the survival of the fittest is an example of natural injustice beyond man's power of adjustment, and one to which he must reconcile himself.

Another topic dealt with by Mr. More in "Aristocracy and Justice" is that of property and law. His argument is summed up in his statement that

> "To the civilized man the rights of property are more important than the right to life." (31)

Beginning with his proof of the statement that property is the basis of civilization, Mr. More goes on to declare that private ownership

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(30) Ibid., p. 120

(31) Ibid., "Property and Law", p. 136.

of property, including its production and distribution, is, with very limited reservations, essential to the material stability and progress of society. A man's personal independence depends upon his possession of private property, and when organized law ceases to protect property, as happened in the case of a strike which Mr. More cites as an example, the national security of a people is jeopardized by the unrestraint of a few. A feeling of insecurity, if allowed to spread, would have dire results.

> "For if property is secure, it may be the means to an end, whereas if it is insecure it will be the end in itself." (32)

Mr. More sees, on the whole, a need for firmer insistence on immaterial values which are within the grasp of every man whatever may be the seeming injustice of his material position. He says,

> "We need to be less swayed by our sympathies and more guided by the discriminations of reason; to put a harsh stop to the feminism that is undermining the sober virility of our minds; to control our equalitarian relaxation, of which recent legislation has been over full, by a stricter idea of the distinctions of value in human achievement; to be less ready to throw upon society the guilt of the individual, and to be firmer in our recognition of personal duty and responsibility; to revise our philosophy of emotional expansion, with its tendency to glorify extremes, for a saner perception of virtue that lies in limits and for a keener search after the truth that dwells in mediation." (33)

This might be called the creed of Mr. More's social reform.

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(32) Ibid., p. 148

(33) Ibid., p. 241

Education.

The source of literary and social achievements, Mr. More thinks, is the proper education of the young mind. The present attitudes towards education, which began with their presentation in Rousseau's "Emile", are responsible for much that he criticizes in society to-day. The fundamental thesis of "Emile" was to make instinct instead of experienced judgment, impulse instead of control, unrestrained liberty instead of obedience, and nature instead of discipline the basis of education. There is a growing belief that the great perversion of truth in it was the fostering of emotions as if the uniting bond of mankind were sentiment rather than reason.

> "To some observers certain traits of irresponsibility in the individual and certain symptoms of disintegration in society are the direct fruit of this teaching", (34)

says Mr. More.

He deplores the trend towards stress on scientific subjects in a curriculum. Science does not get beyond the material and the natural, and fails to give an understanding of the longer problems of humanity. Also, there are too many sociological studies, which, because of the problems that those subjects deal with, lower the student's level from contemplation of what is finest. Too often Sociology spoils his mind with a flabby or a burning humanitarianism. Modern studies, on the whole, arouse unreflecting prejudice.

Education should be, Mr. More believes, a means of fitting the young for responsibility; a disciplinary and selective process,

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(34) Paul E. More, "Rousseau", Shelburne Essays, vol. vi., p. 231

which will not be reduced to the intellectual needs of the proletariat, but will aim towards the development of a natural aristocracy.

> "For it will be pretty generally agreed", he declares, "that efficiency of the individual scholar and unity of the scholarly class are, properly, only the means to obtain the real end of education, which is social efficiency." (35)

The work of the university therefore, is to produce a hierarchy of character and intelligence, for people must, of necessity, be ruled by educated men.

There is need to restore to the curriculum subjects which train the imagination, not in its purely aesthetic form, but an imagination which comprehends the gift of tradition and can distinguish essentials. Here is the foundation of Mr. More's remedy---the classical tradition. Cultural salvation, he affirms, is in a re-birth and return to the classics. His advice to the teaching profession would be

> ".....to steep their own minds in the great and proved writers of the ancient world, to nourish their inner life on that larger humanism which embraces the spiritual as well as the aesthetic needs of mankind, and then, if they be teachers of the classics, simply to teach as they can, omitting nothing of rigid discipline, however repellent that discipline may be, but giving also to the pupil from the overflowing fulness of their faith and joy." (36)

The essence of education is not to teach the pleasant, easy, natural tendencies, but, by gradually leading the young mind to take pleasure and consolation in higher things, to prepare him for a happy, useful citizenship. Above all, he will acquire the right to judge, to

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(35) -------, "Academic Leadership", Shelburne Essays, vol.ix., pp.52-53.

(36) Ibid., p. 100.

pronounce on standards of taste because he knows what is traditionally best and is set free from his own petty limitations.

Mr. More does not minimize the difficulties of social administration, but he feels most keenly the necessity of setting in men's minds the philosophical foundation on which they must work. He says,

> "Until they can rediscover some common ground of strength and purpose in the first principles of education and law and property and religion, we are in danger of falling a prey to the disorganizing and vulgarizing domination of ambitions which should be the servants and not the masters of society." (37)

Religion.

It is generally recognized that Mr. More's greatest and most successful critical work is the development of his attitude towards Christianity. It is equally difficult for any mind except a philosophically or theologically trained one to deal justly or adequately with such a comprehensive study as Mr. More has carried out in his volumes on the Greek Tradition. (38) A statement of his religious growth and his stand on present religious controversies will have to suffice.

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(37) Ibid., p. 43.

(38) The Greek Tradition comprises four volumes, The Religion of Plato, Hellenistic Philosophies, The Christ of the New Testament, Christ the Word, and two complementary volumes, Platonism (3rd edition), and The Catholic Faith.

At one period in his life Mr. More was a complete sceptic. Then from his classical studies his interest turned towards Eastern religions, and among his essays are many dealing with this subject. He refutes the theory that a study of comparative religions results in a denial of Christianity, and finally takes his stand on what seemed to him the focal point of religious belief. At first Mr. More turned to Platonism because he thought it the basis of Western religion, yet not hide-bound by religious dogma, and not in need of confirmation by revelation as is Christianity. He believed that Platonic dualism was the source of Christian philosophy, and his design was to bring about a renewal of faith in the Platonic world of immaterial and spiritual reality. This, he felt, would be an antidote for the materialism and rationalism so evident in the world. As his investigation progressed he came to a realization of the union between Christ and religious Platonism, and finally to hold firm faith in Christianity. He saw that the weakness of Platonic religion was its foundation in philosophy; that what Plato lacked was a divine confirmation which would make his beliefs faith rather than doctrine. He also saw that the strength of Christianity lay in its belief in Christ as an exemplification of dualism, the spirit in God and in man, and that only in the Christian religion did this confirmation appear.

The Incarnation, then, as the mystical expression of dualism, is the cornerstone of Christianity.

Mr. More's definition of religion is dualistic.

> "Now religion, as I take it, is the union of other-worldliness ....and morality; and these two elements are dependent on the mysterious duality of mind and ideas and on the equally mysterious duality of good and evil." (39)

His two volumes, The Christ of the New Testament and Christ the Word, cover the development of religious thinking from Socrates to the council of Chalcedon, with the purpose which he expresses in the former volume.

> "Our purpose, I need to say with emphasis, is not to prove exactly the truth of this thesis of the Incarnation--for such proof would require a line of argument, historical and apologetic, which lies outside of our course---but to show that the Incarnation, so understood, is, as it claims to be, the one essential dogma of Christianity, that the philosophy underlying it conforms to our deepest spiritual experience, that it is the mythological experience, that it is the mythological expression (using the word 'mythological' in no derogatory sense) of the Platonic dualism, and thus forms a proper consummation of the Greek Tradition." (40)

In The Catholic Faith Mr. More gets down to the crux of Christianity; to expose and leave dominant the reason for the inexhaustible vitality of the Christian religion. He would clear away the traditional realistic interpretations that have gradually clung to the Roman Catholic and certain Protestant churches, but would preserve the one essential difference between Platonism and Christianity, the one dogma which must be accepted by every one who would call himself a Christian---the Incarnation. He stresses the need of creeds for documents of belief to hold the church together, but

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(39) -------, The Christ of the New Testament, p. 5.

(40) Ibid., p. 2.

claims for much of the Apostles' Creed only symbolic value, as the poetry of faith. Many once-thought essentials are discarded by Mr. More, the miracles, the virgin birth, the objective reality of the resurrection, and the personality of the Holy Ghost. How much more than allegorical value one gives to these doctrines is a question of personal faith. For example, his own interpretation of the Holy Ghost is as the spirit of divine Grace.

Mr. More criticizes the various Churches for their extremes and omissions. The modern religious dilemma is anothef effect of the Demon of the Absolute.

> "It has wrought havoc in religion by presenting to faith the alternative between an absolute omnipotent God or no God at all, and between an infallible Church or undisciplined individualism." (41)

He attacks the Roman Catholic Church for its dogma of infallibility, and its accompanying assertion that there is no middle ground between the two absolutes of complete acceptance or rejection. Such a situation must end in absolute, individual interpretation, and this, he holds, is spiritual death. On the other hand, Protestantism depends upon the opposite extreme from revelation; it is too coldly rational, too individualistic. Man needs something to supplement his limited intuition, some authority to fortify faith, and some common expression of worship.

