

## RACE AND RELIGION

FIFTY years from now, historians may look back on the present and write of it as a period of ideological struggle, but five hundred years from now, it may be regarded as the time when delusions of racial superiority on the part of Europeans and Americans led to the disastrous eclipse of Western civilization. While progress in the field of race relations has frequently been noted in these pages, the over-all rate of progress is still discouragingly slow. Perhaps it cannot be improved; but, perhaps, again, the rate is slow because the underlying causes of the delusion of superiority have not been sufficiently exposed.

To take an illustration, the policies of the Malan government of the Union of South Africa are much in the news today. As a writer in the April *United Nations World* points out, "The name of South Africa has become inseparably associated with racial discrimination, and the Africans word *apartheid*, the slogan of the Nationalist regime of Prime Minister Malan, has been incorporated in the everyday vocabulary of the newspapers of half-a-dozen languages." But what is not so frequently called to mind is the declaration of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1942 that "the principles of God were based upon colour discrimination and God accepted the trusteeship of the Europeans."

South Africa, of course, has no monopoly on racial discrimination. A casual note in *Time* (March 10) reports on a survey of race relations in Indianapolis churches conducted by the Indianapolis Protestant Church Federation. Asked, "Would you allow a member of another race to be a member of your church?", fifty-four congregations voted "yes," twenty-three "no," and forty-one of the congregations did not bother to reply. The delusion of superiority dies hard. A century ago, Southern Christians were claiming the same "religious" authority for white supremacy that the Dutch Reformed Church asserted in 1942, and during World War II, opponents of repeal of the Oriental Exclusion Act argued that the Chinese, being "Heathens," ought not to be allowed

the same immigration privileges accorded to "Christian" foreigners.

In Florida, last January, 200 delegates of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People convened in Jacksonville to protest the murder by a terrorist's bomb of the militant Negro leader, Harry T. Moore. (Mrs. Moore also died, subsequently.) The delegates chose deliberately to meet in Florida, the state in which the crime was committed. According to a *Nation* (Feb 2) report, the temper of this meeting is conveyed by the remarks of J. M. Hinton, NAACP president in South Carolina, who spoke to an audience which included the Jacksonville chief of police:

"It's a peculiar thing how the police can always track down every Negro bootlegger and numbers writer, but whenever a Negro is killed by white men they rush in and say 'tell us the story'; and then they close the book. You may be sure that if a white family had been bombed to death, the next morning they would have had a hundred Negroes in jail—any hundred. . . ."

"The future of this world no longer rests in white hands—it is being decided in India, China, Japan, and Africa. . . ."

The fifteen million Negroes in the United States are becoming increasingly resentful of the patterns of injustice inherited from the days of slavery. A young Savannah delegate declared:

"Just because Jackie Robinson has been admitted to the ball parks, and Ralph Bunche and Marian Anderson have crept through a crack in the wall, doesn't mean that we're all satisfied. . . . Too many white people in the South—and nation too—embrace the formula: 'Uncomplaining Negroes plus unchallenged whites equal peaceful race relations'."

Another militant, a Charleston attorney, cried: "To hell with these social gradualists, these time-not-rippers who say to take it easy! I'm not willing to follow any man who wants to go easy for me winning my freedom!"

Before drawing the easy conclusion that expressions of this sort will win few friends for the Negro cause, some attention should be given to the actual program to which this meeting committed the NAACP:

- (1) The right to security of person against the organized violence of lawless mobsters or irresponsible law enforcement officers;
- (2) The right to vote as free men in a free land;
- (3) The right to employment opportunities in accordance with individual merits;
- (4) The right of children to attend any educational institutions supported by public funds;
- (5) The right to serve unsegregated in the armed forces of the country;
- (6) The right to travel unrestricted by Jim Crow regulations;
- (7) The right to go unmolested among fellow-Americans as free men in a free society.

The anger of intelligent, literate citizens at being denied these rights can hardly be criticized by any member of the white community. The wonder is that Negroes are so patient with their fellow citizens, who find it difficult to comprehend the emotional strain that must exist among a people to whom these simple principles of justice have been denied for generations. An article in the *Progressive* for April, 1952, by William Worthy, an American Negro, throws a great light on the natural feelings of Negroes in the United States. He writes of his reception in European countries:

For the first time in my life I am treated like everyone else. When the time comes for me to return to America, I shall leave this new-found freedom reluctantly, and only because I would solve nothing by running away from the race problem at home. After a brief period in this refreshing atmosphere, I do not propose to forget what, in contrast, America is like for a Negro.

