

motion and knowledge are ends in themselves, or whether they are modes of living, and if they are modes of living, why is conquering the sky a more excellent pastime than lying on one's belly by a pond and watching the insects, as long as there is as much ecstasy in the restrained activity of the second mode as there is in the freedom of the first. If he who knows as the long day goes that to live is happy has found his Utopia, then science and locomotion, which Mr. Wells makes the be-all and end-all of his utopias, are simply two elements in a whole diapason of life-enhancing qualities; and there is no more reason why the human race should go cavorting through inter-stellar space than there is why the true-born Britisher should go rambling through the Orient in search of new principalities to subdue. Mr. Wells's preoccupation with the physical sciences and their achievements is by no means inevitable or essential: it is, rather, highly probable that another generation will be as interested in, say, the intricacies of psychology, and instead of learning simply to control matter people generally will find more fun in directing their own conduct, as mystics like A. E. do now in directing and illuminating their inner vision.

In sum, Mr. Wells's *Utopia* is always a little too strictly Mr. Wells's utopia; and it leaves out a good many things that other people, brought up in a different region, molded by a different tradition, would find essential to their well-being; and when Mr. Wells rules out these variations in the interests of "civilization" he is behaving in the same way that a bureaucrat often behaves towards the culture of an "inferior" people; namely, he assumes as inferior anything that does not contribute to the fulfillment of his own purposes.

In another generation or two a good part of our present-day movements, our mechanical inventions, our paralyzing specializations in science and technics, may seem uneasy escape-reactions, following the line of least resistance; and Mr. Wells's Utopia will seem like the judicial definition of drunkenness—the quickest way of getting out of Manchester. So in the end, I suggest, Mr. Wells's utopias will be interesting to those future generations upon whose fate he delights to speculate, as documents rather than as ideals. Publishers will reprint *A Modern Utopia* and *Men Like Gods* to remind the folk of the twenty-first century what the early twentieth century was like, rather than to get any inspiration as to what the twenty-first century should be.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

Man and Culture

Man and Culture, by Clark Wissler, Curator-in-chief, Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. \$2.75.

TO leap takes courage when you know that you are to land in a sprawl. *Man and Culture* is an expression of just such courage. The gap to be leaped was that between the conventional boundary of anthropology and the boundaries, less conventional, of history and sociology. Students of cultures without written records, of so-called primitive peoples, have been quite well aware that their boundaries were unreal, as fictitious as a definition of zoology in terms of vertebrates or of tropical fauna; but the complex nature of the historical cultures has baffled

the anthropologists, and so for convenience they have continued to observe the time honored boundaries. The simpler data first, has been their plea. Hard pushed by the layman whose interest in the "simple savage" is notoriously slight, the anthropologist might urge that he did not know enough about our own culture or any other historical culture to count it in, the historical monographists had not yet prepared the ground, which invited only to a fall.

That Dr. Wissler has kept his balance as well as he has in *Man and Culture*, is due to self-confidence in applying method learned from much study of the simpler cultures, witness his scholarly and authentic book, *The American Indian*—and to concentrating attention upon economic aspects. Dr. Wissler achieves simplification by excluding, not whole cultures, but, more or less, the non-material traits of society. *Man and Culture* may well be called an economic interpretation of culture.

Culture is described as a congeries of human activities in speech, material traits, art, mythology and scientific knowledge, religious practices, family and social systems, property, government, and war. There is no direct evaluation of these activities, but of them all, according to many implicit indications, material traits are to Dr. Wissler the most significant. Thus he sees culture as a continuum, with nothing important lost, "tribes may come and tribes may go, but culture goes on forever," an accumulating structure. Now in terms of tools, shelter, food, transport, etc., this conception of the continuity and unity of culture is certainly more tenable than in any other terms. Surely it would be difficult to present mythology as a continuous, accumulating structure, or religious practices, or family systems. Government, war, property? Yes, at least within our own culture during a comparatively recent period. Possibly the sense of integration in culture in general is but a subjective interpretation of one's own cultural values, a conditioning of an inborn response, as, turning psychologist, Dr. Wissler would say, one of the ways in which a child is set to the culture of its parents.

As for comparing the continuity of culture with that of the germ plasm and suggesting that we may never know "what is working in culture," that is but a little metaphysical junket on the part of Dr. Wissler of a kind he rarely indulges in. For empirically and very ably he discusses "culture at work," the cultural trait and complex, cultural type, the culture area, the play of invention and of diffusion. Cultural traits such as fire-making by wood friction or head-hunting or use of tobacco or the cultivation of wheat are seen to occur in particular ways or connections that form a complex, complexes in turn combining to form a culture type. Again culture types may be distributed within a range which may be defined as a culture area. How do cultural traits arise and how do they spread? How explain similarities in culture? Reviewed for us is a standing anthropological controversy whether cultural parallels have independent origins or have spread from a common origin. In interesting detail are given histories of the cultivation of maize and of the domestication of the horse to illustrate the spread or diffusion of culture traits.