Religion can be neither purely individualistic nor purely

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(41) -------, "Literature", New Shelburne Essays, vol. i, page 2.

determined. The question is a critical one, and he declares,

> " The zealot who forces upon hesitant doubters the harsh and false dilemma of submission to an infallible Church or of irresponsible individualism, and who repudiates any notion of authority between despotism and anarchy, has simply signed the death warrant of organized Christianity. The execution of that warrant may be delayed; but it will come in due time. Nor can I see more reasonableness in the position of the agnostic who accepts the same dilemma and then sneeringly asks us: If you believe anything supernatural asserted in the name of revelation, why not believe everything? Such an alternative of absolutes is as alien to the truth in matters of the spirit as it is in art or government or ethics or philosophy." (42)

What Mr. More would have is an authoritative as contrasted with an absolute church. His religion would be a militant force, exacting obedience, not a vague conception of the infinite, not a social ornament, not demanding total renunciation of the world's pleasures. It would have some austerity of command, and bring the feeling that our ethical sense has a justification in the eternal canons of truth, and that the consequences of our actions follow us in the hereafter. It must give a feeling of purpose in the creation of the world, and must suggest the spiritual in the visible; it must give the feeling of eternity, uniting the future and the present. Only so will man realize his reward of happiness on earth.

How then, one may ask, does Humanism, as expressed by Mr. Babbitt, fit into this? It is here, in the problems of religion that Mr. More's philosophy meets and then passes that of Mr. Babbitt.

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(42) -------, "The Church", The Catholic Faith, p. 205.

Mr. More has taken religion beyond the human plane into the realm of the supernatural by asking one question; that is, whether humanism, unaided and by itself, can provide the purpose and values it needs for its fulfilment and production. Must it not depend, finally, upon religion for its driving force? Mr. Babbitt is very reluctant to associate the supernatural with any kind of dogmatic or revealed religion. Mr. More expresses his opinion in these words,

> "... the humanist who thinks to stand without religion is desperately beset by forces that would sink him to the level of naturalism. He may cling stubbornly to values that are the creation of his own fancy---for a while; in the end he will be overcome by the brutality of facts." (43)

He does not deny humanism, but he believes that it does not go far enough. In itself, humanism is not anti-religious in so far as it depends on the controlling power of the supernatural, but it may be non-religious in so far as it is worldly and does not try to escape the world.

Even religion, however, may have its humanistic qualities. As Mr. More adapts religion to life, he seeks a humanistic <u>via media</u>; not renunciation or asceticism, but unremitting control of temperamental impulse to mediate between indulgence and asceticism. Self-restraint, humility, and a sense of personal responsibility are attributes of the Humanistic as well as of the religious life.

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(43) -------, "On Being Human", <u>New Shelburne Essays</u>, vol.iii, p.21.

CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE AND CRITICISM.

Now that a survey has been made of what the leaders of the New Humanism propounded as their principles, it remains to be seen what influence their teachings had on American literary criticism. This will best be realized through a resumé of American critical literature from the beginning of the twentieth century to the great critical debate of 1929-30, in which the Humanists played a major rôle. Also, the anti-critics must be given their chance to refute the arguments of the Humanists. In this way the Humanists may be seen in better perspective than if viewed as individual critics.

During the first decade of twentieth century literature, criticism was relegated to polite academic statement in reviews. Mr. W.C. Brownell was the chief exponent of anything like humanistic standards, but he was overshadowed as the naturalistic trend began to make itself felt in the work of the younger critics. Near the turn of the century, Santayana gave a clue to the new reaction in the naturalistic psychology at the basis of his criticism. Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More were the first to feel that all was not well with the trend. Babbitt's "New Laokoon" and More's first volume of "Shelburne Essays" opposed Humanistic standards to Spingarn's "The New Criticism", which called for aesthetic judgment of art, and thus started an undercover controversy which came to a head about fifteen years later.

The first outbreak occurred in 1915 when Van Wyck Brooks wrote a criticism of American life called "America's Coming of Age", and

Stuart P. Sherman, defender of tradition and classicism, opened the journalistic debate with a challenge for free discussion of America, her ideals, traditions, and her future. The challenge was promptly accepted by H. L. Mencken, spokesman for the naturalists and liberalists and the argument developed into a shouting, even personal, battle, which filled reviews and weeklies. After the War, Stuart Sherman gradually broke away from the traditionalist school to side with the naturalists, exposing the men who had been the true leaders behind the scene, and whose books had been influencing some men for several years, namely Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More. They continued to write without the noise attendant on the Sherman-Mencken battle, and gradually to gather around them a group of men who agreed, some entirely, some only in part, with the doctrines of the New Humanism. So quiet were they, indeed, that the opposition believed they had killed the snake, not merely scotched it. How mistaken they were was clear in 1929 when a direct movement for the New Humanism, under the leadership of Babbitt and More and abetted by Norman Foerster, was presented to the public. In a book entitled Humanism and America, edited by Foerster, fourteen Humanists representing the various branches of Art, as well as science, religion, and psychology, expressed their outlook on modern civilization. At once thirteen opponents, under the editorship of Mr. C. H. Grattan and distinguished by no particular platform except their objection to Humanism, made answer in "The Critique of Humanism". And so the storm raged back and forth with practically every American critic taking sides, and even some, as in the case of T. S. Eliot and Bernard Bandler II, taking part on both sides.

Reviews and weeklies, like the Nation, The Criterion, The Hound and Horn, The Forum, and the Bookman, to mention a few, carried the controversy.

One influence acknowledged by all critics is that Babbitt and More aroused American criticism to an awareness of fundamentals which older critics had refused to face, showing how deeply criticism penetrated the centre of man's life and thought. To some it was the birth of a true American critical literature, of which, despite its doctrines or because of them according to individual opinion, America might justly be proud. Another factor which all critics conceded was the impressive learning and scholarship of both Babbitt and More. Even H. L. Mencken was forced to admit that More was perhaps America's foremost scholar, although he promptly annulled the effects of his admission by adding characteristically, "God bless us!" Then it must be remembered, Mr. Babbitt was professor at Harvard for thirty-five years, where his teaching ability impressed his doctrine upon many of his students. Witness to the influence of both men is the number of books dedicated to them by younger critics. Chief among their disciples are the following men: Norman Foerster, John Jay Chapman, George E. Woodberry, W. C. Brownell, P. H. Frye, Frank Jewett Mather, Robert Schafer, P. H. Houston, G. K. Elliot, Stuart P. Sherman (in his earlier work), and other lesser-known critics.

The very nature of Humanism, especially in its religious concept, leaves ample room for disagreement among the Humanists themselves.

As Mr. Boynton wrote in 1931,

> "Just now the humanists are losing their tempers over what they mean by humanism. And the enemies of humanism are making capital out of the disagreements. Every humanist has his own ideas of what is in truth a rather abstract concept. In the midst of the great controversy with the naturalists there are little quarrels with fellow-humanists. They need to define their cause. They are doing much exploding and too little explaining." (1)

Mr. More himself admitted that a good deal of the energy of Humanist supporters was expended in agressive protest.

The battle of 1929-30 is regarded by many as gaining no final goal of supremacy for either side. Each party went its own way, thus making any true controversy impossible. In the words of one critic,

> "That was the irony of the controversial years, that libertarians gathered about Mencken who, by ultimate principle was none at all and that therefore More, consistent Calvinistic reactionary, was never met on his own ground. There was another reason that made the battle in its outward aspects a sham battle. The adversaries had no concrete common ground when it came to the substance of letters and philosophy. More had not impartially read any book written later than 1890, Mencken had read hardly any book written before that date. Both men are at once monsters of ignorance and monsters of learning." (2)

The Humanists claim that their leaders have never been met on their own plane because no other critic has a range of learning or wisdom comparable to that of Babbitt or More, and is therefore not fully qualified to argue against them. Another anti-humanist declares that what Humanism might have accomplished, namely correction of aimlessness,

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(1) P.H. Boynton, The Challenge of Modern Criticism, (Chicago: Rockwell Press, 1931), p. 112.

(2) Ludwig Lewisohn, Expression in America (New York: Harper, 1932), pp. 430-431.

vulgarity and irresponsibility in American talents, was largely nullified by the mood of rancour, heat and confusion on both sides in which the battle was conducted.

It is sometimes difficult to separate what is truly critical in anti-humanist criticism from what is biting satire, like most of Mencken's, or from the simple irritation that occurs in nearly all their essays. However, the recurrence of certain adjectives applied to Babbitt and More and their writings gives a clue to consistent lines of criticism which cannot be ignored. For example, "reactionary", "Puritan", and "hide-bound", express the most prevalent belief that the New England background of the leaders was not quite far enough in the background to suit their critics.

An examination of the criticisms of the Humanistic philosophy reveals agreement on the negative value of humanistic morality. Their insistence on inhibition, restraint, and discipline do not make for a true morality such as they seek. In fact, they make a fetish of morality, so Lewis Mumford believes. They read art, literature and philosophy in terms of their ethical significance and their effect upon practical conduct. Actually a good part of our activities are conducted on neutral ground and include no questions of moral choice. Conduct has more aspects than just the ethical, and to isolate ethical judgments from the whole is to make the chronic invalid the supreme type of ethical personality. The critics claim that true morality is only obtained through positive channels of effort; that such restrictions produce nothing and that while necessary in their proper place and time are only incidental to the pursuit of the useful, the fine, and the dignified.

