

to change the mood of a nation . . . surely deserves some respect from the historian. A historian who ignores it . . . runs the risk of being considered too clever by half.

But what about the European Jews? That episode is conveniently forgotten by Mr. Taylor.

It does not fit the character of a German statesman who "in principle and doctrine, was no more wicked and unscrupulous than many other statesmen."

According to Mr. Taylor, Hitler really only wanted the German city of Danzig, but since geography prevented him from obtaining it except by the coercion of Poland, he was forced, reluctantly, to apply such coercion and prepare military plans. Of course (according to Mr. Taylor) he did not intend to execute these plans.

It [the book] will do harm, perhaps irreparable harm, to Mr. Taylor's reputation as a serious historian.

water dropping on a stone, their voices suddenly broke through the crust of incredulity. They seemed to have been proved right; and the "appeasers" wrong. . . . Henceforth the appeasers were on the defensive, easily distracted from their work and hardly surprised at their own failure.

Many Germans had qualms as one act of persecution followed another culminating in the unspeakable wickedness of the gas-chambers. But few knew how to protest. Everything which Hitler did against the Jews followed logically from the racial doctrines in which most Germans vaguely believed.

In principle and doctrine Hitler was no more wicked and unscrupulous than many other contemporary statesmen. In wicked acts he outdid them all.

Previously Danzig might have been settled without implying any upheaval in international relations. Now it had become the symbol of Polish independence; and, with the Anglo-Polish alliance, of British independence as well. Hitler no longer wished merely to fulfil German national aspirations or to satisfy the inhabitants of Danzig. He aimed to show that he had imposed his will on the British and on the Poles. They, on their side, had to deny him this demonstration. . . . Of course Hitler's nature and habits played their part. It was easy for him to threaten, and hard for him to conciliate.

The Regius Professor's methods of quotation might also do harm to his reputation as a serious historian, if he had one.

## A Reply

By *H. R. Trevor-Roper*

I AM AFRAID that after examining Mr. Taylor's use of German documents, I am not disposed to accept him as a tutor in the art of quotation. Nor do I think that his "exercises" amount to much. They are calculated to spare him the trouble of argument and to give a lot of trouble (or, more likely, bewilderment) to the reader. They are certainly no answer to the positive points made in my review.

In my review I tried to summarise Mr. Taylor's thesis. Of course such a summary is not tied exclusively to single quotations: it is distilled from many; and it is not refuted by single quotations which in no case conflict seriously with it but, at most, may sometimes illustrate only a part of it or vary the emphasis. In view of the bewildering inconsistencies in Mr. Taylor's own presentation of his thesis (some, but only some, of which have been shown by correspondence in *The Times*

*Literary Supplement*), such variations are not hard to find.

For instance, my sentence No. 1 is not based only on the passage which Mr. Taylor now places opposite it. It is also based on other passages in his book. Thus, on p. 70, he writes, "Hitler wanted the Allies to accept the verdict of January 1918; to abandon the artificial undoing of this verdict after November 1918; and to acknowledge that Germany had been victorious in the East. This was not a preposterous programme"; and on p. 108: "whatever his long-term plans (and it is doubtful whether he had any) the mainspring of his immediate policy had been 'the destruction of Versailles.'" I cannot see that my summary is unfair.

Similarly, in quotation 9, if Mr. Taylor's own words are boiled down, what do they come to? In this single quotation he is saying that in the material world Hitler only wanted Danzig, but

that, by now, he wanted to get it by means which would constitute a prestige victory. On p. 248 he explains that, for geographical reasons, Danzig could not be seized without direct coercion of Poland. In other passages, quoted by me, Mr. Taylor insists that Hitler did not want war but only a war of nerves backed by military force. My words, which quotation 9 is intended to refute, seem a fair summary of these passages. And the same can be said, I believe, of all the other "exercises."

In one "exercise" (No. 6) Mr. Taylor suggests that I have overlooked a paragraph in his book. I have not. I said that "a contemporary conviction that was strong enough to change the mood of a nation . . . surely deserves some respect from the historian," "Respect," not "notice." By "respect" I mean that the historian should consider whether such a "conviction" may have been based on sound reasons. I do not mean that he should merely note the change in mood, dismiss the arguments, and pass on.

