

why we behave like inhuman beings

by EDWARD L. BERNAYS

ONCE upon a time—long, long ago in the fabulous 1920's—a noted American anthropologist, George Amos Dorsey, wrote a best-seller, *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*.

This appeared in the Coolidge Era, when the future looked boundlessly bright.

The old American dream of rags to riches, log cabin to White House, was still going strong. Elbert Hubbard's *Message to Garcia* still inspired high school boys with the conviction that, if you let nothing stop you in the competitive obstacle race of our time, you were bound to reach the glittering goal of Success.

This sublime assurance pervaded even the highest levels. From Washington, D. C., there emerged on history's horizon the shining promise of the Kellogg Pact, signed by the many nations which solemnly agreed to outlaw war and establish permanent world-wide peace. In this happy age men appeared to be quite human.

World War I opened an epoch without precedent in history. Now, for over three decades, humanity

has been rent asunder by conflict.

For all its advanced democratic way of life, America has not wholly escaped the nightmare upheavals of this century. We have known depression, war, strikes, lynching, race riots, religious and racial bigotry, juvenile delinquency, increased divorce rates. And there has been an alarming rise in mental illness, the last desperate refuge of the acutely maladjusted from the tensions of an age which opened with a pistol shot at Sarajevo and ended its first act with the explosion of the atom bomb at Hiroshima. And so the current question is not why we behave like human beings, but why we behave like *inhuman* beings.

THE pioneer discoveries of the nineteenth century science encouraged the belief that man's unbroken progress and freedom lay wholly in mastering the physical world. Today, when the physical sciences have perfected aircraft that travel at the speed of sound, and promise to release us from the control of gravitation, the material conquest

of nature is at the highest peak in history. Yet the world is aflame with conflict rendered all the more violent and devastating by the inventions of science.

This has altered the emphasis of science itself. It is not surprising that religious conferences should call for moral regeneration as man's last best hope on earth. Nor is it surprising that a congress of the world's leading psychiatrists, meeting in London, should urge the study and control of man's nature, especially his aggressive impulses, as the major solution of the twentieth century crisis.

The key problem of the twentieth century is one of human relations. The continued triumphs of physics, chemistry, and biology are taken for granted. But if we want to know why, in the midst of these triumphs of mind over matter, we continue to behave like *inhuman* beings and how, in spite of everything, we can learn to behave like *human* beings, we must turn to the new sciences which have begun their real development only in the past 30 years—anthropology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and sociology.

This makes me feel somewhat at home, because my uncle, Sigmund Freud, pointed out long ago that the solution of most of our problems lies in following out scientifically Socrates' famous injunction: *Know thyself!* Today it is recognized psychiatric treatment for the maladjusted to cure themselves by knowing themselves. Since man as a whole seems to

be maladjusted to the new conditions imposed by the twentieth century, this technique is being applied to man as a whole.

In their attempt to discover why we behave as we do, the sciences are probing the nature of man from various angles. Physiologically, the human being is the way his body works; psychologically, the way his mind works; sociologically, the way he functions in groups; biologically, the ways he reacts to heredity and environment; pedagogically, the way he is formed by early and adult education; economically, as the beneficiary or the victim of our mass production system. By exploring these phases of everybody's behavior, we may come up with answers which may explain some mysteries of human nature and conduct. This fundamental knowledge may help us find the way to better social adjustment.

Recently there has been a great deal of discussion among scientists about man's aggressive impulses. Dr. Thomas Nixon Carver of Harvard has classified aggressive forms of conduct as destructive, deceptive, and persuasive.

Destructive forms include war, robbery, duelling, murder, and brawling; deceptive forms are thieving, swindling, adulteration of goods, false advertising; persuasive aggression involves political, erotic, commercial, and legal attacks upon others. No matter how we classify it, aggression always seeks to bring injury or death to others; and these

days the question, "Why do we behave like inhuman beings?" has become "Why do we behave *aggressively*?"

Civilization begins with man's renunciation and sublimation of jungle impulses. Family and social life are impossible unless men curb their primitive sex and aggressive instincts. Even the most primitive societies prohibit incest, robbery, and murder. When these prohibitions break down, we get anarchy. When they are abandoned by a despotic ruling élite, we get a totalitarian state with the law of jungle imposed on a helpless slave population. On the other hand, when the repression of primitive impulses is carried too far, we get first hypocrisy, then widespread frustration and neurosis. Modern science is looking for the factors in man which can make for balanced individuals and a balanced society which recognizes the force of man's primitive impulses and converts them into a source of creative power; or at least mitigates their destructiveness.

MORE and more the modern psychiatrist tends to relate the contemporary crisis to our early childhood experience in the family and society. Civilization requires that each of us adjust himself to social living. When faulty upbringing or makeup prevents us from making this necessary adjustment, we behave like inhuman beings.

