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FEAR OF THE MIND

FEAR and persecution of the free mind make what is probably the most flattering left-handed compliment that human beings can pay to themselves, even if the power of the mind is a suspected and unwanted virtue, so far as the flatterers are concerned. Since, today, fear of independent thinking tends to dominate public decision in many parts of the world, there should be merit in examining some of its forms. There is also the possibility—a possibility which "liberals" ought not to neglect, despite its heretical implications—that a free mind, like any other power, is as capable of evil as of good, which might help to explain why many men, often respected men, seem to choose the wrong side in the fight over freedom of thought.

Such an inquiry, however, should start out with the assumption—self-evidently true, we think—that whatever of constructive change has taken place in human history has been due to the free exercise of the mind by men of imagination. The constraints upon freedom have come afterward, and are often pressed with the claim of conserving the gains which were made in the first place by freedom itself.

For convenience, the various fears of the mind—of independent critical and creative thinking—may be grouped as "Political," "Religious," and "Scientific" fears. This classification will not really neglect personal opposition to original thinking, for a man's private resistance to, say, the "dangerous thoughts" of a member of his own family differs very little in principle from the fears of a group. The fears arise because the individual or party feels unable to cope with new ideas. These ideas threaten the individual's control over his own life. He may be forced to change in some unpleasant way. The ideas may demand that he reform his notions of the Moral and the Good; or, worse, he may feel that the innovations will surely expose his secret sins, or exhibit in an unfavorable light certain items of behavior in his past which once seemed almost virtuous, but will now condemn him as narrow or sectarian, or even anti-social.

In politics, the source of fear of mind needs little elaboration. We have countless minor illustrations of this fear on the national scene in the United States, while the official fear of political unorthodoxy in Soviet Russia has already become the subject of an impressive literature—typified, perhaps, by Arthur Koestler's melodramatic *Darkness at Noon.* A sample of American expression directed against freedom of thought in education is found in the following statement by Allen A. Zoll, head of the National Council for American Education:

> Parents go to a lot of expense and hardship to put their youngsters through school, and in general they do not want to have their sons and daughters come out of school as atheists, agnostics, communists, or socialists—and there are a lot that are coming out of school with those un-American, irreligious ideologies. You may not agree with it, it may seem very funny—but such is the case, nevertheless, and if you are an astute observer you will see it for yourself in many parts of the country.

On the occasion of these remarks—a Harvard Law School Forum—Mr. Zoll testified on his own "astuteness" as an observer:

> To my mind there is not the slightest difference in ideology between communism, socialism, fascism, New Dealism, and some of the other isms. . . . Americanism was founded . . . upon the basic, unshakable premise that all power resides in the people; and all these other ideologies (represent} the totalitarian doctrine that believes that the power should be in the state.

Mr. Zoll's argument against "academic freedom" in the public schools and universities is quite simple. Teachers are employees. They

should teach what their employers, the people, order them to teach. This, he argues, is the "democratic" way—carrying out the will of the people. Concerning loyalty oaths, he says:

> I believe in them and advocate them, but in actuality loyalty oaths are almost useless, because a person who is an out-and-out communist will lie, swear falsely, even perjure himself. The only value of loyalty oaths, as I see it, is that through them we can determine which people yell and scream about them and their sacred "academic" freedom. They are useful mainly as a lodestone, a test tube, to see which teachers are on the right side and which are not.

What Mr. Zoll thinks about the role of education in American society is revealed by his answer to a question proposing that the student is engaged in "the search for truth":

> That's one of the primary functions. But another part of the function is to learn to (or to get an education so he can) live a happy, useful life; and I don't know that he's going to have time to do a lot of searching for what you call truth. I do believe this very definitely: that there should be a university, the institute for advanced study—at Harvard or some other place—where people do nothing but search for truth. But I think that most of the universities of the country are set up to try to give education to the people that go there.

With a speaker so candid and so consistent as Mr. Zoll, little comment is needed. He is the champion of universal conformity. Why look for truth, since we already have all the important truths we need to know? Teachers have simply to transmit those truths in a convincing way. If parents don't want those truths questioned, teachers are not to question them. Truths are not maintained by criticism, but by indoctrination.

In other words, for Mr. Zoll, the practice determines the ideal. Educators are clerks hired to service the *status quo.*

It may be true that, in our sort of society, the teacher has an obligation to carry out "the will of the people," but this shifts responsibility back to the people, who should be delighted to find a teacher of independent mind who insists upon thinking for himself and upon trying to persuade his pupils to do the same. In a political society, academic freedom can advance very little beyond the freedom of the people, themselves. If the people do not love freedom, the educators will not be permitted to practice it.