I could make the same point about "exercise" No. 7. When I wrote that Mr. Taylor conveniently forgot the persecution of the Jews, I meant, of course, that he drew no deductions from a fact

central to the evaluation of Hitler's rule and methods and particularly relevant to the question of the disposal of "inferior" races. I do not regard this serious problem as faced, or my statement as exploded, by a single parenthetical reference in which a crime unique in European history is flicked aside as the logical result of generally shared German ideas.

In "exercise" No. 8 Mr. Taylor suggests that I have deliberately omitted a distinction which he made between Hitler's relatively innocent principles and doctrines and his admittedly wicked acts. But I scrupulously quoted his limiting words "in principle and doctrine." And anyway, if his wicked acts are to be dismissed as merely "following logically" from his innocent "doctrines," what is the force of the distinction?

If Mr. Taylor had been able to convict me of any "quotation" comparable with his own version of the German documents (a subject on which he is now silent), or if he had shown my summary to be as inconsistent with his thesis as he so often is with himself (an inconsistency on which—see his letter to *The Times Literary Supplement*—he has also refused to comment), I should indeed be ashamed. But if these "exercises" represent the sum of his answer to my criticism, I am unmoved.



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## BOOKS & WRITERS

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### Love, Death, and Mr. Fiedler

By Marcus Cunliffe

Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

Everything was in confusion in the Oblonskys' house. The wife had discovered that the husband was carrying on an intrigue with a French girl, who had been a governess in their family, and she had announced to her husband that she could not go on living in the same house with him.

THESE will be recognised as the opening sentences of *Anna Karenina* (in the Constance Garnett translation). What is there that stamps it as a "European" or at any rate as a non-American work? Why could no American novel, at least none written in the 19th century, begin in such a fashion? What is the special tone of American fiction?

Many attempts have been made to answer that sort of question. American novelists themselves—Cooper, Hawthorne, Henry James—explained that their society was too raw, too thin, too undifferentiated to afford scope for the novel of manners on the European pattern. No governesses, among other deficiencies. D. H. Lawrence, digging deeper, argued in his *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) that there was something very odd about Poe, Cooper, Melville, and the rest, an apparent innocence and softness disguising "the inner diabolism of the symbolic meaning":

Always the same. The deliberate consciousness of Americans so fair and smooth-spoken, and the under-consciousness so devilish. *Destroy! destroy!* hums the under-consciousness. *Love and produce!* Love and produce! cackles the upper-consciousness. And the world hears only the love-and-produce cackle.

More recently, Richard Chase's *The American Novel and its Tradition* and Harry Levin's *The Power of Blackness* have examined the peculiarly disembodied and the deeply pessimistic qualities of American fiction. We may agree with these and other witnesses that there *is* more in American literature than meets the eye, and feel that

the critic is justified in searching for hidden clues.

Leslie Fiedler is the latest, most confident, and most ambitious of the searchers.\* He seeks a comprehensive explanation, with the aid of Marxist, Freudian, and Jungian terminology. He looks at the novel as a social fact and, at the other extreme, as an expression of deeply buried myths and archetypes. The emergence of the novel as an art-form in Europe was coeval with the emergence of the bourgeoisie. It therefore mirrored the taste of the middle classes, and especially their sentimental standards, since the "subject par excellence of the novel is love" or—as Mr. Fiedler also defines it—"the passionate encounter of a man and a woman." He considers Richardson's *Clarissa* to be both an early archetypal expression of this situation and a very promising version of it. European literature developed maturely along Richardsonian lines, producing abundant and adult examples of the novel of manners, society, heterosexual encounters (the terms seem interchangeable). It also for a time experimented with and then abandoned a second development, the Gothic line as exemplified in Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. In the United States, on the other hand, the Richardsonian pattern became debased and perverted, while the Gothic element—also in some ways debased and perverted—survived and thrived, evolving into a distinctive American style.

Using this broad Richardsonian-Walpoleian division, Mr. Fiedler goes on to examine a number of American novels, famous and obscure. He finds none, from the end of the 18th century to the present day, that deal convincingly with relations between men and women. The female characters are either angels (the common 19th-century model) or bitches (the dominant 20th-century model), either sanctimonious or depraved. The only enduring friendships are "homoerotic," and what is more, pairings of white and coloured (Indian or Negro): Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook, Ishmael and Queequeg, Huck Finn and Nigger Jim. They *seem* innocent, as D. H. Lawrence noted: hence

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\* *Love and Death in the American Novel*. By LESLIE A. FIEDLER. Secker & Warburg, 60s.