. . . there is no need to exaggerate the problem at home. Racial discrimination in the 48 states is sufficiently degrading and brutalizing so that an observer can stick to the facts and still communicate the horrible urgency of the situation.

Mr. Worthy believes that Negroes should resist injustice by the method taught by Gandhi rather than by violent rebellion. But no one, he points out, can tell what fifteen million Negroes will do in the

turbulent days ahead. How will they be influenced by the revolutionary struggles of the peoples in Asia? He adds:

It is doubtful if even unprejudiced persons in the States perceive the potential of racial unrest. For if they did realize the explosive potentialities of this intolerable social pattern, they might begin to work with a missionary spirit to avert what could become a disastrous era of physical conflict.

The report in the April *UN World* on conditions in South Africa is even more ominous. There, the eight and a half million Africans (Negroes) who constitute 67 per cent of the population obtain only 20 per cent of the national income, while the 2,643,000 whites (91 per cent of the total) have 67 per cent. The system of *caste*, however, with its oppressive assumption of white superiority, weighs even more heavily on the black population. "The simple handshake between white and African is practically unheard-of, and the use of courtesy titles such as Mr. or Mrs. in addressing non-whites generally is almost universally avoided." The important thing to note about South African politics is that the position of the non-whites has been *systematically weakened* during recent years. The Negro population lost all but token parliamentary representation in 1936, and the same discriminatory rule was applied to the Cape Coloureds (people of mixed blood) in 1951. Meanwhile, however, the psychological balance is swinging in the other direction. As the *UN World* writer says:

The gradual industrialization, urbanization, and education of non-whites is probably the most significant factor in this connection because it is bringing in its wake not only increased political consciousness and discontent on the part of the nonwhites, but it is also taking its toll in the social disorganization, crime, and vice which has its base in periurban black belts. What is happening in South Africa is increasingly shaped by fear on the part of the white man and by the black man's grim knowledge that he owns the future.

Various ironies emerge to give the world-wide problem of race a more profound dimension. In India, for example, where feeling runs high against America's discrimination against its dark-skinned population, Dr. Ambedkar, leader of India's

"untouchable" caste, resigned recently from political office in protest against the ineffectiveness of India's new laws abolishing untouchability. The situation of the untouchables, he claims in a recent book, is if anything worse than it was before the passage of the reform legislation. In the United States, the Negroes themselves practice discrimination against members of their race, through a caste system of their own which depends upon the degree of "whiteness" of skin. Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* deals at length with this borrowing of the habit of prejudice by Negroes from whites. And while William Worthy speaks glowingly of the absence of discrimination in European countries, the *UN World* contributor who discusses the South African crisis holds the colonizing Europeans responsible for the dogma of white supremacy: "The sorry fact is that the doctrine of basic human equality regardless of race never yet has been accepted by any substantial part of the European population." Finally, an unanswerable reproach to the proud West came from the Chinese representative at Lake Success, who pointed out that "in 5,000 years China had not found it necessary to have religious or racial discrimination and was perturbed that there still remained parts of the world where there was no racial equality."

It seems likely that the reformers who have been working as "Christians" or "white liberals" or simply as devoted humanitarians to break down the barriers of racial prejudice have not gone deeply enough into the sources of the ideas and emotional attitudes which sanction discrimination. Where, for example, must we seek for the origin of the simple notion of "superiority," if not in the religious doctrine of exclusive salvation? The untouchable of India is treated with contempt and aversion because of a *religious* evaluation of this group of human beings. Spanish arrogance toward the Indians of Latin America was underwritten by the conceit that Catholic Christianity was the only "true" religion." In general, there can be no doubt about the fact that some of the most cruel wars of history have been waged by Christians for what they claimed were Christian causes, and nothing creates so quickly as war the contempt of man for man and for human life.

What is needed is a tireless and unequivocal search for the psychological roots of the idea of *status*. As Floyd Ross pointed out in *Addressed to Christians*, for example, early in Christian history the function of the "creed" changed from a statement of how to become a Christian to a means of determining "*the conditions for expulsion*." A like and much more stringent criticism could be made of India's caste system, which once laid great emphasis on defining *responsibilities*, but now gives most of its rigor to the maintenance of special privilege. It is evident from history that these primary delusions of religious status are easily integrated with economic and social distinctions, until, finally, the idea of racial or hereditary superiority becomes an unquestioned belief which cannot be removed without actual psychic mutilation of the people who accept it as a natural or religious fact.