When we come into the world as children, our impulses are those of

primitive creatures struggling for survival in the primitive animal world. The psychological problems of childhood revolve around the need for becoming socially adjusted to family, community, country, and world. All education and training—at home, school, and church—is directed toward curbing the primitive impulses, especially those of aggression with which we are born, and redirecting them to social ends.

But those who bring us up, above all our parents, are not always aware that if their attempts to civilize us are indifferent, ignorant, or brutal, if they fail to take into account the particular needs of our developing personality, we may become frustrated. Creative redirection of the child's primitive impulses is one thing; the suppression which comes from lack of love and understanding quite another.

Man lives not by bread alone, the Bible tells us. The child, father of the man, needs love. He needs to feel that he is accepted and cherished by his family and community. If he is rejected—above all *unjustly* rejected—the iron enters his soul and he becomes embittered, vindictive, and aggressive.

Anatole France once said that Napoleon overran the world with blood because he was a failure in his own tent; and modern psychologists have found that the men who murdered millions in concentration camps were seeking scapegoats for the forgotten suffering of their childhood.

It is, we have discovered to our cost, only too easy for the psychological monster with a flair for leadership to promise a heaven of security and victory on earth, and thus rouse primitive impulses of aggression in millions of frustrated people.

Another reason why we behave like inhuman beings is sociological. We live in a highly competitive society. Our behavior in this society is predicated on jungle rules of survival.

It is true, as many of our wisest social scientists point out, that environment is a far more powerful factor in shaping our behavior than heredity. For the most part, we are what our surroundings make us. Each of us has to learn in his own lifetime the entire heritage of the race in our particular civilization.

Some individuals absorb these patterns more quickly and easily than others. Some have little or no capacity to absorb them. These regress easily to the primitive folkways of the jungle which are part of our unconscious heritage.

Another factor in our environment which makes this regression possible is that of the two billion inhabitants of the world, one-half are still illiterate. They are easy prey for distortion and superstition. Instead of being guided by knowledge and understanding, they are driven by the most primitive fears and hopes.

ALL these factors which make us behave like inhuman beings are augmented by the great paradox

of the twentieth century. We have made fabulous progress in technology without comparable progress in ability to handle human relations.

We can make the atom bomb, but do not know how to control it socially so that it does not annihilate most of mankind.

We can press a button and start a TVA powerhouse, yet cannot prevent race riots caused by ignorance, misunderstanding, and prejudice.

And though we know perfectly well how fatal another armed conflict may be for the whole of civilization, there has never been so much talk of war as now, only a few years after two wars to end all war.

It is a sign of the times that Dr. Carl Binger of Cornell University, addressing the recent International Mental Health Congress in London, urged statesmen and politicians, who would not think of waging war without the help of scientists, to give scientists a hearing on how to prevent wars. Doctor Binger confirmed Freud's thesis that wars result from man's aggressive instincts, and he equated war with ailments having no single cause, but several causes, all contributing to the final catastrophe.

Thus science, with its modern equipment of experiment and method, is seeking to solve the problem of inhuman behavior through greater and greater knowledge of man and the world in which he lives. The key to our liberation from our jungle heritage of force and fraud lies in accelerated self-understanding.

BEST

magazine articles

OF THE YEAR

selected by the leading editors of the nation

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT SEX CRIMES? . . . SATURDAY EVENING POST

WE CAN MAKE CHILDBIRTH SAFER LADIES HOME JOURNAL

WORLD REVOLUTION, AMERICAN PLAN HARPER'S

WHY WE BEHAVE LIKE INHUMAN BEINGS HOUSEHOLD

LOU BOUDREAU: LAST OF THE BOY MANAGERS SPORT

END OF A BOY'S LIFE MCCALL'S

—and 23 other outstanding articles from Fortune, The New Yorker, Colliers, Pageant, Changing Times, American Home, Liberty, Argosy, The Progressive, Nature, Chatelaine, Charm, Survey, N. Y. Times, Christian Herald, Rotarian, The Woman, Nat'l Home Monthly, Woman's Day, Holland's, Everybody's, This Week, Pathfinder.

FULL TABLE OF CONTENTS ON PAGE 2

25c

HEALTH

HUMOR

SCIENCE

POLITICS

CRIME

BUSINESS

FAMILY

PEOPLE

SPORTS

NATURE

RELIGION

SOCIAL

PROBLEMS

A *Free* COPY... to new members of the Book-of-the-Month Club

AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE VALUABLE BOOK-DIVIDENDS YOU WILL REGULARLY RECEIVE

THE AMERICAN GUIDE

RETAIL PRICE \$7.50

• 1376 PAGES

• 40 PAGES OF MAPS

THE ONLY COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE UNITED STATES . . . 100,000

Points of Interest Included. TAKE IT WHEREVER YOU TRAVEL . . . CONSULT IT ALWAYS FOR WHERE TO GO . . . HOW TO GO . . . WHAT TO

LOOK FOR Here is a great volume, indispensable for anyone who ever travels through the United States. The land is divided into eight regions, with an overall description of each one, giving the outstanding historical, geographical, cultural and economic facts about each. Transcontinental tours, connecting these various regions, are laid out and described. Then literally hundreds of tours, to all points of interest within each region, are given in detail . . . Most travelers overlook far more than they see, just because they don't know what to look for. In this great book—wherever you go in the land—all that you would want to know and would want to see is told about.