> "..., the New Humanists", Mr. Mumford declares, "have merely opposed to the weakness and infirmities of our present society a series of anxious negatives - negatives just as impotent to produce new values as the optimistic assent of their New Mechanist rivals. In short: the New Humanists are empty." (3)

Edmund Wilson believes that humanity has as much need of being exhorted against such coldly negative behaviour as against irresponsible exuberance. Mr. Tate in his essay "The Fallacies of Humanism" tries to point out that the basis of Mr. Babbitt's control is the same intellect which is also the force behind naturalism, exploitation of humanity, and other evils. The negative quality is apparent when it is realized that the intellect cannot limit itself, as Babbitt wishes it to do; it is a case of the intellect versus itself.

So too, the inner check and higher will are examples of purely arbitrary authority. They cannot hope to solve modern sickness; they merely confine man to the moral solitude of a cultured minority who are not faced with the actual problems of humanity. As a system of ethics, it is incomplete, ignoring social and economic realities, and filling in the gaps with mere convantions.

> "The Humanists, ... tend to divorce their higher will from experience altogether, and to employ it, so divorced, as a standard by which to judge others' experience. It is no wonder, then, that what the Humanists call their insight, their imagination, their discipline, should seem to us their arrogance, their blindness, and their censorious ignorance." (4)

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(3) The Critique of Humanism, (New York: Brewer & Warren Inc., 1930), p.337. Lewis Mumford "Towards an Organic Humanism".

(4) Ibid., R.P. Blackmur, The Discipline of Humanism", p. 254.

Mr. Blackmur suggests instead that they cannot be treated as if they were rigid natural rules of conduct, but to be useful must be regarded as convenient myths to be applied when the occasion demands. By no means should they be regarded as a set of principles. His fellow-critic, Mr. Grattan, is even more scathing:

> "The Humanists fail to see that life is not so ascetic an affair that man may brood on ethical "choices". They have not indeed, under modern conditions of living, time to engage in abstract spiritual exercises of any kind, and if the values which are to be regarded as valuable to man and society do not have a natural and inevitable continuity with action, they are bound to remain unobserved and consequently trivial and unimportant -- noble and amusing anachronisms." (5)

Altogether these checks show a peculiarly doctrinaire frame of mind.

Both naturalism and Humanism, Mr. Mumford feels, are only partial philosophies, each seeks to make a single element in experience dominate or interpret the whole. Most critics go farther and state that Humanistic morality has no connection with experience at all. And experience cannot be done away with because it is a source of elements unobtainable in any other way; it is a conditioning process which affects morality itself.

> "Like mechanism, this pseudo-Humanism has no faith in the principle of growth and no understanding of its processes: hence its dogmas malign both our actual life and the possibilities that arise out of it. The New Humanist, impatient to achieve the final stage of growth, its fruition in a mature and competent personality, scorns all the preparatory phases: in his distrust for the erratic experiments of childhood, he puts a premium upon the fixations of senility." (6)

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(5) Ibid., C.H. Grattan, "The New Humanism", p. 25.

(6) Ibid., Lewis Mumford, "Towards an Organic Humanism", p. 345.

The whole search for a definite, dogmatic program is in part an effort to evade continuous vigilance and responsibility, he asserts; and Mr. Babbitt's appeal to the young is this very concentration upon the individual. It appeals to the immature personality faced with the crisis of adolescence and incapable of directing his energies to any lasting ends. It is this self-interest in Humanism which Mr. Fausset objects to chiefly. He believes that it ranges the self against humanity in the name of humanism; it lacks the readiness to give the self to life, as many humble men do, and therefore lacks wholeness. It is infused with an element of intellectualistic pride and complacency; it is not humble but egotistical.

Above all there is the suspicion that Babbitt does not mean simply self-restraint or self-control, but the uncritical subordination to a neo-Calvinism or Puritanism in both art and morals which is so dreaded by Americans. To them Puritanism means depression of life and thought; a crippling and paralyzing of creative effort. Lewisohn is particularly bitter about the Puritan influence, and therefore he sees an ancestral trend in Humanistic theories, a return to New England theocracy, and a last reaction of pioneer Puritanism against the reintegration of experience with expression, which is his objective. They are right in demanding values and guidance in life, he agrees, but their values are those which no rational man has been able to accept since Jonathan Edwards. Allen Tate makes a more modern, but equally derogatory, comparison.

> "... the Humanist pursues Humanism for its own sake -- or, say, restraint for restraint's sake, or proportion for proportion's sake -- and while this is doubtless better than pursuing disorder for disorder's sake, the authority of the worthier pursuit is no clearer than that of the baser. His

> doctrine of restraint does not look to unity, but to abstract and external control -- not to a solution of the moral problem, but an attempt to get the social results of unity by main force, by a kind of moral Fascism." (7)

Criticism of the dualistic philosophy which Babbitt and More regard as the basis of Humanism is more implied in the critic's attacks than stated directly. They regard dualism as static, unprogressive, and a cautious balance which does not make for unity in man, but only an uneasy compromise. Mr. Fausset believes it to be a wasted and harmful effort to restore the balance of opposites, which results in either open conflict or a self-conscious mediation.

> "And the gulf he wishes to perpetuate between the spiritual and the temporal is as fatal to a complete humanity as that between man and nature". (8)

What is really needed is a true correspondence between the various planes, a harmonious synthesis into an organic whole. Mr. Tate claims that Norman Foerster's dualism is only a verbal one; that he has no really opposed principles, merely an infinite number of points on the same scale.

There is little quarrel between the two sides on the matter of tradition itself; the chief disagreement concerns the kind of tradition and how far its influence will interfere in modern thought. Mr. T.S. Eliot sees tradition as a by-product of right living; and something which is inherited rather than acquired. It cannot be aimed at directly. Concerning Babbitt's defence of tradition he writes,

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(7) Ibid., Allen Tate, "Fallacies of Humanism", p. 132.

(8) Hugh I'A Fausset, The Proving of Psyche (London: J.Cape Ltd. 1929) p. 313.

> "And yet to my mind the very width of his culture, his intelligent eclecticism, are themselves symptoms of a narrowness of tradition, in their extreme reaction against that narrowness..... But he seemed to be trying to compensate for the lack of living tradition by a herculean but purely intellectual and individual effort." (9)

Another critic asserts that Humanistic use of tradition is only a mechanical formula for the recovery of civilization. Humanism should be synonymous with culture, but it has not had enough experience or practice, or enough time to develop into culture. The wholesale adoption of culture, without first making or reconstructing a living background of modern experience, is pure imitation. Mr. Blackmur writes,

> "They have taken principles and notions once embodied in Greek civilization, mediaeval Christianity, and perhaps the French seventeenth century, and made them their own without embodying them in the civilization of to-day. They have conceived a tradition which cannot move except by imitating itself, by remaining static and duplicative --which is not, therefore, and cannot be, a living tradition at all, but merely the dry intellectual shell of once vivid sense." (10)

One consistent criticism is that there are really two distinct humanisms; that with a capital H and that with a small h. The latter stands for a general attitude, a fine artistic spirit which the former have adopted through the old humanists into their formal doctrine to give it prestige.

Not only have the Humanists adopted tradition, but also conventions, and not the most decorous ones at that. The critics say they are the conventions and prejudices of the university; one of

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(9) T. S. Eliot, After Strange Gods, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd.,1933) p. 39

(10) Ibid., R.P. Blackmur, "The Discipline of Humanism", p. 251

them is an intellectual and social snobbery which, while it may suit a professor's drawing room, is out of place when applied to literature and art. Their boldness of attack, also, is derived from habitual acquiescence of university students to their ideas. It is only such men who would insist on the necessity of a cultural background.

> "To sum up", declares Mr. Wilson, "a small clique of self-anointed have arrogated to themselves a name that stood in the fifteenth century for a genuinely liberating attitude, and degraded it to a synonym for a tight academicism. The whole doctrine has become little more than a rationalization of neophobia and a piece of special pleading for the genteel tradition. At its best, it is a mere revival of a singularly dogmatic and narrow classicism. There are, of course, sound criteria in the classic tradition unduly neglected in the criticism of the last decade. But the critics who wish to apply these criteria will be well advised if they do not load themselves down with the millstone of dogma that the Humanists are so eager to hang round their necks." (11)

Throughout American criticism there seems this constant relation in the critic's mind between the words academic, intellectual, and arrogant.

Quite a protest arose over the treatment accorded science at the hands of Babbitt and More. The critics give several reasons for this. First, that the Humanists wish to make out a case against the modern world, and the disintegrating effect of science makes the simplest target. Or, by the rejection of science they hope to aggrandize Humanistic and religious values. But chiefly that by attacking science they hope to save their values from scientific, that is, experimental scrutiny. That they did not succeed in

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(11) Ibid., Edmund Wilson, "Notes on Babbitt and More", p. 96.

doing so is exemplified in the essays of Bernard Bandler II, and in Mr. Grattan's statement that no one with an elementary knowledge of scientific thought could accept the validity of such a figment of the imagination as the higher will. Mr. Wilson believes that the Humanists rationalize their scientific ignorance; they wish to convince themselves that what they do not know is not of primary importance anyway. In this way they ignore the genuine achievements of science; they fail to appreciate the great lesson of impersonality which it has taught. The critics point to the working habit of humility which it teaches, as proof that the Humanists do not have a monopoly on this attribute.