In the field of science, the rejection of independent thought as the means to knowledge is the subject of a rather profound book—*The Eclipse of Reason,* by Max Horkheimer of the Columbia Institute of Social Research (Oxford University Press, 1947). Prof. Horkheimer shows how the modern contempt for theoretical thinking has debased civilization and rendered it without defense against further debasement:

> By its identification of cognition with science, positivism restricts intelligence to functions necessary to the organization of material already patterned according to that very commercial culture which intelligence is called upon to criticize. Such restriction makes intelligence the servant of the apparatus of production, rather than its master. . . . The content, methods, and categories of science are not above social conflicts, nor are those conflicts of such a nature that people would agree to unconfined experimentation with respect to basic values just in order to straighten them out. . . .

Here, Horkheimer is talking about a place "where people do nothing but search for the truth," and pointing out that a society which takes its standards from current practice or "reality" is not likely to accept the conclusions of "unconfined experimentation with respect to basic values." Horkheimer continues, showing what happens to a civilization which insists upon pragmatic tests of truth, yet sneers at philosophy:

> Intellectually, modern man is less hypocritical than his forefathers of the nineteenth century who glossed over the materialistic practices of society by pious phrases about idealism. Today no one is taken in by this kind of hypocrisy. [Mr. Zoll hardly bothers to speak respectfully of the "search for truth."] But this is not because the contradiction between high-sounding phrases and reality has been abolished. The conflict has only become institutionalized. Hypocrisy has turned cynical; it does not even expect to be believed. The same voice that preaches about the higher things of life, such as art, friendship, or

> religion, exhorts the hearer to select a given brand of soap. Pamphlets on how to improve one's speech, how to understand music, how to be saved, are written in the same style as those extolling the advantages of laxatives. Indeed, one expert copywriter may have written any one of them. In the highly developed division of labor, expression has become an instrument used by technicians in the service of industry. A would-be author can go to a school and learn the many combinations that can be contrived from a list of set plots. These schemes have been coordinated to a certain degree with the requirements of other agencies of mass culture, particularly those of the film industry. A novel is written with film possibilities in mind, a symphony or poem is composed with an eye to its propaganda value. Once it was the endeavor of art, literature, and philosophy to express the meaning of things and of life, to be the voice of all that is dumb, to endow nature with an organ for making known her sufferings, or, we might say, to call reality by its rightful name. Today nature's tongue is taken away. Once it was thought that each utterance, word, cry, or gesture had an intrinsic meaning; today it is merely an occurrence.
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> The story of the boy who looked up at the sky and asked, "Daddy, what is the moon supposed to advertise?" is an allegory of what has happened to the relation between man and nature. . . .

Are the pragmatists, instrumentalists, and positivists responsible for all this? Not exactly, but Prof. Horkheimer holds them indirectly responsible because of their attack on reason as the source of standards for human life. Reduce the mind to a mere tool, incompetent to determine ends, and you take away the only means by which a man can rise above the dull level of mediocrity. If mind must wait on "science" for ideals, and if science relies on the "data" of existing conditions, then, as Horkheimer says, "Economic and social forces take on the character of blind natural powers that man, in order to preserve himself, must dominate by adjusting himself to them."

The political reasons for fearing independent thought are plain enough, but why should scientists, or the scientific philosophers known as pragmatists, object to independent thinking? The fears of the latter are at least respectable in origin. They are concerned lest men substitute words and symbols for realities. They are against the misleading pretensions of theology. They insist that every significant word be somehow connected with immediate experience of what it represents. And since science has developed around investigation of the material world, the tendency among scientific thinkers is to restrict the idea of reality to material things, laws, and processes. An *ideal* scientific method, of course, would be as hospitable to philosophical speculations as to data from the chemist or biologist or social scientist, and would evolve intellectual disciplines for checking such modes of research. A pragmatist following this method would say, simply, "Put your theory to work." Instead, many of them say, "Your theory has no application to the kind of work we are doing," and condemn it as verbal nonsense.

Finally, there is the religious suspicion of independent thinking—the prototype, actually, of all fears of the mind. The heretic shakes the foundations of orthodoxy by choosing for himself what he will believe. Religious orthodoxy rests upon the proposition that men are unable to think for themselves. To deny this proposition is to declare the church unimportant, and to declare the church unimportant is to threaten the stability of conventional society.

Vigorous minds invariably attempt a way out of this intellectual straightjacket. In the Middle Ages, philosophers invented the theory of double truth, by which a scholar could remain orthodox in faith, yet deviate widely from accepted doctrines in his speculations. But if a man interfered with the peace and calm of orthodoxy, he was led away to the stake regardless of this defense. The safe way was the way described by Adam of Saint-Victor in the twelfth century:

> Thus professing, thus believing,
> Never insolently leaving,
> The highway of our faith,
> Duty weighing, law obeying,
> Never shall we wander straying
> Where heresy is death.