No superficial "reform" program can hope to erase prejudices which are so old and so deeply rooted that they have become organically structural in the emotional and psychological life of a culture. The reform must begin at the beginning—with the religious and philosophical separatism which accomplished the initial distortion. And if the dominant races delay too long in this reevaluation, they may find themselves outnumbered, outclassed, and outhated by peoples who are neither better nor worse than themselves—who are simply the same in outlook, but who, for a change, now have greater power.

## *Letter from* **GERMANY**

BERLIN.—By engaging in historical sciences, mankind obtains consciousness of a past which was itself unconscious of purposes and ends. In general, all science tends—as Hegel showed—to self-consciousness, and we may note that the "spirit" (mind) of each man usually takes pleasure in the process of elucidation, and that science gains one of its strongest supports from this mild and steady enjoyment.

But it seems to us that the Russian scientists who now influence thought in Eastern Germany and the Eastern sector of Berlin cannot draw much pleasure from their profession. Although apparently progressing in the "Russian" part of Germany and Berlin and steadily pressing back "bourgeois" theories of learning, they are nonetheless generally on the defensive. Anthropologists, at any rate, do not get much pleasure from elucidating their science, for they are much too occupied with strengthening rigid party "theories" and with the formulation of aggressive arguments against "bourgeois" sciences.

Russian anthropologists seek still their main theoretical support in the now hopelessly antiquated theories found in Lewis H. Morgan's *Ancient Society*, published in 1877. Together with the German Bachofen (*Mother-right*, 1861), Morgan supposed in early mankind a state of sexual promiscuity, this being followed by a period of the pre-eminence of woman over man (matriarchy, mother-right). Morgan further elaborated a scheme of developmental periods which all "civilized" peoples supposedly had gone through, from time immemorial up to the present.

Marx's associate, Friedrich Engels, caught eagerly at these ideas, which doubtless seemed to him to shake the rigid picture given by Holy Scriptures, and to begin a search for true insight into the changing realities of family and social life. Carelessly, Engels drew his Socialist conclusions and wrote a whole book referring to Morgan and Bachofen as his leading authorities. Meanwhile, firsthand knowledge about native tribes grew steadily, finally refuting the doctrines of Morgan and Bachofen.

Soviet anthropologists twist and turn under the impact of new findings and results. Engels' outdated book, *Origin of Family, Private Ownership, and State*, was published in a new edition in East Berlin after the war (1946) without even a simple note of critical

commentary! Morgan is still the hero, although the Russians are prepared to give up the thesis of "promiscuity." (Probably the new doctrine of "family" in the Soviet Union—which favors monogamy, stable family relations, and extensive child-rearing—is responsible for this development.) With regard to the period of mother-right, they still seek evidence to support Morgan's and Bachofen's hypotheses. It is amusing to see Dr. Otto of East Berlin Humboldt university try to find proof for early mother-right in remains dug up by archeologists! (Compare this with Soviet propaganda on woman labor and equality of rights: the thesis of "mother-right" has to bolster the claim of "equality" of woman with man—to be "proved" by history itself. But what sad equality!—established for use by bureaucratic machinery which regards human beings as *one kind* of raw material or "power.")

Russian scientists obstinately cling to Morgan's view of the development of culture in well-defined stages. His theory (1) fits well with Marx's conception of the necessity of transition from "Capitalism" to "Socialism"; and (2) seems to guarantee the existence of "Socialism" in Soviet Russia; for, if culture develops in regular stages, nothing else than "Socialism" can follow "Capitalism"! Further, Morgan's theory gives security—not in reality, but in abstract terms—for the continuance of "Socialist Soviet Russia." How could a past "stage" ("Capitalism") revive, if Morgan with his "iron steps of progress" is right? Thus, we can hardly expect Russian anthropology to abandon a scheme, however antiquated, which gives so much stability to a political system grown so questionable under the stresses of our time.

While Morgan's theory was once the ideologic expression of a naively optimistic middle class, it now represents the theoretical sheet anchor of a bureaucratic caste sailing a turbulent sea. But woe to a "science" and its supporters who are chained to a wreck!

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW

### THE PEOPLE OF THE DEER

FREQUENT quotation from Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia* has indicated our unbounded admiration for the sort of man who is able to penetrate the psychological mysteries of a land completely alien to his own culture. Once Taylor had stopped thinking of the Indians as a "backward people," and *wanted* to learn from them, he became initiated into a sort of brotherhood with the Asians he otherwise could not have known.