> "The remedy for the present situation", Mr. Grattan insists, "is not less science but more science. The extension of an experimental technic into the human and social realms is bound to be the most fruitful adventure of modern times." (12)

One is apt to wonder why, in the face of such criticism, Humanism has continued to endure. Mr. Lewisohn admits the fact regretfully, and even acknowledges the addition of new disciples to the fold. His reason is that nothing was opposed to them except a complete nihilism, like the vivid but unphilosophical negations of Mencken. Amidst the destructive criticism and blind drift of their contemporaries, says Mr. Mumford, the Humanists offered their assertion of the dignity of the human spirit, and their own forceful convictions. His conviction is,

> "The result is not a coherent philosophy of life; but at least it is a stop-gap. As a purely temporary

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(12) Ibid., C.H. Grattan, "The New Humanism", p. 33.

> protest, paving the way for a more central and capacious philosophy of life, the New Humanism has perhaps its chief justification." (13)

A favourite criticism of Babbitt is that, although he was insistent on decorum, discipline, and the law of measure for others, he failed to employ it as his own writings. Mr. Wilson states several reasons for this. First, Babbitt looks only for the errors in the writings of others, not their good points. Second, he makes a broad word like humanism the exclusive property of a group of fatuous schoolmasters. Third, he makes an A.B.C. of Humanism, a regular Five Foot Shelf business of the culture of Homer, Phidias, Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Virgil, Horace, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Matthew Arnold, Emerson and Lowell. Fourth, he assumes that no one else takes seriously the woes of our times, and that everyone else aggravates them.

Another critic ridicules the principle of decorum applied to literary criticism.

> "We are above all to judge a writer, not by his originality or force, not by his talent or genius, but by his decorum! That is, we are to praise him for a virtue within the reach of any learned blockhead." (14)

Several critics have accused Babbitt and More of intolerance, gained principally from the pedantry and academicism of the university. Not only does the Humanist search out the errors of an author's work, but he fails to see anything except his own ideas, or denounces as futile and irresponsible all writers who do not state his particular moral in his particular terms.

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(13) Ibid., Lewis Mumford, "Towards an Organic Humanism", pp.346-47

(14) Ibid., Henry Hazlitt, "Humanism and Value", p. 95.

Mr. Blackmur looks on them all as conspirators working to prohibit and censor such literature as does not fulfil the notion of a Humanistic society.

There are strenuous objections to the uses to which the Humanist puts literature. Literature, they feel, should not be a vehicle for philosophic and moralistic discussions; Humanism is based on a misapprehension of the purpose of literature, it is not a support for dogmas. And it goes even farther than the work itself to the Author. To quote Mr. Chamberlain,

> "One turns from the New Humanists because they want to make the poet, and novelist and the dramatist bear the burden of the philosopher, and reformer, the social engineer, and the critic of society, a confusion of métiers that may be said to constitute our newest Laokoon." (15)

The critics deplore the effect that the preoccupation with philosophy and morals has had on the minds of the Humanists, especially on those acknowledged to be capable ones. It has made Babbitt's mind a prey to inflexible doctrine; it has made him a moralist, controversialist, and pamphleteer, rather than a critic. It has caused Mr. More to confine art in a tight circle of moral prejudice, or to reject the type of art that would have invigorated his doctrines. In both men it has stiffened their sensibilities and paralyzed their aesthetic appreciation, the critics believe. The moralist, Mr. Spingarn declares,is prosaic, not poetic. Mr. T. S. Eliot warns of the danger accompanying the continuation of literary into general questions, and of using literature as a means of criticizing every aspect of society.

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(15) Ibid., John Chamberlain, "Drift and Mastery in Our Novelists", p. 257-58.

> "The danger is that when a critic has grasped these vital moral problems which rise out of literary criticism, he may lose his detachment and submerge his sensibility. He may become too much a servant of his mind and conscience; he may be too impatient with contemporary literature, having pigeonholed it under one or the other of the social maladies; and may demand edification at once, when appreciation of genius and accomplishment should come first." (16)

This seems, actually, like a subtle, indirect criticism of Babbitt and More.

Chiefly responsible for their lack of sensibility is their lack of experience, or contact with life. Mr. Bandler declares that the difference between Humanism and America and A Critique of Humanism is that the writers of the first want thought, order, and discipline imposed upon life arbitrarily, while the latter agree that it must come from life itself, taking what form the materials of the contemporary scene permit. Mr. Fausset insists that without contact with experience art will lack vital expression. It is this lack of experience and corresponding lack of expression which has made the Humanists' own work so uncreative in the eyes of their critics. Not only that, but they reveal their ignorance of the creative process. Babbitt's definitions of the artist are unpsychological, Mr. Lewisohn declares; they ignore the artist in action in a manner that denotes the uncreative writer. The will to refrain, for example, is utterly contradictory to the inner function of the artist.

Burton Rascoe attacks Babbitt in particular for his lack of interest in literature and his failure to understand the creative

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(16) Thomas S. Eliot, "Experiment in Criticism", The Bookman, LXX (November, 1929), 3.

process. In spite of the fact that Mr. Babbitt happens to hold a chair in comparative literature at Harvard, he complains, he is naïve enough to imagine that all that is necessary for the production of great masterpieces is to observe the rules laid down in Aristotle's Poetics, exercise inner control, be decorous, and be a gentleman. He even has a positive distaste for literature, he continues. Mr. Hitchcock, in a review of the arts, points triumphantly to the fact that the little Humanistic education that has been carried on in the last decade has produced critics but not one major writer. Indeed, it has even, perhaps, blighted the fruitful talent of Mr. T. S. Eliot. Its increasing dominance would remove those of most promise from the artistic field. The classical method, another maintains, must, to have any force, be applied to a literature that has its values based on experience. The failure to observe this truth has resulted in another attitude.

> "Our critics.....maintain this peculiar cosmopolitan eclesticism partly because, not being creative minds, they do not appreciate, as the creative mind does, the necessary correspondence between expression and experience, even, if need be, the most limited, merely local, experience; and partly because by means of it they are able to prevent literature from coming into direct contact with a society whose acquisitive, non-creative programme it would immediately upset and destroy." (17)

The critics have less quarrel with the Humanist concerning aesthetics and its relation to ethics than on the previous point. The reason is, they seem to agree, that there is so little aesthetics to be found in Babbitt and More's work, so they expend their energies

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(17) Van Wyck Brooks, Letters and Leadership (New York: B.W.Huebsch,1918) p. 83.

rather on explaining the lack of it. Mr. Tate believes that Babbitt is not philosophical enough since he repudiates aesthetics as the trivial decoration of the moral doctrine. Tate declares that it is actually philosophy itself, and that Babbitt creates a false dilemma between externally imposed decoration and externally imposed morality. Spingarn recognizes Babbitt's aesthetic theory, but finds it corrupted by moralistic and intellectualistic errors, for example, his suspicion of the purely creative imagination. His conscious mediation between reason and imagination is merely a critical judgment and arrangement of external aspects; it

> "is to destroy the unity and so impoverish the reality of perception. The ethical and the rational must in short be perfected in the aesthetic consciousness." (18)

Mr. More is accused of lack of aesthetic perception, as in the significance of style, with the result that he has failed to understand most of the literature that he has read. Mr. More's criticism against for art for art's sake is viewed as no less rational than Mr. More's own tenet of morality for morality's sake.

What Mr. Fausset would substitute for the Humanistic theory is apparent from the above question. He seeks a true aesthetic spontaneity which

> "represents a vital and inward experience critically evolved and individualized." (19)

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(18) Hugh I'A Fausset, The Proving of Psyche, (London: J. Cape Ltd. 1929), p. 258

(19) Ibid., p. 210

In an article defending Santayana against Humanism, an American critic states,

> "Just here may a philosophy such as Santayana's through its despised materialism and aestheticism, supplement the work of the humanists. The American, having been disciplined, can well afford to acquire more repose, more tolerance, more grace." (20)

A large number of critics, however, are inclined to accept the Humanistic idea because they feel that America literature was weakened by the aestheticism of the previous school of critics.

This separation from experience, lack of creative understanding and aesthetic appreciation have, singly or together, formed most of the case against Babbitt and More's literary judgments. There is also the suggestion that they have substituted their own authority and personal distastes in the name of the established authority of others, Plato for example. They are accused by some of being subjective and romantic in their writings and interpretations; by others of icy scholasticism and Puritanism; Yvor Winters declares that there is very little in their work that could not be extracted in richer form from Matthew Arnold. One of their judgments which receives particular disparagement is that against Rousseau and Romanticism. In spite of the fact that no critic agrees with much of the Romantic philosophy, they dislike the Humanistic preoccupation with and antagonism to it. Mr. Hazlitt draws this conclusion:

> "....it is impossible to take Mr. Babbitt seriously as a thinker. His antagonism to Rousseau distorts all his

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(20)G.W. Howgate, "Santayana and Humanism", Sewanee Review, 43: 49-57 January, 1935.

> views, if it does not actually dictate most of them; it drives him to an opposite extreme; he is clearly the victim of 'the subservience of contradiction'." (21)

Romanticism was already dead when attacked by the Humanists, declares Lewis Mumford; it had been killed by a growing knowledge of society and the place of individual personality. Mr. Fausset is their chief adversary in this; his own philosophy is derived in spirit and temperament from the Romantic.