That there are excesses of intellectuality for which the free mind must answer there can be no doubt. The Buddhist reform was, among other things, a reproach to the Brahmins for their elaborate doctrines and logical disquisitions. And Zen Buddhism, a wholly doctrineless system, is a reproach to Buddhist speculators. Further, the revival of science at the end of the sixteenth century was in part a reaction against medieval scholasticism. Degenerate intellectuality always produces an anti-intellectual revolt. It is as easy for timid minds to entrench themselves in reactionary intellectual systems as it is for avaricious appetites to seek justification in the prerogatives of class. But despite the partial justification of these measures, all history shows that the quickest way to prepare a population for enslavement by some spurious use of the mind is to declare that the mind must be the servant of some higher authority—such as Divine Revelation, the socio-economic *Status Quo,* or the Data of laboratory and field. There is never any really vital difference between these authorities, since they all worship at the same shrines, regardless of how named. They all insist upon the insignificance of man.

The only alternative to submission to these authorities, so far as we can see, is in a declaration of competence for the human mind, and the assumption that nature and life are, at root, rational, and capable of being understood in rational terms. There is need, also, for the further assumption that the natural law has, for man, a moral aspect, even as Emerson maintained, and that the work of the individual human is to open his perceptive powers to the "lines of force" which the moral law represents. That human beings have this potential is perhaps suspected by the enemies of the independent mind, leading to the ceaseless campaign of the latter against its freedom. For if enough men realize this potential, all others will be obliged to become free, and freedom always seems unbearably dangerous to those who have opposed it for "practical" reasons.

Letter from GERMANY

BERLIN.—Rapid progress in the development of traffic facilities, in economic expansion, and in the spread of modern culture tends more and more to dissolve the diverse national histories of the world into *one* history—the history of mankind. This is confirmed by a comparison of schoolbook histories of today with those of years ago. It is further confirmed by the daily newspaper reports of international affairs, by radio newscasts, and by the availability of products from all regions of the earth in the stores of a single town. The uniting factors of this our world—despite all political and social rifts—bring a new quality of social and historical life—that of universal history experienced by ourselves.

An anachronistic opposition to this trend can be seen in the intentions and results of historical "science" in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany. While in Western Germany the role of "national interest" in historical research is diminished by German historians who favor a more united Europe, Eastern historians, on the contrary, are ordered by their political superiors to accentuate national traits of German history. Examples: a special "Museum of German History" was founded recently in Berlin, with heavy State support; newspapers in the Eastern zone of occupation publish full-page articles to celebrate the memory of this or that national event of the past.

The characteristic of the "science" of history in the Eastern zone is narrow-mindedness. Of the totality of events, only a few of interest (to the bureaucratic caste) are reported. The main themes are the class struggle of the poor in past times; the wars of liberation against Napoleon I (1813-1815); and the fight for German unity in the last century. German unity is a vital theme for German historians, as for every German, but when a project involving study of the rise of the Papacy (Gregor VII) in the eleventh century and its conflict with German emperors (Henry IV)—certainly a basic cause of German particularism over many centuries—was proposed, this research order was refused "because of no use for actual application," *i.e.,* propaganda purposes. (My own experience!)

Soviet German historical research in general runs counter to today's trend by stressing the national aspect of German history; and it is false even in this, since not national German interests, but Soviet Russian national and imperialist interests, decide the direction of research. The motive behind such work is the support of Soviet Russia's demand for influence on the whole of Germany through the endlessly repeated slogan of "German unity."

The contradictions of this policy are emphasized by calling to mind the theoretical Soviet tradition of internationalism, world revolution, and so forth. Instead of joining with the worldwide current of internationalism in history, this narrowly restricted "science" is established and given antiquated nationalist terms and tasks. Furthermore, this "science" has its "conclusions" ready, even before the research program begins. The "working out" of desired ends with the help of young and inexperienced students—coming fresh from college—makes a mockery of the true scientific approach.

We can only deplore this development, which shows, first, that national impulses in our world are still strong enough to hinder steady progress in internationally oriented cooperation; and, second, that national impulses, which were often "progressive" in the last century, are today wholly allied with reaction. The consequences of these retarded and forcibly attained impulses become extremely unpleasant when distorted under Soviet occupational pressure; science ceases to be a means of finding truth under these circumstances.