OVER \$40,000,000 WORTH OF BOOKS LIKE THIS (RETAIL VALUE) WERE DISTRIBUTED FREE AMONG MEMBERS OVER THE PAST 3 YEARS. YET DURING THIS PERIOD MEMBERS PAID ROUGHLY 23% LESS FOR THE BOOKS THEY BOUGHT THAN THEY OTHERWISE WOULD . . . How Can This Be Done?

It is a striking example—in the field of books—of the economies that can be effected for consumers by quantity production. Club members are never obliged to buy the Book-of-the-Month® (see inside), but so many do each month that very large editions can be printed. The saving makes it possible for the Club usually to sell the book itself at a lower-than-retail-price to members. But, in addition, a fixed percentage of the total amount members pay is set aside and "invested" in other large editions of books, and these so-called "Book-Dividends" are given to those members who earn them by their purchases.

FIRST CLASS
Permit No. 419
(Sec. 510 PL&R)
New York, N. Y.

BUSINESS REPLY CARD

(No Postage Stamp Necessary if Mailed in the United States)

4c POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY

BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB, INC.

385 MADISON AVENUE

NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

Continued on
inside cover

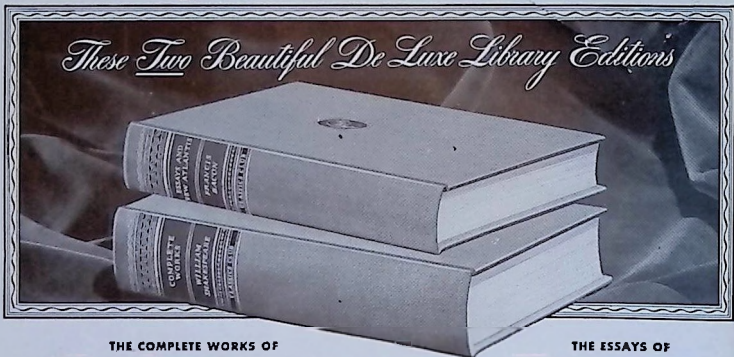
TEAR OUT
AND
MAIL
POST CARD

See Other
Side

BOTH *Free*
TO NEW MEMBERS

...WALTER J. BLACK, PRESIDENT OF THE CLASSICS CLUB,
INVITES YOU TO ACCEPT FREE

These Two Beautiful De Luxe Library Editions



THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

THE ESSAYS OF

Shakespeare and Bacon

*All 37 Plays • Comedies, Tragedies,
Histories and Poems*

EVERY word of Shakespeare—every delightful comedy, stirring tragedy, thrilling historical play; every lovely poem and sonnet—yours *complete* in this beautiful 1312-page volume. So deep did Shakespeare see into the hearts of all of us that he is more alive today than he was over three hundred years ago!

*On Love, Truth, Friendship, Riches
and 54 Other Fascinating Subjects*

SIR FRANCIS BACON'S surpassing intellect laid the groundwork of science and philosophy for generations. Anyone in search of a practical philosophy of life can do no better than to read these immortal essays. Both these De Luxe volumes—Shakespeare and Bacon—are now yours *free*, as membership gifts from the Classics Club.

Why the Classics Club Offers You These 2 Books Free

WILL you accept these two volumes as membership gifts from the Classics Club? You are invited to join today... and to receive on approval beautiful editions of the world's greatest masterpieces.

Why Are Great Books Called "Classics"?

A true "classic" is a living book that will never grow old. For sheer fascination it can rival the most thrilling novel. Why have the truly great books become "classics"? Because they would not have lived unless they were read; they would not have been read unless they were interesting. To be interesting they had to be easy to understand. And those are the qualities characterizing Classics Club selections: readability, interest, simplicity.

A Trial Membership Invitation to You

Will you accept a Trial Membership? With your first book will come an advance notice about future selections. You reject any book you do not wish. You take only the ones you want. No money in advance; no membership fees. You may cancel membership any time.

Mail this Invitation Form now. Publishing costs are rising. This low price—and your FREE copies of SHAKESPEARE and BACON'S ESSAYS—cannot be assured unless you respond promptly. THE CLASSICS CLUB, One Park Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

Walter J. Black, President
THE CLASSICS CLUB
One Park Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

TR

Please enroll me as a Trial Member and send me, FREE, the beautiful 2-volume De Luxe Classics Club Editions of The Complete Works of SHAKESPEARE and BACON'S ESSAYS, together with the current selection.