> "Indeed we may say that above the small fluctuations of fashion we cannot henceforth be ever again anything but romantic in spirit, and demand the same infinite aspiration, the same faith in evolutionary betterment, the same universal humanity of our poets, as was voiced amid much hasty error at the beginning of the last century. Romanticism has enlarged man's consciousness for good. We can never return to a poetry based upon narrow and privileged sympathies." (22)

However this preoccupation with the past is only one aspect of a much greater crime, in the eyes of the critics. Their neglect of contemporary literature, or scorn of the few writers they recognize, is their most serious shortcoming. Mr. More, for example, is limited by his dealing with second and third rate talents; also, he almost never attempts high and difficult subjects. The critics were angered by Mr. More's rejection of Don Passos' work, and one stated that,

> "If Don Passos had been a second-rate eighteenth-century essayist, Mr. More would know everything about him, political opinions and all---if he had been the humblest New England poet (of the seventeenth century, that is,) Mr. More would have read him through." (23)

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(21) Henry Hazlitt, "Humanism and Value", The Critique of Humanism, (New York: Brewer & Warren, Inc.1930) p. 94

(22) Hugh I'A Fausset, Studies in Idealism, p. 274

(23) Edmund Wilson, "Notes on Babbitt and More", The Critique of Humanism, p. 57.

And Mr. More's sharp criticism of James Joyce's Ulysses is met with an even more serious charge.

> "....and I will venture to say that the Humanists' high-handed habit of disposing jeeringly of contemporary writers whom they plainly haven't read is an even more serious scandal to their cause than their misrepresentation of the ancients, whom they have at least conscientiously studied." (24)

Mr. Blackmur explains their attitude as an inability to get inside them; that the Humanists have only a foreign, irrelevant discipline which acts in the way of a censorship, and which is unsuitable to the substance of moderns.

But their lack of appreciation for contemporary work is not confined to literature alone, but to new psychology or research. Mr. Wilson declares that he cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that

> "Mr. More's primary objection is to having anyone, either in science or in art, find out anything new, and I cannot explain this state of mind except on the hypothesis that Mr. More is really an old-fashioned Puritan who has lost the Puritan theology without having lost the Puritan dogmatism. Mr. More is more certainly than Professor Babbitt a man of some imagination; he is able to follow the thought of the modern world, as appears from his very intelligent and often sensitive expositions of the ideas of other writers (if they are not absolutely contemporaries)--but some iron inhibition always comes into play in the long to restrain Mr. More from agreeing with anything which he finds in modern philosophy or art." (25)

Not all the criticism of Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More is unfavourable. The former has been praised for his tenacity of purpose, his broad sweep of fundamentals and analysis of the contemporary scene; the latter for his profound thought, his sound prose style, and the

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(24) Ibid., p. 56.

(25) Ibid., p. 59

consistently high quality of his criticism. Yet, as a literary philosophy there are few hopes for its future. Mr. Hitchcock sees it as a snare, and a false, ready-made doctrine for the artist of to-day. It implies a loss of freedom recently won, and a renunciation which the artist should determine for himself. Yvor Winters sees beside Humanism a steady development in an organic, living criticism which Humanism cannot deal with. Besides, young writers are as unaware of Humanism as it is of them.

> "It is hardly likely therefore", he concludes, concerning the Humanists, "that they will exert any profound influence on the future of American letters." (26)

Foremost among criticisms of the Humanist social programme is that it is a defence of the privileged classes; that is, of the property-owning classes. Mr. More's statement that the right of property is more sacred than the right to life, was met with much protest. They accused him of preferring to see slave labour and starvation wages continue rather than see injury done to the private property of the man who has exploited the people. For this reason he is regarded as a capitalist.

> "And implicit in all his writings on social matters is the conviction that the desirable economic arrangement which will give us genuine justice and genuine civilization is the exploitive capitalism of late nineteenth-century America. It will be regulated only by the will to refrain; its leaders will be restrained by the inner check." (27)

Mr. Brooks declares that Mr. More's inability to feel human values finely is because to have done so would have upset his whole faith

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(26) Yvor Winters, "Poetry, Morality, and Criticism", Critique of Humanism, p. 324.

(27) Ibid., C.H. Grattan, "The New Humanism", p. 13.

in a society based upon the acquisitive instincts of men and ruled over by a natural aristocracy of economic power.

Yet this is one aspect of the whole situation, Mr. Fausset feels. There is also the Humanists' unconcern with the lot of the masses, which the discipline of an authoritative minority is not likely to improve. There is a lack of humility in his principle which would cause him to impose his social and economic principles upon the people, whose enemy he is at heart. His theory separates not only himself from society, but the various classes and groups from each other. He has opened up the old gulf between the manual and the mental worker, and in doing so has impoverished both. Mr. Fausset's own idea is contrary to this.

> "There is a false and a true belief in equality," he says, "The one submerges all degrees of human value in merely physical majority; the other recognizes that humanity is a whole, of which each individual is a varying but dependent unit with the same rights to a favourable environment for growth, and the same creative potentialities. Unequal in intellectual ability as the farm-labourer and the university professor may be, they share a common essence, which religion has called a soul, and which is of profounder value than the talents which differentiate them." (28)

Mr. Babbitt's humanism can never reconcile the split in society, because he respects only a certain kind of personality. As a superior "Humanist" he separates himself from the masses, and his theories reflect his individualistic viewpoint. It is his conservatism, Mr. Grattan believes, which makes him unwilling to face the important part of the problem---the modification of environment. The masses must be protected from the self-assertive individualism

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(28) Hugh I'A Fausset, The Proving of Psyche, p. 288.

of a few men whose desire for exploitation cannot be restrained by abstract moral precepts.

> "Instead of attempting to achieve a balance between the individual and the environment which, after all, is the true nature of the problem, he ignores the environment entirely and concentrates on the individual." (29)

Mr. Babbitt has made no attempt to better society, and to expect mere moralizing of egotistical impulses to solve the conflict between the will to power and the will to serve is uncertain or impossible, Mr. Fausset believes. He would solve the problem in a very different way, as the following paragraph explains.

> "But in a world which really respects every personality that is born into it, which appeals to and educates the creative instincts in an atmosphere in which virtue is expected, because it is regarded as natural, the will to power and the will to serve will be far more equally developed and hence the conflict between them will be far less acute and volcanic." (30)

Frank J. Mather was unfortunate enough to make the statement that

> "A few thousand genuine humanists in America would make our society humanistic;...." (31)

for which he has been taken severely to task by his critics. The idea that a few thousand humanists could in any way influence the vast economic machine of America, or remedy labour conditions, was to them the height of absurdity.

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(29) C.H. Grattan, "The New Humanism", Critique of Humanism, p. 7

(30) Fausset, op. cit. p. 300.

(31) Frank J. Mather Jr., "The Plight of our Arts", Humanism and America, p. 115

The consensus of opinion concerning Humanist social philosophy is summed up by Mr. Grattan:

> " The point here is that Humanistic values are derived from past formulations, and particularly from formulations arrived at in a primitive society where the authors could not conceivably imagine many of the most vital and complex problems of modern living." (32)

There is scarcely a murmur of protest against the criticism and plan of reconstruction of education set forth by Babbitt and More, except by those scientists who dislike the proposed curtailment of scientific studies in a curriculum. Mr. Babbitt's Literature and the American College is generally recognized as a valuable work in the field of education.

The dissension among the Humanists themselves has given their opponents fine weapons of criticism. Indeed it seems almost as if many specific arguments voiced by the critics were first advanced by Humanist writers. The attacks centre chiefly upon Babbitt and Foerster rather than on More, that is, on what the critics regard as the separation of man from religion or the supernatural. Mr. More, on the other hand, finds the completion of Humanism in religion, and so escapes much of the censure. There is very little mention made of More's work in The Greek Tradition, principally because it is beyond the grasp of the ordinary critic of letters. Instead there is a general attack on the religious aspect of Humanism as conceived by Mr. Babbitt.

There are several different criticms of Babbitt's attitude towards religion. To some it appears as the last struggle of

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(32) C.H. Grattan, "The New Humanism", p. 28.

Protestant theology, an attempt to revive a failing rationalistic religion. But T. S. Eliot raises the question of the purpose of such a revival. Why, he questions, should one strive to lift oneself out of rationalism, as Babbitt desires? To what ultimate purpose? If there is no goal beyond Humanism itself, it is an empty purpose. Mr. Grattan speaks of what he calls Babbitt's "dilemma".

> "He sees that Humanism, in spite of all protestations to the contrary, is not of this world. It is a technique for preparing man for the next -- a sort of substitute Christianity. But curiously enough, it tends to deny the next world." (33)

Many critics are puzzled by the fact that so powerful an intellect, so concerned with the specifically human in man, and so insistent that man is an infinite animal, should have so persistently shied away from the idea of God.

G. K. Chesterton, in an essay entitled "Is Humanism a Religion", (34) feels it necessary to answer in the negative. He believes that Humanism is doing valuable work in organizing the various divisions and concepts in life--what he calls "picking up the pieces"; but he questions the strength of what they use to stick the pieces together. T. S. Eliot shows his doubt when he questions the feasibility of Babbitt's Humanism, and whether it is durable beyond the influence of Christian teaching. He sees Humanism as merely a state of mind in a few persons at a few times, not as a continuous habit. For that reason its existence is dependent on some other attitude; it is critical, even parasitical; it can refine the taste but it can not save the soul.

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(33) Ibid., p. 4

(34) G.K.Chesterton, "Is Humanism a Religion?", The Criterion, VIII (April, 1929), 32.