The counter forces against this state of affairs lie both within and without the Soviet occupation zone of Germany. Within is the opposition of scientists, or their emigration, both influences which impede the nationalist trend; from without come urgent appeals to lift the "iron curtain," to bring Germany back to European union, and, finally, to unite her under the sign of international cooperation.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
"TIMSHEL"

JOHN STEINBECK'S 600-page novel, *East of Eden,* we think, calls for neither praise nor censure, but rather for simple appreciation of the insights and concerns revealed in so many of its passages. Steinbeck himself, apparently, regards this work as something of a distillation of what he has learned about authorship and what he has learned about himself. We agree. The sombre tones of *To a God Unknown* are echoed here, but against pleasanter hills. The realism of *The Grapes of Wrath,* revealing the naked impoverishment of uprooted families, is also present, yet with gentle subtlety added. Two of the characters embody the author's conviction that philosophy is an inborn heritage for the beloved of earth—a conviction probably obscured for most readers of *Tortilla Flat,* yet the core and worth of this book also.

We have seen many reviews of *East of Eden,* but, as in other instances of literary criticisms, found little attention given to the essential values the author proclaims. Harvey Webster, a *Saturday Review* critic, for example, summarizes Steinbeck's "universally religious point":

> Every man is potentially Cain (including Abel). It is impossible to live without feeling guilt and without feeling unjustly rejected and inadequately loved. Still, every human being has the power to choose, whatever his conditioning. There is good and evil and the human soul, which is always attacked and never destroyed, can decide for good, for evil, or for any of the stopping places in between.

This seems accurate enough, yet Steinbeck gives his "religious point" more significance than can be so briefly indicated. He needs many discussions and many events to get across his central idea, which finally emerges with compelling power. We should agree with Mr. Webster that Steinbeck's central theme is that man must learn to live *with* the "evil" in his own soul. For Steinbeck, however, this becomes, not "acceptance of evil," but rather acceptance of the condition in which one presently finds himself—which are two very different things. Evil cannot be combatted until it is understood, and nothing can be understood until it is in some sense accepted. On this ground Steinbeck becomes a dedicated opponent of the theological approach to sin. Rejection of evil, if achieved under theological guidance, is a rejection without understanding, and therefore the aspirant to Goodness is not the conqueror of self, but merely a man who has retreated from self.

Mr. Steinbeck spends considerable time with this point. Its development arises from the desire of Lee, a "heathen Chinese" cook, to ferret out the essential meaning of sixteen verses in the fourth chapter of *Genesis.* A protracted study of Hebrew meanings reveals to him the fact that the theological biasses of Christianity have distorted and spoiled the original thought in all extant translations. This discovery becomes the theme, the word *"Timshel"* being the last word spoken in the story. Here is Lee's discovery:

> Lee's hand shook as he filled the delicate cups. He drank his own in one gulp. "Don't you see?" he cried, "The American Standard translation *orders* men to triumph over sin, and you can call sin ignorance. The King James translation makes a promise in 'Thou shalt,' meaning that men will surely triumph over sin. But the Hebrew word, the word *timshel*—'Thou mayest'—that gives a choice. It might be the most important word in the world. That says the way is open. That throws it right back on a man. For if 'Thou mayest'—it is also true that 'Thou mayest not.' Don't you see?
>
> "Yes, I see, I do see. But you do not believe this is divine law. Why do you feel its importance?"
>
> "Ah!" said Lee. "I've wanted to tell you this for a long time. I even anticipated your questions and I am well prepared. Any writing which has influenced the thinking and the lives of innumerable people is important. Now, there are many millions in their sects and churches who feel the order, 'Do thou,' and throw their weight into obedience. And there are millions more who feel predestination in 'Thou shalt.' Nothing they may do can interfere with what will be. But 'Thou mayest' ! Why, that makes a man great, that gives him stature with the gods, for in his weakness and his filth and his murder of his brother he has still the great choice. He can choose his course and fight it through and win." Lee's voice was a chant of triumph.

A number of writers are going back to the basic questions. Vincent Sheean's *Rage of the Soul* strives in this direction, and we shall probably see many more such attempts in fiction, representing a kind of "coming of age" in our perilous times. Steinbeck briefly reveals

his own intent, while laying the groundwork for never-ending hope:

> We have only one story. All novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves of good and evil. And it occurs to me that evil must constantly respawn, while good, while virtue, is immortal. Vice has always a new fresh young face, while virtue is venerable as nothing else in the world is.

Appropriately, Steinbeck's analysis of moral problems—and *East of Eden* must be recognized as a novel primarily concerned with ethical issues—gives considerable attention to the subtleties of decision presented by war. His leading character was forced into cavalry service near the turn of the century, and long before World War I demonstrated that the psychological roots of what we call "pacifism" lie deep within sensitive men. Steinbeck, moreover, sees both the bright and the dark of war resistance. (We should say, perhaps, that he sees both the weakness and the strength of chiefly emotional rejection of any kind of "evil".) Here, he philosophizes on unwanted soldiering, which, today, may be found everywhere in the world:

> It has always seemed strange to me that it is usually men like Adam who have to do the soldiering. He did not like fighting to start with, and far from learning to love it, as some men do, he felt an increasing revulsion for violence. Several times his officers looked closely at him for malingering, but no charge was brought. During these five years of soldiering Adam did more detail work than any man in the squadron, but if he killed any enemy it was an accident of ricochet. Being a marksman and sharpshooter, he was peculiarly tatted to miss. By this time the Indian fighting-had become like dangerous cattle drives—the tribes were forced into revolt, driven and decimated, and the sad, sullen remnants settled on starvation lands. It was not nice work but, given the pattern of the country's development, it had to be done.
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> To Adam who was an instrument, who saw not the future farms but only the torn bellies of fine humans, it was revolting and useless. When he fired his carbine to miss he was committing treason against his unit, and he didn't care. The emotion of nonviolence was building in him until it became a prejudice like any other thought-stultifying prejudice. To inflict any hurt on anything for any purpose became inimical to him. He became obsessed with this emotion for such it surely was, until it blotted out any possible thinking in its area. But never was there any hint of cowardice in Adam's army record. Indeed he was commended three times and then decorated for bravery.
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> As he revolted more and more from violence, his impulse took the opposite direction. He ventured his life a number of times to bring in wounded men. He volunteered for work in field hospitals even when he was exhausted from his regular duties. He was regarded by his comrades with contemptuous affection and the unspoken fear men have of impulses they do not understand.

"Revolt" and "reaction" operate in the lives of all of us, today. War is still, as it was for a confused "Adam," an important focus for the internal struggle between good and evil. However, the war itself is not, and never has been, the greatest evil, for the greatest evil must always be the individual man's incapacity to resolve the struggle within himself. This struggle can be resolved, says Steinbeck, in innumerable ways, some ways apparently contradictory to others, since each individual finds for himself the nobility which ultimately makes him a man.

Steinbeck's diatribes against war and war hysteria are balanced by the following:

> It wasn't all bad or cheap or hysterical. There was heroism too. Some men who could have avoided the army enlisted, and others objected to the war on moral or religious grounds and took the walk up Golgotha which normally comes with that.

Steinbeck, as we have before remarked, like some other modern "realists," believes in heroism. If he writes of the sordid and of evil—concerning which he reaches an extreme in *East of Eden*—it is because he believes that you know what heroism is only when you see it opposed by conditions which bring it to desperation.

COMMENTARY
THE INDEPENDENT MIND

WITHOUT pretending to say just what an "independent mind" is, we think there is justification for suggesting that there is a great deal of independent thinking going on today. Even after the constraints described in this week's lead article are taken into account, there is still evidence, it seems to us, of a flowering of self-reliant thought. Week after week, our review section reports on the vitality of mind to be found in many modern novels. Frontiers adds similar testimony from the field of social science. It is as though a new confidence has been born in the power of the mind and in the integrity of individual moral judgment.

It is perhaps natural that, as political controls become increasingly insistent upon conformity, a new spirit of independence should emerge. Actually, the externalization of tradition—its reduction to frenzied slogans and obvious shibboleths—probably contributes to this awakening by disclosing how artificial many conventional attitudes have become. Men often remain uncritical conformists until the day when they are given a peremptory *order* to conform. It is the *order* which gives the game away.

But besides the influence of this "reverse" sort of conditioning, there is also, we think, a genuine renaissance of free thinking in formation. All the talk about the "sanctity of the individual" is proving to have had something more than talk behind it. The pressures of the past, the overlay of habit, even the imperious voices of authority, seem to have lost much of their weight. Increasingly, individual minds are becoming the mediators and interpreters of experience, instead of "schools" of thought, instead of institutional judgments and hallowed beliefs.

Here, perhaps, is the real issue, the true struggle, of the twentieth century. It is not a war *of* ideologies, but a war *against* ideologies—ideologies, in this case, meaning idea-systems which demand acceptance without examination and which resist criticism as though it were some sort of disloyalty or unforgivable betrayal.

We have no doubt as to the outcome of this war. Men with free minds will win. They will win because they acknowledge no enemies except ignorance and willful sectarianism. They will win because the great mass of mankind will eventually respond to and support those who do not merely claim to believe in the dignity of man, but make it the basic assumption of their life decisions.

There will also, we have no doubt, be heavy casualties.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

DISCUSSING the breakup of marriages, a clinical psychologist recently emphasized the extent to which a stereotyped pattern of supposedly ideal marital behavior is so frequently *responsible* for psychological casualties in the marriage relation. People have enough trouble all by and with themselves, undoubtedly, but they seem foolishly to create a great deal more by cutting out mental patterns into which they attempt to compress both marriage partners. It is as if, in unknowing flagellation, most men and women construct a Procrustean bed of conventionality, and then lop off or stretch heads and legs to make themselves fit.

