

'Why I Dislike V

One who has made a lifelong study of explains why the contemporary societ

In a recent article, the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, who has just turned 75, remarked: "I came to look on this modern Western world with alien and unadmiring eyes." Here, at the suggestion of The Times Magazine, he tells why he feels that way.

By ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

WHEN I say baldly that I dislike contemporary Western civilization, I am, of course, saying this partly to tease my fellow Westerners. The stand that I take is partly a joke, but it is also partly serious.

My dislike of the West, though genuine as far as it goes, cannot really be unmitigated. If it were, I should not feel lost — as I know that I should — if I did not have a *pied-à-terre* in London. I am a Londoner born and bred, but I have not reacted against

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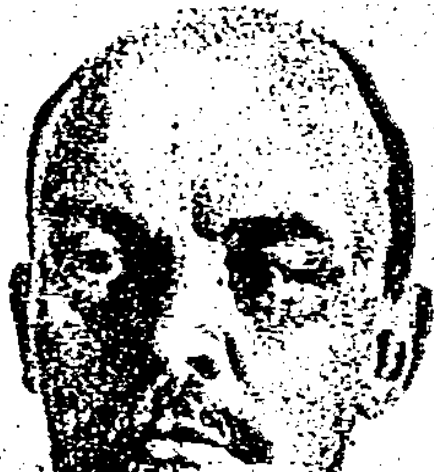
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educated in Greek and

Toynbee's World

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produced Mussolini and Hitler and McCarthy. These Western enormities make me, as a Westerner, feel insecure. Now that my German fellow-Westerners have murdered six million Jews, how can I be certain that my English fellow-countrymen might not do something equally criminal? We did murder some thousands of defenseless civilians at Port Said in 1956. What might we not go on to do after that? What might I not be capable of doing myself, if this contemporary

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College students on the beach at Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

"While we are lowering the age of sexual awareness, we are prolonging the length of education. How can the young be expected to give their minds to study during these sex-haunted years?"

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promising Moslem boy being allowed to commit intellectual suicide by sexual indulgence at the age of puberty. The 20th-century West is now imitating the non-Western habits that the 19th-century West rightly—though perhaps self-righteously—condemned.

Our irrational contemporary Western impatience and our blind adulation of speed for speed's sake are making havoc, today, of the education of our children. We force their growth as if they were chicks in a pullet factory. We drive them into a premature awareness of sex even before physical puberty has overtaken them. In fact, we deprive our children of the human right of having a childhood. This forcing of sex-consciousness started in the United States; it has spread to Britain, who knows how many other Western countries this perverse system of miseducation is going to invade and demoralize?

OUR whole present policy in the upbringing of the young is paradoxical. While we are low-

taneously revert to our grandparents' practice of prolonging the age of sexual innocence. If we persist, in this vital matter, on our present Hindu course, our brand new would-be institutions for higher education will become, in practice, little more than social clubs for sexual mating.

THIS relapse into precocious sexuality is one of the moral blemishes of the contemporary Western civilization. One of its intellectual blemishes is its insistence on splitting up the universe into smaller and smaller splinters. It has split up the human race into a host of sovereign independent national states. It has split up knowledge and understanding into a host of separate watertight "disciplines." I dislike nationalism and I dislike specialization, and both are characteristically Western aberrations.

When I was about 16 years old, I stayed with an uncle who was a specialist on Dante, while his wife was a specialist on Horace Walpole. Their library was less specialized than they themselves were, and I

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more complicated machines. I did learn to ride a bicycle. How can one be expected, in just one lifetime, to go on to learn to ride a motorcycle or to drive a car? I started shaving in the age of the cut-throat razor, and Mr. Gillette's invention came as a great relief to me. But how can I be expected to go on to use an electric razor? How could I know about volts and ohms and transformers? An American friend did give me an electric razor. This lies safely tucked away in a drawer, and whenever I unearth it, it alarms me.

I DO now travel about the world in cars and airplanes. The better these get at covering the distance, the worse they get at allowing an inquisitive passenger to see the view. I did my first traveling in Greece in 1911-12. I did it on foot with a rucksack on my back. I was as free as a bird. I could go where even mules could not go. I could see the world as I pleased. I have never traveled so satisfactorily