A religious critic sums up the movement in this way:

> "While recommending religion, Professor Babbitt on the whole advocated leaving it alone in order to obtain an apparently more feasible humanistic level below it but above naturalism. Here his intellectual and moral preoccupations seem to have slightly obscured for him the fact that, even from an empirical point of view like his own, religion exercises at least as strong a sway over the minds and the hearts of mankind as any urbane secularism is likely to do. Dr. more when he stated that literary humanism is to be thought of less as a creative, self-subsistent force than as a means of directing and criticizing forces of that kind, and when he warned that, isolated from the realistic moral and religious faith that invigorates it, humanism would relapse into naturalism, probably estimated the character of the movement more justly." (35)

Mr. Eliot attacks Foerster's Humanism and America in the fear that Humanism will become a positive philosophy which will attempt to take the place of religious dogma. He declares that Mr. Foerster's Humanism is too ethical to be true and wonders where all his morals come from. Mr. Dakin believes the Humanists defend primarily the ethical standards of Plato and Aristotle, completed and refined by Christianity. Mr. Eliot believes their system of morals is founded on nothing but itself, and that one advantage of an orthodox religion is that it puts morals in their proper place. The Humanists all hold aloof from committal to religious doctrine. Mr. More urges acceptance of the Incarnation because without it there can be no religion, yet he leaves it to individual faith to decide. His own disciple, Robert Shafer, criticizes him for"tinkering"with the Apostles' Creed. The Humanists do not rely on dogma to obtain their ends, but on reason, science, ethics, art, and the

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(35) A.H. Dakin, Man the Measure (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 19.

beneficial features of religion, states Mr. Dakin; their aim is not the religious man, but character developed to meet a changing world.

The most active part in the controversy has been taken by Mr. T. S. Eliot who, in his earlier years, was a disciple of Babbitt and More. He may now be said to be neither on the Humanistic side of the fence nor on the religious side, but on top of it and looking on both sides. His two essays "Humanism without Religion" and "Religion without Humanism" are good indications of his personal attitude. In the former he shows how Humanism without a basis in religion is an empty doctrine. In the latter essay he writes:

> "But in the full and complete sense of the word, Humanism is something quite different from a part trying to pretend to be a whole, and something quite different from a "parasite" of religion. It can only be quite actual in the full realisation and balance of the disciplined intellectual and emotional life of man. For, as I have said, without humanism both religion and science tend to become other than themselves, and without religion and science--without emotional and intellectual discipline--humanism tends to shrink into an atrophied caricature of itself." (36)

Other critics who do not accept Humanism as a philosophy at all, see Humanism as a refuge for those who do not want the responsibility of defending a conventional dogmatic orthodoxy, and who want moral elevation without having recourse to the supernatural.

Mr. More's Humanism, on the other hand, pleads weakly for Anglo-Catholicism, or, if his rigid standards are followed to the letter, to the Church of Rome.

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(36) Thomas S. Eliot, Religion without Humanism", Humanism and America, p. 111.

Most interesting of all criticisms, because the most constructive, is Mr. Eliot's in his Selected Essays. As a critic interested in the possibilities and capabilities of Humanism rather than in its complete rejection, he is anxious to find a via media acceptable to both sides. He wishes to set forth the functions of "true Humanism" in the fear that those imposed upon it by zealots should cause its isolation from the sphere of influence in which it is most needed. He gives an eight-point programme(37) which expresses his whole theory and which appears to be a substitute for Mr. More's six tenets.

I. The function of humanism is not to provide dogmas or philosophical theories. Humanism is general culture, concerned less with reason than with common sense.

II. Humanism makes for breadth, tolerance, equilibrium and sanity. It operates against fanaticism.

III. "The world cannot get on without breadth, tolerance and sanity, any more than it can get on without narrowness, bigotry and fanaticism."

IV. The business of Humanism is not to refute but to persuade; it operates by taste, by sensibility trained by culture. It is critical rather than constructive. "It is necessary for the criticism of social life and social theories, political life and political theories.

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(37) Thomas S. Eliot, Second Thoughts about Humanism", Selected Essays (London: Faber & Faber, 1934), pp. 436-37

V. Humanism can have no positive theories about philosophy or theology; it can only question tolerantly whether a particular philosophy or religion is civilized.

VI. There is a type of person whom we call the Humanist, for whom humanism is enough. This type is valuable.

VII. "Humanism is valuable (a) by itself, in the 'pure humanist', who will not set up humanism as a substitute for philosophy and religion, and (b) as a mediating and corrective ingredient in a positive civilization founded on definite belief."

VIII. Humanism is valid for a very small minority of INDIVIDUALS. "But it is culture, not any subscription to a common programme or platform, which binds these individuals together."

This treatment would, of course, relegate Humanism to the position of an attitude rather than a philosophy, as G. R. Elliot calls it "a mere balance of mind." (38)

Many other critics of Humanism, while they do not actually state any such definite theory, would probably not be averse to tempering American life and culture with a slight measure of the Humanist "attitude".

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(38) G.R. Elliott, "The Pride of Modernity", Humanism and America, p.99.

CHAPTER V.

S U M M A R Y.

There is no doubt that the New Humanism is directly opposed to the modern mood. It opposes restraint and moderation to the lingering Romantic tendencies towards spontaneity and extremes. And whether or not it has won popularity as a philosophy, the general trend of the few years since Babbitt and More's death has been towards a more moderate, thoughtful manner of life. The world upheaval since 1936 seems almost prophetic of their warnings, and it may be that the obvious need for careful intelligent reconstruction is merely the shadow of a future humanistic outlook.

As a criticism of modern society, the New Humanism has missed practically nothing and has displayed remarkable keenness. The most obvious attribute is its common sense. More than one unfavourable criticism has been forced to admit this openly, and in spite of the limitations it entails, many younger critics seem to be in favour of common sense. It is inclusive to an extent that no critical philosophy of the twentieth century even attempted, and for this it well deserves the credit bestowed upon it for widening the critical field.

With a few exceptions it is admirably suited to the needs of the day. Babbitt saw the necessity for a working philosophy, for a down-to-earth programme that would be of use to the average man. In this it seems as if he had succeeded. In comparison with a

philosophy like Mr. Fausset's, which builds on vaguely spiritual or mystical unions between antagonistic divisions, it brings accomplishment nearer to hand. If the average man came no nearer to an understanding of the New Humanism than its definition of being "moderate and sensible and decent", or "avoiding extremes", he would have grasped a great deal. By following the whole humanistic argument one can realize its universal applicability to the troubling problems of modern civilization. There is nothing vague about the rules it establishes; and the manner in which they are fitted to the organized theory carries assurance of their working value. In his very enthusiastic commendation of Mr. Babbitt's ideas, an English critic writes,

> "When once its import is fairly grasped, its influence is like that of a new principle of classification in one of the descriptive sciences. New and natural lines of cleavage or affiliation at once appear, introducing order and interdependence into a mass of chaotic or misrelated facts. A simple criterion is put into the reader's hands, which he cannot help using, even though it mean the abandonment of secret loyalties and the dethronement of long-cherished idols." (1)

Most readers will agree with this sense of unity that comes with the reading of Babbitt's works.

Yet there are several criticisms and questions to consider before a too-thorough commendation is given. First, there is the criticism of its adaptability to only a cultured minority. If we recall Babbitt's statement that the future of civilization lay with "the saving remnant", rather than with a democratic average, we find part of the answer. It is aimed at the development of a class of

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(1) Philip S. Richards, "Irving Babbitt and a New Humanism", The Nineteenth Century, vol. ciii (April, 1928), pp.433-444

leaders; not that this refers to an economic class, but to one with a certain level of intelligence. There is much in it that any ordinary person would find of value, but it is chiefly directed towards an "intelligensia", to use a much misused word. It presupposes an ability and willingness to think. It foresees an age of equal educational opportunities for all, and attempts to provide a general philosophy capable of being used by those to whom it will be of greatest value. It covers the more important questionings of life--a deliberative philosophy.

There is the accusation that the New Humanism is austere and dogmatic. Both Babbitt and More seem somewhat austere in their views, it must be admitted. This has been attributed to their study of Eastern philosophy, especially Hindu philosophy, and it must be taken into account when weighing the emphasis on words like "discipline" and "restraint". One must also discount an over-emphasis for the sake of force, which is common to both Humanists and their opponents. Babbitt's style, and a sort of dogged repetition and insistence on certain points, give his philosophy a dogmatic air which might arouse antagonism in a reader. But the Humanists have been far busier with "aggressive protest", as Mr. More says, than with dogmatism. The two are easily confused. A great deal would depend on how rigidly its principles were adapted to the individual. Such restrictions as the "inner check" would necessarily enforce on one individual might be far less irksome to him than to another. The degree of Humanism adopted would vary greatly, and would even determine

the pseudo-humanist from the pure humanist. Too much emphasis on discipline is repugnant to more liberal temperaments, and there seems to be some cause for protest.

Mr. T. S. Eliot's suggestion that Humanism be treated as an attitude, and that it be denied any formal body of doctrine, is to force it at once into obscurity. Only by its forceful presentation and competent organization has it had a voice against the modern trend; without this it could not survive.