Farley Mowat's *People of the Deer* (Little, Brown) has psychologically much in common with *Richer by Asia*, being a provocative and informative "culture-contrast" volume. Mowat is a young Canadian whose experiences led him to seek a land beyond the horizons of the tragic confusions of modern war. He found the Ihalmiut, inland Eskimos who live to the Northwest of Hudson Bay, an isolated and forgotten people whose way of life was the essence of simplicity. Mowat concluded that many of the psychological and social puzzles of humanity could be studied here in a fresh context. But, unhappily, he did not escape "beyond the horizons of tragic confusion," for the effects of man's competitive warfare plagued him even in the Barrens, although here the warfare was of a different sort—the white man's warfare against the balance of nature itself. Yet, he found a *people* who were inwardly peaceful and whose lives were beautiful.

Mowat first describes, as best he can, the urge which sent him into the forbidding vastness of a Caribou-land which few whites have ever had the temerity to approach. In so doing he unwittingly explains why many may read his book with avid interest, perhaps finding some of their own feelings reflected by Mowat's reactions to war, and thus appreciating the depth of impressions made upon him by the awesome grandeur of the Arctic and the brave but gentle people he met.

When I was nineteen years old I exchanged the prairies and mountains for the close confines of an infantry regiment, and the world that now lay outside those narrow bounds suddenly became a mad, nightmare creation which I feared and could not

understand. 1941 came, and I was part of the phony war in southern England and on my brief leaves I watched without comprehension as the walls of great cities crumbled over the dismembered bodies of men. I began to know a sick and corroding fear that grew from an unreasoned revolt against mankind—the one living thing that could deliberately bring down a world in senseless slaughter. The war drove inexorably on. My regiment moved through Italy, then up through France into Belgium and Holland, and at long last into the Reich. And one day there were no more crashes of shellfire in the air—and it was done.

In the spring of 1946 I returned to my own land—but it was a far cry from my return to my home in 1935. I wished to escape into the quiet sanctuaries where the echoes of war had never been heard. And to this end, I at once arranged to become what is called a "scientific collector" who would go into far places and bring back rare specimens for science to stare at. Desperately seeking for some stable thing rooted deep in reality, I grasped the opportunity to labor in what I thought was the austere pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

So it was that at the end of 1946 I found myself far up in the forests of northern Saskatchewan at a place called Lac La Ronge. Nominally I was there to collect birds for a museum, but I had put my gun away, for I soon had enough of "scientific" destruction, even as I had had enough of killing in wartime. The search for tranquillity which had led me hopefully into science had failed, for now I could see only a brutal futility in the senseless amassing of little bird mummies which were to be preserved from the ravages of life in dark rows of steel cabinets behind stone walls.

A desire to comprehend the mysterious people who inhabit the Land of the Deer took the place of Mowat's former zoological leanings. He learned the language of these people, growing to appreciate the subtleties of a "primitivism" which has much to teach those of us who claim to exist in a more "civilized" world. More than this, Mowat took up the case of the Ihalmiut and defended it with a passion sufficient to bring home to thoughtful readers the enormity of the crimes that have been often committed in the name of western progress. (Shifting back to Edmond Taylor's gleanings in India, we might note that Mowat, like Taylor, is strongly impressed by the "karma" of all transgressions of natural law.) The

rapacity of traders destroyed the culture of these Northern peoples by the introduction of trading for-profit—a profit which the Eskimos were prevailed upon to exchange for the inferior and weakening provender of the white man. Thousands of Eskimos who might have lived peacefully and healthfully in proximity to their "deer" were exterminated by starvation—the starvation of malnutrition caused by exploitation of their open, trusting natures. Disease and discouragement from white men's broken promises have almost ended the Ihalmiut story, and ended, too, a source of furs and meat that only the Ihalmiut are hardy enough to procure.