As Dr. Wissler puts it, the anthropologist is primarily a seeker of distribution data in space and time. Hence, for the anthropologist the chief interest of *Man and Culture* will lie in its analyses of invention and of diffusion, in discussions on how the initial solution is the one that counts in adjustment to environment, on the distinction between

what happens when a new object or idea is carried far afield and dropped into the midst of a strange culture group or when a group itself is dropped into a strange culture; on rates of diffusion; on traits that do not travel; on intermittent distribution of traits; on adhesion of trait to trait; on how the trait complex pattern exercises a selective function in the face of diffusion; on how in order "to take," a new idea must be closely related to an existing complex. Circular diffusion will no doubt be questioned as a non-empirical idea, where only empirical ideas are in order, and still more will be questioned the classification of culture types into mesa, tundra, and jungle as one of those simplifications of history possible only by the omission of facts which do not fit; and belying the sound rule that Dr. Wissler himself lays down, for analyzing similarities in different cultures, the rule that "each specific case must be treated as a problem to be approached by scientific methods," i. e., inductively, not by generality.

Knowing how dangerous is generality, however well supported by illustration, would Dr. Wissler really have us accept the view that incompatibility of culture between mesa and tundra peoples is the cause of war or feud between Orient (mesa) and Occident (tundra)? What of the fact that wars, most wars, notably the last great war, have been fought within the same culture? In this discussion, as in the whole matter of his topographical-cultural substitute for our popular classifications by race, I incline to think that Dr. Wissler has his tongue in his cheek. After pointing out that prevailing concepts of race are untenable by the student of culture, after hinting, at least, of our will to believe that we belong to the superior order, Dr. Wissler deftly replaces the tenet of race superiority by the tenet of superiority in culture, and opines that in the march of culture "onward and upward" which has proceeded with an ever accelerating pace, the centre of Euro-American culture, "the torch of light," is being shifted from Europe to America. One more glory story for American progress, as well as for its conspicuous agents, the stock of Northern Europe (call them Nordics, if you like, grants Dr. Wissler), "the new generation in the family of the world, and the hope of the immediate future."

Not that Dr. Wissler is without misgivings. The pace may be too rapid; even our "wilder and less disciplined" Nordic folk may be unable to stand the strain of our contemporaneous culture. Curiously enough this reflection does not lead to further misgiving about the nature of the culture itself. And yet in an earlier part of the book has not Dr. Wissler defined progress as an elaboration and enrichment of cultural complexes, there being no distinction between "primitive" and "higher" cultures, except in complexity or richness of content? Now if our speeded-up culture is putting us, as Dr. Wissler suggests, in danger of burning out, how does it stand to the test of complexity and richness of content? Not only for all the cultural categories of patterns, but for participation in them by the individual?

A culture may be or may seem to be full in itself and yet be meagre for the individual, as Sapir has lately been pointing out, and this trait appears characteristic of contemporaneous Euro-American culture, an aspect of our life ignored by Dr. Wissler. Nor has he a word about the encroachment of economic traits upon other traits, variety in the economy blinds him to the lack of its elsewhere, standardization does not trouble him nor that intolerance of cultural differentiation which is so notable a trait among

Nordics. Cultural borrowing Dr. Wissler does commend. Let us keep informed, he urges, as to what the other peoples of the world are doing and if we find traits "truly better than ours," let us make them our own. "Truly better"—such an estimate were in itself an evidence of cultural fit, for unless sufficiently like ours to fit into ours, would we think them superior?

From this point of view specifically, of appreciating that with which we can agree, *Man and Culture* is a timely and welcome book, half of it to students of anthropology, and half to those of us who feel that our own culture is "a thing as precious to us as life itself."

ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS.

The Story of an Ishmaelite

The Life of William Hazlitt, by P. P. Howe. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$6.00.

IT is generally understood that Robert Louis Stevenson was planning to write a life of William Hazlitt, when he came upon that ill-starred record of an ignominious passion known as the *Liber Amoris*, whereupon he turned aside to other fields. It would be interesting to have the portrait of Hazlitt by Stevenson, but if the drawing of it had in any way preempted the ground of the present complete and authentic biography by Mr. Howe it would have been a cause of regret. Mr. Howe found a situation to rejoice a biographer's heart—a placer mine, the soil rich in the precious metal of his interest and requiring only to be sifted. The material for a life of Hazlitt is enormous. There are, first of all, his own writings. The source of that extraordinary zest which his critics have marked as the greatest of his qualities was the fact that he wrote directly from his interests and tastes. And these he revealed with unabashed frankness. It was the boast on his shield that he never hesitated "to say as an author what he felt as a man." The *Liber Amoris* was the supreme test of self-revelation; a man who would write that would write anything. Then there are the recollections of his contemporaries. Hazlitt was not a popular man, and in his case hate and fear performed the task of love in recording the minute details of his life. His frailties passed under the observation of Blackwood's men, Lockhart and Wilson, of the Lake Poets and their apologists, of Haydon, Crabb Robinson, De Quincey, as well as the more tolerant eyes of Procter and Leigh Hunt. His connection with Lamb brought him into the sphere of influence of the latter's biography. And with all this wealth of metal the ground had never been worked in any systematic fashion. The recollections of Hazlitt's son and the two sets of memoirs by his grandson represent merely a desultory assembling of a small part of the material. The lives by M. Douady in French and Mr. Augustine Birrell in the English Men of Letters series are to be counted as preliminary surveys and testings of the ground. Altogether Mr. Howe arrived upon a unique opportunity, and by his diligence, thoroughness and acumen he has shown himself worthy of it.

The chief interest of a biography of Hazlitt must be not in the personal relations which he developed and sustained but in the personal substance out of which he spun the threads which he wove into so intricate a pattern. Mr. Howe is a biographer of the scholarly and reticent type; he is concerned with his facts, not with their interpreta-