The basic argument of Humanism has scarcely been touched by the anti-critics. As Mr. More stated, once deny dualism and there is no common ground with the Humanists. This psychological or philosophical theory seems to make the question a purely personal one, but the Humanists are backed by experience, history, great art and religion. Mr. Fausset's philosophy is an interesting contrast because it is monistic; this monism also seems the source of its weakness. Humanism, in spite of the fact that it promises no healing of troublesome divisions between man and nature, or man and the spiritual, or no easy solution of problems by a synthetic unity, seems more dependable. As Babbitt pointed out, its lack of "short cuts" is the secret of its unpopularity. There is a deep psychological understanding of human nature in the Humanism of Babbitt and More that cannot fail to impress the reader, reflections of one's own mind that give food for thought. This is particularly striking in their analysis of the moral nature of man.

A serious consideration is whether or not Humanism is too moralistic and therefore negative in its action. In its general aspect Humanism is a moralistic philosophy, rather than an aesthetic one. The Humanists emphasize morality, sometimes at the expense of imagination, and Babbitt states that he has stressed ethics because he believes that in this lies the solution to man's problems. Those who do not agree with this principle are apt to lose patience with its reiteration. Those who do agree with him find an understanding of the moral problem that may well deny the criticism of being contrary to experience.

It is a favourite habit of the opposition to see only the intellectual side of Babbitt's philosophy. He has emphasized the spiritual aspect of the higher will which gives it a wider scope and influence than allotted it by the critics, but they prefer to regard it as purely arbitrary. When discussing Babbitt's use of tradition, they also neglect his insistence on a modernized tradition, a "positive and critical one", which differentiates it from the static tradition implied or stated in their criticism.

While the critics demand a positive morality rather than a negative one, they give no constructive means, and offer nothing to take the place of discipline, restraint or decorum. They would develop a creative morality, yet they fail to state how they would go about it. To the inclusion of humility as a philosophical factor they have little reply. Not only is it an innovation in modern philosophy, but it is an unquestionably good principle. The critics can only grumble at not having stated it first.

The greatest natural argument for humanism is that the average mature personality tends towards a Humanistic attitude to life rather than to any other. In the way of adjustment he learns to take on limitations and to restrict his desires because he finds that contact with people demands it. Such adjustments are not the"fixations of senility", as Lewis Mumford calls them; they are natural developments of the mature intellect, in which mediation, voluntary or unconscious, becomes part of a growing wisdom.

A survey of the critic's arguments against Humanism reveals an ironical reversal of the charges. The outstanding impression gained is that the critics are dogmatically sure only of what they do not want, and that in these preconceived rejections is the answer to much of their criticism of Humanism. They start off with a series of deeply-felt, negative prejudices, for which, to be sure, there are some just reasons, but when carried to extremes, injure more than they remedy. To name three, they are anti-Puritan, anti-European, and anti-academic. Anyone interested in the cultural life can readily acknowledge the blighting effect which Puritanism had on America for so many years, and practically no one would be in favour of its re-establishment. But to classify a whole philosophy as Puritanical because it speaks of restraint, is to carry the term to an extreme of derogatory criticism.

It is amazing to a reader, on a first introduction to American criticism, to find a nationalism so strong that it is

determined to free itself of anything un-American, even the influences brought from Europe by its own settlers. Mr. Babbitt, in particular, is the recipient of this criticism. His years as student in France, the critics believe, cause him to attempt the grafting of French culture on to American society. The whole history of the spread of culture is this contact between different ways of life and thought. Especially at the present time, a purely American culture is a wild vision, and to discard everything foreign in origin is to lose much of value which Europe might donate. The feeling against tradition has the same cause behind it, and the belief that the old traditions hold nothing of value for the new America.

The critics' constant suspicion of anything "academic", as in reference to Babbitt and More, reveals another of their prejudices. There has always been this contempt of the creative writer for the academic man, especially the academic critic, and Babbitt and More are both. To add to this, both were actually professors, and naturally enough their work, and especially their great learning, bears the stamp of the university. Their opposition to the trend set by the creative writers is the source of the complaint of snobbism which usually accompanies that of academicism. The critics would have done well in this case to have let this argument alone; it smacks of professional jealousy. And it is a peculiar frame of mind that will continuously disqualify a writer because he is connected with a university. On the whole, it is no wonder that the critics find Babbitt's "cosmopolitan eclecticism" so puzzling.

For their battle against irresponsibility, Babbitt and More deserve a great deal of credit, and few critics deny them this. Their criticism is very thorough, and few demonstrations of irresponsibility escape their notice. Mr. Shafer declares,

> "Hence to say that a man has boldly struck at the irresponsible elements in our society, and at the forces making for their growth, as Professor Babbitt and Mr. More have struck at them, is the most honourable thing that can be said of any man who plays any part in our affairs." (2)

He suggests that it is this very effort on the part of the critics to shirk responsibility that is behind their excited opposition to Babbitt and More. Mr. Lewisohn has perhaps stated the trouble more correctly when he declared that the younger critics knew Babbitt did not mean self-restraint and self-control, but uncritical subordination, a loss of freedom, in other words. In one sense they are right; if freedom means licence, as Babbitt sees it has come to mean, then Humanism is against it. To weigh the case between them, the Humanists might occasionally be accused of intolerance in their judgments of irresponsible elements, but freedom in the Humanistic sense leaves ample scope for the capabilities of any critic.

The rôle which the Humanists have assigned to science in modern life is less important than it deserves. When considering that it is a new problem, that it has no roots in tradition to help in its adjustment to society, one realizes that the Humanists have dismissed it far too summarily. Granted that science cannot teach us how to live in harmony, or settle our moral problems for us, but it has revolutionized many old methods of living and created many

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(2) Robert Shafer, Paul Elmer More and American Criticism, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p.225.

new ones. Its effect on the individual, necessitating new adjustments in thought and action, creates a larger problem than the Humanists make allowance for in their scheme of things. There is a subtle change in attitude caused by scientific industrialism and scientific thinking, and a preoccupation of those who deal with them, that cannot be done away with by merely relegating science to an inferior position. The critics who would build society around science are going to the opposite extreme, but Humanism should concern itself more broadly with this growing force.

Compared with the general run of American critics, the ideas of Babbitt and More seem mature and broad. While one may find amusement in Mencken's clever, biting sarcasm, Rebecca West's stinging taunts, and the occasional well-phrased jibes of other critics, one is soon faced with the feeling that their ideas are small, often childish, and reveal their own limitations rather than those of their opponents. Only those critics who have their own definite ideas to oppose to the Humanists are content with straight criticism --- Van Wyck Brooks, T. S. Eliot, Spingarn, and Fausset, for example. The rest do not oppose very serious arguments to the cause of Humanism.

As essayists Babbitt and More receive a great variety of criticisms. Babbitt's Masters of Modern French Criticism is undoubtedly his best work, but unfortunately its merits are overlooked in the attacks on his Rousseau and Romanticism. More's Shelburne Essays are regarded by some as the finest critical work in American

literature. Their range is amazing, and the keen insight into each author's life and work leaves an impression of thoroughness and understanding. Mr. More has a charm of style, a smoothness that Mr. Babbitt lacks, but the latter makes up in force what he lacks in finish. With a blunt directness and continuous insistence on precepts which have not varied since his earliest essays, he inspires a confidence in his convictions that cannot fail to impress his readers. His tenacity also leaves him open to the charges of intolerance and unprogressiveness.

Both writers tend to emphasize an author's faults, rather than his virtues. Mr. More's easays on Walter Pater and Wordsworth are notable examples for which he has been criticized more or less justly; they have proved too much of a temptation as expositions of the faults he wishes to stress as unfavourable. Babbitt's attack on Rousseau, as has been stated earlier, is clearly overdone. To attribute all the evils of modern society to one man's influence is not only intolerant but incorrect. And here Mr. Fausset's judgment of Rousseau makes an interesting study in comparison. Both he and Babbitt are aiming at the same goal, the adjustment of the individual to society; both criticize Romanticism for its failure to further this end, yet their means are widely different. While Babbitt looks for attainment through direct opposites to their weaknesses, Fausset seeks it in a purified and corrected Romanticism. Each could profit by borrowing from the other's ideas. Fausset is probably more correct

in believing that the Romantic spirit will continue to colour our lives, and Babbitt errs in failing to give credit to the emotional and imaginative qualities displayed by Romanticism in its less violent manifestations.

Babbitt and More justly denounce a weak and over-sympathetic criticism, and their ideas of the critic's function is a much-needed and valuable piece of work. The trend in modern commercialized criticism is less towards criticism and more towards salesmanship. It is to be hoped that the Humanists' teachings bear fruit in this sphere of literature.

Another criticism which should be refuted is that both leaders are uncreative and therefore cannot understand the creative process. Not one of these critics has defined what he means by "uncreative". If he means that neither has written a great poem, novel, or drama, there is some truth in the accusation. Yet he still would have neglected a large body of essays and all of Mr. More's Greek Tradition. Both men have covered ground that the ordinary critic usually does not touch; their work may be regarded as creative criticism. As James Adams points out, Babbitt has created standards which may, or may not, prevail in critical literature. There is some cause, on the other hand, for believing that the Humanists do not completely understand the creative process, or the artist in action. To apply strict moderation and self-restraint to the artist indiscriminately is rather an inflexible rule. It seems out of place when applied to the truly great, the exceptional artist, a Da Vinci, or a Dante.