Now, all patterns are static, and since the lives of human beings, at the core, are dynamic, the result is that no *status quo* of behavior in a marital situation can long prevail. The difficulty, then, often resides in the inability of married couples to recognize the need for constantly expanding outlooks. A new perspective or horizon adopted by one of the pair is too often regarded as a threat by the other, when it might be welcomed with interest and joy. If defensive action is taken to repel the "threat," mutual suspicion and hostility may result.

Incredible as it may sound, there is ground for supposing that many men and women would be able to enjoy a happier life and provide a better home for their children if they were able to forget entirely the fact that they "married." After all, their relationship is not to an institution called marriage, but to each other and their children. The real obligations are obligations to persons.

Small wonder, then, that parents ill-equipped to face alterations of perspective and feeling in their own relationships are unable to help their children acquire the resilience of mind and feelings which might fit them to take psychic transitions in their stride. Yet all children pass through tremendous psychic transformations, during which their outlook toward parents undergoes revision and when, unless there is some inward preparation, the transition may turn into a tortuous revolt against the values of earlier years.

All this might be regarded as introduction for some passages occurring in Alberto Moravia's *Two Adolescents.* Our purpose, here, is not so much to recommend the book of this Italian novelist, nor the author—of whom much can be said both pro and con—but to make use of what seems an extraordinary capacity in Moravia to sense the exaggerated turmoils which may overtake children, entirely outside the awareness of their parents.

In this character study of youths who are forced into a world beyond the solace of absorption in filial love, the two boys are, in the words of a reviewer, "for all their sense of guilt, singularly pure-minded youngsters," and the parents, rather kind and "good." The reader is helped to realize that what happens to "Luca" could happen to any child in any home. While this tale may seem to have little relevance to the apparently happy and carefree lives of our own youngsters, we should not ignore the possibility that some similar heart-rending experience has touched their lives in secret and solitude. "Luca" found that the "new view" of his parents led him to this extremely negative orientation of thought:

> Disobedience was the theme and all the acts that accompanied it and that involved him ever more deeply, were the variations. The game, furthermore, resembled one of those drawing exercises for beginners, wherein the drawing is already indicated by a series of dots so that all the inexperienced child has to do is to follow the line of dots with a pencil. It was a cruel, destructive sort of game, but a game none the less, because it was carried out on a disinterested, experimental plane. It was in fact chiefly a question of following that mysterious movement which grew steadily more rapid and more coherent and which seemed to be carrying him toward utter annihilation; and of discovering, each time, the conjuncture of circumstances in which to live meant doing certain things, to die, doing the opposite things, and of regularly choosing the latter. Like all boys, Luca had a strong sporting sense. He decided that from now on

he would hunt out all the things that bound him to this life for which he felt such a calm and satiated disgust. All this might have frightened him if he had seen it as it really was, a kind of suicide. But dressed in the familiar, innocuous guise of a game it attracted and pleased him.

Oddly enough he did not think of his affection for his parents as a bond that held him to life and that must be destroyed. As a matter of fact he did not feel himself bound to them to any greater extent than to the furniture in his home, or to his schoolfellows. . . . This decay of his filial love was brought home to him by the comparison of his former feelings with those of the present. There had been a period when he had had a feeling of almost religious reverence for his parents, when it had seemed to him that they were perfect and that they derived from this perfection an authority that was both lovable and unquestionable. This perfection, he remembered, had seemed to him to be founded upon an almost unbelievable goodness, a goodness that, just because it was unbelievable, was moving in the highest degree. It was not the kind of goodness that later on had been prescribed to him by school-mistresses and governesses and by his parents themselves, a goodness made up of rules and precepts, of regulations and duties, it was a much wider sort of goodness, indescribable, without beginning and without end, a goodness of which he felt the effects without investigating the causes. To this goodness, furthermore, he had never made any appeal; it was enough for him to be conscious of its omnipotent presence all around him and above him, the source of his life and its ultimate justification. During those years this goodness had been what he thought the sun must be for the grass and for the flowers of the fields—a flood of light, everlasting, indifferent perhaps, but though blind, infinitely generous, impregnating every one of his acts, even the smallest, every moment of his life, even the most fleeting, and imbuing them with warmth and energy. At that time he had really been, without recognizing it, grateful to his parents for having brought him into the world and for being themselves alive; and in that, fundamentally, lay their goodness.