I am not obligated to take any specific number of books and I am to receive an advance description of future selections. Also, I may reject any volume before or after I receive it, and I may cancel my membership any time.

For each volume I decide to keep I will send you \$2.89, plus a few cents mailing charges. (Books shipped in U.S.A. only.)

Mr. }
Mrs. }
Miss } (Please Print Plainly)

Address Zone No.

City..... (if any) State.....

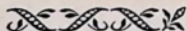
BEST MAGAZINE ARTICLES OF THE YEAR

FOREWORD

Nowhere in the world has magazine journalism been perfected as it has in the United States. At its best, our factual periodical literature is highly informative, painstakingly accurate, clear and sound in its interpretation and often as entertaining as good fiction. For the American public, unquestionably the best-informed of any people, has developed a craving for knowledge on every conceivable subject—a craving that is being satisfied each week, each month, through our periodicals.

This annual anthology represents an effort to gather within one volume the most noteworthy articles published in the United States and Canada between July, 1948 and June, 1949. The editors of every leading magazine were invited to nominate at least three articles they had published during the year which they considered their "best" from the standpoint of significance, originality and good writing. Our final selection was made from this group of candidates. In four instances, magazine editors (some of whom felt that *all* the articles they published were good) declined to submit their own nominations. They preferred to have us make the difficult choice.

—Tom Farrell
Theodore Irwin
Editors



W. J. SMITH PUBLISHING CORP.
NEW YORK

Copyright 1949 by W.J. Smith Publishing Corp. Copyright under International
Copyright Convention and Pan American Copyright Conventions.

CONTENTS

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- What Can We Do About Sex Crimes? by David Wittels.....
 *Saturday Evening Post* 4

BUSINESS

- Business Is Still in Trouble..... *Fortune* 12

MEDICINE

- We Can Make Childbirth Safer by J. D. Ratcliff. *Ladies Home Journal* 17
 Let's Stop Sleeping Pill Suicides by Estes Kefauver..... *This Week* 126

HUMOR

- It Gives Me Great Pleasure by Emily Kimbrough... *The New Yorker* 22

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

- World Revolution, American Plan by Isabelle Carey Lundberg....
 *Harper's* 30

THE STATE OF THE NATION

- Will There Be Another Depression? by Irwin Ross..... *Pageant* 37
 Here Comes the Welfare State.....
 *Changing Times, the Kiplinger Magazine* 92

ACHIEVEMENT

- Impossible—but Joe Does It! by Steven Casey Williams ... *Liberty* 42

THE FAMILY

- What's Right With the Family by Evelyn Ardis Whitman.....
 *American Home* 46

YOUTH

- End of a Boy's Life by John Bartlow Martin *McCall's* 49

COMMUNITY LIFE

- Neighborhood Life Insurance by Wellington Brink..... *Holland's* 56

SPORT

- Lou Boudreau: Last of the Boy Managers by Ed Fitzgerald.... *Sport* 59

INSPIRATION

- I Have Given Away Mountains by Samuel D. Bogan... *The Rotarian* 65

HEALTH

- Hope for the Alcoholic by Kathryn Close..... *Survey Graphic* 66

HUMAN BEHAVIOR

- Why We Behave Like Inhuman Beings by Edward L. Bernays *Household* 70

POLITICS

- Confessions of a Candidate by Richard L. Neuberger *The Progressive* 74

SCIENCE

- Civilization Threatened with Destruction by Leonard Reed . . . *Argosy* 77
War Against Bugs *Pathfinder* 118

NATURE

- The Woodhouse Night Club by Lucy Furman *Nature Magazine* 81

PEOPLE

- Ralph Bunche—American Peacemaker by Richard B. Gehman *Collier's* 84
"Now That I'm Growing Older"—An Interview with Eleanor Roosevelt by Lotta Dempsey *Chatelaine* 89

RELIGION

- Missionary to the Cowboys by Grant Sutherland King *Christian Herald* 97

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- The Fat Way Out by Don Romero *Charm* 100

LITERATURE

- What Makes a Book Good? by John K. Hutchens *The Woman* 103

CURRENT HISTORY

- Stalin Would Have Liquidated Marx by H. R. Trevor-Roper *New York Times Magazine* 107

RACIAL RELATIONS

- What Am I? by Eleanor Rice *Woman's Day* 111

ENTERTAINMENT

- "If It's Good—It's Impossible" by Tamara Andreeva *Everybody's Digest* 114

THE FOREIGN SCENE

- Inside Moscow with Anna and Ivan by Leslie Roberts *Nat'l Home Monthly* 122