And it is true that the more artistic genius a man possesses, the more he creates his own standards, or perceives limits through his own insight rather than that of a critic. The via media is more suited to the lesser, self-conscious artist who is unable to formulate a self-limiting theory of his own.

There seems to be a good deal of confusion over Babbitt and More's evaluations of art, and this is responsible for equally confused opinion of their artistic appreciation. They aim at the highest quality of art, and state that it has been achieved by very few men. The critics are inclined to feel that a philosophy so exclusive that it can approve of no more than a dozen men in all history, is not applicable to the modern artist. It is not that Babbitt and More reject all art which does not reach these standards, but they measure its value by its nearness of approach to them in the Humanistic scale. More especially has insisted that

> "....one of the functions of criticism is to set forth and so far as possible rescue from oblivion the inexhaustible entertainment of the lesser writers." (3)

One could scarcely call their broad choice of subjects "exclusive". And whether humanistic values are found in great or lesser writers, or whether they occur in the culture of ancient Greece, or seventeenth-century France, their universality only strengthens their significance. The impression of consistency they convey arouses more confidence than any other argument.

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(3) Paul Elmer More, "Shelley", Shelburne Essays, vol.vii., p. 26

To evade this significance by saying that Babbitt and More deliberately ignore modern writers or to pass them over as unworthy of notice, while it may seem to carry some weight, really fails to alter the situation. Babbitt and More, and their critics, do not actually see things in the same plane. The former see literature in its complete historical setting, while the latter see it from the point of view of the American scene. What "modern" means to Babbitt and More seems to mean a much smaller space of time to their critics. With a grasp of two cultures, Eastern, and Western, their critical disinterestedness may easily be interpreted as lack of interest. Yet one is apt to believe that Mr. More, particularly, may have deliberately evaded the contemporary scene. In one essay he speaks of "...that essentially American trait --- contemporaneity"(4), with obvious disparagement. There are few critics who will not credit them with accomplishing what they set out to do,-- to lift American criticism out of its provincialism. It would also not be out of place to suggest that the modern writers were not a little piqued at being passed over for Greeks and Romanticists.

In collecting and judging Babbitt's and More's various theories of art, there is, one feels, something not quite artistic enough, some lack of completeness or fullness. Yet an examination of the various principles shows little that can be directly criticized. Each critic of art has expressed this dissatisfaction in various terms, but the essence of it is that Babbitt and More imply a

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(4) Ibid., vol. iv. p. 152

suspicion of the creative imagination. This suspicion exercises a cautious withholding from a wider sympathy, and a tendency to think of their principles first and their appreciation afterwards, as if the spiritual and emotional quality of their insight were deliberately suppressed for the intellectual. At times it makes Babbitt's criticism of painting almost prosaic. Mr. More, who has felt the influence of Romanticism more strongly, shows it to a much smaller degree. It is not surprising that a too-stringent criticism of Romantic excesses should cause them to omit this chiefly Romantic quality in their own philosophy.

The Humanist's social philosophy is more concerned with general principles than with specific remedies. It is a correction of the values which are the basis of modern social programmes. It is difficult to find fault with the Humanistic values, for example, their strong argument for the creation of a natural aristocracy, the integrity of their justice, and foundation of future progress in sound educational principles. There is honest realism and a sincere concern for social betterment that denies any accusation of deliberate lack of feeling for the masses. One may truly say that they are above such partisanship. But their philosophy leaves gaps that are not easily accounted for. To charge them with lack of contact with life seems almost paradoxical when, as most critics agree, they show such penetrating insight into the evils of the times. Yet, as several critics have pointed out, while they emphasize the duties of

the individual, they omit the environmental factor altogether. One wonders whether they do not put too much trust in the "will to refrain". It seems doubtful whether the "magnanimity of the strong" is a dependable factor in the individual, or at least whether it would have any greater effect than his desire for "the brotherhood of man". There have been enough illustrations of this in the past ten years to convince most people that the will to refrain without social legislation to enforce it is unsure and too easily corrupted.

More, in his defence of property, while he is correct in emphasizing it as necessary to the future of civilization, carries his idea too far when he would defend it to the detriment of the people's social welfare. When property becomes a means of exploitation it is not entitled to any defence, for instead of fulfilling its purpose as an aid to civilization, it becomes a hindrance to the natural rights and justices of mankind.

The Humanists' attack against humanitarianism is also too stringent. They expose with righteous indignation the weaknesses and sentimental extremes of humanitarianism, but they give only half-hearted praise to the good work it has accomplished. No one will deny that disinterested justice, rather than haphazard humanitarianism, is the proper method of administration, but often where justice has failed to provide more than a superficial remedy, humanitarian sympathy and aid have been effective. One may say that a balanced humanitarianism should be companion to justice. A very recent incident has upheld

More's theory that the lawgiver's work is one of mediation. In labour disputes, when mediation seemed impossible, the government appointed a group of men to form a mediation board, with instant success. Perhaps "a few thousand genuine humanists" in our society may yet prove Mr. Mather's statement not entirely wrong.

In spite of its omissions, there is sane, conservative, yet realistic fact in social Humanism. Their strongest point is the concentration upon the individual rather than the group, a factor all too patently neglected in modern sociology. The same principle has doomed their philosophy to be slow-working, unpopular, and difficult. Yet it is the surest way. It does not put its trust in vague "unions" or harmonies, as a bridge between antagonisms. It demands the teaching of duties rather than rights, of true liberty which entails obligations, and depends upon leadership rather than unorganized individualism.

Mr. More does not seem to put much faith in the ability of improved social conditions to cure a discontented society. He advises, and rightly, that man cultivate immaterial values which are within his reach whatever his material position may be. Nevertheless a certain measure of material security is necessary to the pursuit of immaterial values; not every person has the happy faculty of being cheerful though half-starved.

Like the majority of critics of Humanism, one leaves the work of criticizing Mr. More's theology in The Greek Tradition to the Greek

scholar and theologist. A general understanding of his position can be gained from The Catholic Faith and Platonism. The argument between Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More seems to weigh more heavily in the latter's favour. While admitting that there is a minority of highly rationalistic people to whom pure Humanism is acceptable, one realizes with his critics that Mr. More's adherence to a modified dogmatic religion and an authoritative church is more closely adaptable to the innately religious man. There is a wide scope within his religious philosophy for personal adjustment. How much or how little one accepts of his personal interpretations, as of the Creeds, is a matter for faith to decide; they are not dogmatic. To the ordinary reader interested in such discussions they are a most valuable aid in clarifying his position.

Babbitt's philosophy, as far as it goes, has been greatly misrepresented, and does not deserve the angry attacks made upon it. There is no doubt that Mr. Babbitt's personal religious faith went beyond what he has prescribed for the pure Humanist, but whether he refrained from expressing it because it was entirely personal, or whether he limited himself because he saw the necessity for just such a philosophy as he formulated, is difficult to say. He was trying, as he said, to define a philosophy less powerful than a purely religious one, which would be acceptable to the modern man whose rationalism will not permit him to accept dogmatic and revealed religion.

The critics have accused him of trying to revive Protestantism,

or to find a substitute for Christianity. The former accusation does not agree with Babbitt's denunciation of Protestantism and his statement that perhaps Catholicism was the only church which could save Christianity. Babbitt has insisted that his Humanism was not a substitute for Christianity, yet even his own followers have sometimes ignored this. Mr. Eliot questions, rightly, whether Humanism is durable beyond the influence of Christian teaching, and from a study of his thorough criticism, one concedes that Humanism is not a theology in competition with Christian doctrine but a conclusion drawn by the mature rationalist concerning his religious beliefs. It is not enough to define it as a temporary state of mind; the growing number of people who, without being aware of Humanism have actually arrived at that conclusion for themselves, has shown that there was need to gather such theories together into a coherent philosophy. In the church's present weakness Humanism may prove a saving influence until people renew their faith in a strengthened Christianity.

Humanism would at least make the most of human capabilities; it demands a high standard of right thinking and action, and may lead to a truly spiritual culmination. It seems doubly satisfactory when contrasted with Fausset's philosophy in which the awakening of the religious spirit depends upon a withdrawal from the surface interests of life and a quiet waiting for the inspiration of the "Inner Light", which T. S. Eliot calls the most untrustworthy and

deceitful guide that ever offered itself to wandering humanity. Humanism's greatest danger is that it will always be a refuge for those who are too mentally lazy to think for themselves or too worldly to grasp its spiritual significance.

The concluding question concerns the status of the new Humanism; should it be regarded as a valid philosophy, or only as general culture whose duty it is to question tolerantly and be critical rather than constructive. Humanism, in this reader's opinion, is a philosophy mainly concerned with the cultural aspects of society; it may criticize or it may question tolerantly, but it will, in either case, be constructive. The chief argument against the opponents of Humanism is that they had nothing to replace what they would discard. To err in the same way would be to deserve the charge of being negative, and to allow Humanism only temporary worth or merit.

For the man seriously concerned with the highest standards and true values of living, a Humanistic philosophy may prove a rule or pattern for growth; the real worth of Humanism will be found in its principles flexibly and intelligently applied to individual needs. The true modern will give more breadth to the rôle of science; the true artist will temper its austerity with those finer emotional and imaginative qualities inherent in Romanticism, and the average man will endow it with the kindly geniality which it is apt to overlook in its concern over the troubles of humanity. In this way the future of Humanism as an independent philosophy may yet be assured a consistently important and influential position.

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