He could not have said whether the certainty of this perfection, made up as it was exclusively of goodness, had declined on account of one precise, detached incident, or through a series of minute facts difficult to remember. The only thing he was sure of was that now nothing at all remained of that perfection and of the veneration he had accorded it. Like the sun, which you cannot look at full in the face and which is all light and nothing but light and whose contours you cannot exactly define, so at one time the countenances of his parents had been unknown to him. He would look at them without distinguishing them, observing nothing but the light of that blinding, beneficent goodness But today—just as if the brilliant morning had been followed by a dreary evening and those two suns had been transmuted into two dead, cold moons—today he could see their faces clearly, and in those faces the smallest and most disheartening details. He saw them, in fact, with complete precision, in the pitiless light of reality, just as he saw the faces of his schoolfellows or his teachers. And because he saw them so well, it seemed to him that they had been degraded to a lower rank. And with this degradation to objects of insignificance there had disappeared from his life the warmth that gave it energy. He did not recognize this with absolute clarity, but he had an obscure intuition that his revolt against the world must have begun just at the time this warmth had diminished.

The point is that "Luca" was not suffering from genuine *disillusionment.* His ceasing to love was simply ceasing to love in *the old way,* yet, because he knew of no new way, he felt that no love at all was left. This happens in marriages, too, and whenever it happens it is a pity, for love, like mercy, is "not strained," and can find many new levels of expression if men and women are prepared to accept it in unfamiliar guises. If love be so shallowly regarded as to be known with only one visage, it will frequently disappear, leaving sorrow in its wake—especially in the case of adolescents whose parents have never helped to prepare them for the psychological variations and transitions which none can or should want to escape.

FRONTIERS

Emergent Evolution

COMMENTING on the discussion here of Psychic Mysteries" (MANAS, Nov. 5), a reader writes:

> I fail to see why you are so opposed to the theory of Emergent Evolution, which I have long used under the heading: "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." All that this implies is that the laws relating to units of one order of complexity are not deducible from the laws relating to units of a lower order. In the terms of a recent MANAS article, this implies that the aspirations of man will not be explicable in terms of a tropism.

Our remarks concerning Emergent Evolution were perhaps harsh, but would not have been if our understanding of Emergent Evolution were the same as what is suggested by this reader. If Emergent Evolution be taken to mean simply that each "level" of evolutionary development has to be defined and understood in its own terms, then there can be no argument. But this happy agreement does not, so far as we can see, take any notice of the problem which the Emergent Evolutionists set out to solve.

The Emergent Evolutionists—Lloyd Morgan, Durant Drake, C. A. Strong, Edmund Noble, R. W. Sellars, S. Alexander, and others—most of whom published their views in the 1930's—were concerned with freeing modern scientific thought from naïve atomistic materialism; but they also wanted to explain how the various evolutionary "levels" came to be. If the higher phenomena of living things are not to be explained by physical and chemical laws, then how did living things rise above the physical level and develop their uniqueness? The answer given is that they "emerged."

The problem may be set in these terms: The physical world, it is held by most scientists, is ruled by mechanical laws which give no evidence of a guiding intelligence behind the scenes. Yet from the physical world evolve organic forms that exhibit, in ascending progression, life, intelligence, consciousness, creative imagination, and moral purpose. Each of these steps represents in some sense a *novelty*—it adds a new phase of reality to existence. The Emergent Evolutionists declared that no step could be defined in terms of the one below, but must be acknowledged as having its own distinctive character. Yet they insisted that each step of advance was nevertheless a product of the preceding level—an "Emergence."

The major Emergents to be considered are, quite obviously, Life and Mind. In his *Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution* (Methuen, 1929), William McDougall summarizes some of Lloyd Morgan's contentions:

> Lloyd Morgan's oft-repeated assertions that Life and Mind are emergents and that emergents are effectively related to the system from which they emerge; his frequent references to conscious guidance, his distinction, often repeated, between, on the one hand, bare sentience and enjoyment which do not guide behavior, and, on the other, reference, prospective reference, and foretaste in enjoyment, which do bring "conscious guidance with prevision", . . . all these seem to be assertions, as explicit as possible, that mental or conscious events emerge in the same sense as the properties that characterize life emerge, and as those that characterize chemical compounds emerge; and that these conscious events, having emerged, exert influence on the course of events in the systems from which they are emergent. In a score of passages his language will bear no other interpretation. . . .
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> . . . he [Morgan] writes of the pyramid of Emergent Evolution, material in its lower parts, vital and mental in the upper levels. "In our pyramid of Emergent Evolution, the ultimate basis . . . is a world of purely physical events (and their correlates) in changing spatial and temporal relatedness." Here in one sentence is the clearest expression of Lloyd Morgan's desire to eat his cake and have it too. The physical events from which Mind is said to emerge are said to be *purely* physical and yet they are said to have (in brackets) their psychical correlates. And when, at an advanced stage of evolution, the psychical correlates emerge from their brackets and enter into effective relatedness with their physical correlates, they are said to have emerged from the *purely* physical events and to exert conscious

> guidance on them and yet to be without causal influence on them.

In final explanation, Morgan says: "For better or worse, I acknowledge God as the *nisus* through whose Activity emergents emerge, and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed." With reason, it seems to us, Dr. McDougall wonders why Lloyd Morgan so stubbornly denies the existence of mind in nature, insisting upon "purely physical" causes for the emergence of mind, yet allowing "God" to engineer the entire process. McDougall's comment is pertinent:

> Now, I am not quarrelling with Lloyd Morgan's postulation or acknowledgment of Divine Purpose and its expression in theological direction of the course of evolution. I merely point out that, while he nowhere explicitly recognizes the essentially teleological nature of human action and leaves us uncertain whether in his view our teleological mental guidance of action does or does not emerge from the realm of mechanistic causation, he nevertheless does not hesitate to postulate theological Activity as real, fundamental, and unevolved. He strains at the gnat and swallows the camel.

The implication is that some scientific thinkers feel able to cope with gnats and want to be left alone to do so without divine interference, while reserving the "will of God" to lend a general air of piety to the entire scheme and to suppress all larger philosophical questions.

Not all the Emergent Evolutionists invoke God, but they are all confronted by the same basic problem—deriving mental emergents from physical events. Most of them, McDougall notes, show that they recognize the problem. An exception, however, is R. W. Sellars, of whose *Evolutionary Naturalism* McDougall has this to say:

> All the other exponents of Emergent Evolution, . . . like other conjurers, . . . know that if you are to produce Mind from a hat (or from any other physical arrangement) you must first put it there or have it up your sleeve; or else you must be content to produce a mere semblance of Mind; and they take the necessary precautions. But Sellars merely exhibits his set-up and, without attempting to perform the operation or show in detail how it may be done, says: "Now you see, it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that Mind will emerge." It is true that he softens the emergence of cognition by allowing the prior emergence of psychical events that are not awareness of anything; and he softens the emergence of purposive striving by asserting that the emergence of events that are purposive is preceded by the emergence of events that are no longer mechanical or mechanistic. In both cases he is postulating events of a kind for which we have no warrant. Further, Sellars does not grapple in any way with the facts of heredity and morphogenesis. These are events that occur below the level of his emergence of cognition and purpose, the level of highly complex brains, yet they have the marks of being in some lowly sense teleological. . . .

These criticisms of the Emergent Evolutionists—who, it should be pointed out, differ considerably among themselves—are founded on the assumption that there is a rational principle in nature as well as in man. Recognizing this, it becomes possible to formulate a much more tolerant view of these scientific thinkers. The history of scientific thought shows that, in order to get rid of the idea of a Personal Creator, the founders of modern science felt obliged to dispense also with the concept of Purpose in natural phenomena, since the admission of any sort of purpose in nature seemed to them as subversive of scientific method as a Personal God. The Newtonian world-machine, besides the beautiful mathematical exactitude of its laws, provided an equally beautiful impersonality, opening up for the scientific inquirer an endless vista of progress in discovery—progress carefully guaranteed against unpredictable intrusions by the deity.

The price paid for this opportunity for uninhibited research, however, was too high. As the implications of Mechanism became plain, it was realized that they led to wholesale denial of all notions of human freedom, morality, and aspiration. Decent, intelligent men could not abide this conclusion, so they set about devising a theory of evolution which would preserve the impersonality of scientific method and at the same time restore the moral freedom of human beings.

The doctrine of Emergent Evolution was the result.

It might be argued that, given the religious and intellectual history of the West, no other conclusion could be reached. So long as the notion of Deity remained personal, freedom would depend upon a qualified Atheism, such as, for example, Lloyd Morgan proposed. What was needed to avoid the contradictions found by McDougall was a conception of Deity which offered no conflict with the impersonality of scientific law, and no such conception existed in the Western religious tradition. If ever such a conception gains acceptance, the logical difficulties encountered by the Emergent Evolutionists will be dissolved; but then, along with this advance, a radically new version of evolution itself will have to be adopted—a view more like the ancient doctrine of Emanations than the classical scientific view of an ascent from elementary particles of matter or elementary quanta of energy, and the primeval slime.

We may admit, then, that the resistance of the Emergent Evolutionists to the notion of God as the manipulator of evolution is sound and admirable; and that their effort to give an account of man which acknowledges his creative and moral qualities is also sound and admirable. Their intentions are beyond reproach, but their philosophical resourcefulness, so far as we can see, is fatally limited. The evaluation of this theory offered years ago by W. R. Mathews seems both accurate and just:

> Emergent Evolution appears to be the result of an attempt to find some middle path between mechanism and teleology. . . . But it may well be questioned whether this hybrid concept is not destined, like many hybrids, to be sterile. . . . I venture to suggest that it will be found ultimately that the theory of emergent evolution was a convenient halting-place in the passage to a more explicitly teleological conception of nature. (From an essay in *The Mind*, London, 1926.)