The Ihalmiut way of life depended upon the deer (caribou). They were the hunters and eaters of these deer, able to live well enough until traders persuaded them to trap foxes for pelts and learn to appreciate the superiority of a winter diet consisting of 80 per cent white flour. Before long the Ihalmiuts became dependent upon the guns and cartridges which white traders brought them, so that when these were withdrawn after a generation or two, and the price of pelts dropped, the people had lost the arts of hunting and living on the deer. Meantime tuberculosis and other diseases laid waste whole areas not, Mowat contends, because the Eskimos have "less immunity" to the diseases, but simply because no Arctic dweller has immunity unless provided with proper nutrition. Mowat has seen the virtual death of a beautiful and knowing civilization, although he still holds some hope that a reversal of policy may bring back the surviving Ihalmiuts to a normal existence:

Surely there is but one way to cure a man of the diseases which are the products of three generations of starvation, and that is to feed him. It is so simple an idea that I suppose it cannot possibly have real validity or else it would have been tried long before this. But it does not greatly matter any more, for soon there will be no mouths to feed. These parodies of men, the northern Indians, who are not God's creations as the missionaries would insist, but who were created at our hands, will not need great hospitals, for it is quite true after all, they are incapable of building up immunity—against starvation.

The Danes, Mowat points out, have set an example in Greenland to the major competing powers of the world. The Eskimos of Greenland have been treated as human beings, and not simply as means to imperialist ends:

In Greenland today there are no people called Eskimos. There are only Greenlanders. Some carry pure Eskimo blood in their veins; some carry a mixture, and some are of pure Danish blood—but *all* are of one people. In that land there are men of Eskimo stock who teach in schoolrooms built for the children of all bloods. Native Greenlanders not only teach and are taught, but no limits are imposed upon their education. It is quite possible for a pure-blood Eskimo to pass through the Greenland school system, then go to Denmark (at government expense) to complete his education in a university. When such men return to Greenland they become the teachers of those who remain at home, and in this way the gap between the ancient past and our times is quickly bridged.

The Greenlanders are rigidly protected from the commercial exploitation which has a stranglehold on our arctic regions. The type of white men who know how easy it is to make a rich living from the heart's blood of a primitive race are forbidden to enter Greenland and they have no power there.

Though Mowat claims to "loathe" statistics, he appends a great many of use to his saga of adventure, and they are effective, too, in giving factual support to his heartfelt appeal on behalf of a people he had grown to know and to love. He hopes that "the color of blood might at last be wiped from the record in the place of the River of Men." And we see in this an expression of that deepest of all urges of the human will—the will to serve others in need—a will found among the most primitive peoples as well as among those who finally may scale the heights of a truly mature civilization.

## *COMMENTARY* **STORIES FOR CHILDREN**

"CHILDREN . . . and Ourselves" for this week mourns the passing of the story-teller. We should like to add a lament for the passing of the story—the rare and treasured story. While there are endless low-priced, paper-covered books for little children, written by properly pedigreed doctors of philosophy with close attention to the minutia of child psychology, the need for another kind of nourishment emphasizes a problem for which mass production techniques in literature offer no solution at all.

When children are very young, the paper-covered books are no doubt valuable. The child's vocabulary grows, he converses with others about the stories—which are read one after the other in rapid succession—and occasionally a very good story may make a deep impression on him. But when stories of richer content are sought, this endless making of books for children becomes a formidable obstacle. Literally *hundreds* of books for children come out every year, and the parent is reduced to the same policy as is followed in picking a new breakfast food—choosing one that "looks" promising and hoping it is a good one.

Actually, we think a firm boycott against the "new" in books for children over four or five might be an excellent program to initiate. Let the parent choose at the library a few books—stories which have lasted for centuries, millennia, even—giving the substance of ancient legends, the tales of gods and heroes—picking them almost as carefully as he would a religion, and making the reading of these stories more of an "event." Exceptions could be made, of course— in the case of stories like *The Pearl*. The principle we are espousing is the principle of "great books" for children, and while we have no "list" to offer, such books can be found.

One of the practical arguments for this plan would be that the language of myth and legend has become a vital part of the language of

literature, philosophy, and psychology. The child who grows up knowing nothing of Prometheus, nothing of Theseus, Jason, Ulysses, Achilles, or Hector, who has not heard of Sisyphus or Tantalus, and to whom the names of Rama or Krishna sound no familiar note, will read in later years with a foreshortened vocabulary. And no dictionary consultation can make up for the imagery which was lost during those most impressionable years of childhood.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

ONE of the greatest tragedies of the American family lies in the departure of the story-teller, hastened by the tense pace of urban life, and precipitated by the monopolizing claims of the screen, radio, and television. All art, all drama, and all creative literature had their origin in the spoken word, usually conveyed in moments of leisure, and bringing unique stimulus to the imagination of listeners, both young and old. The story-teller was a special sort of instructor; he demanded no disciplines from his listeners, had no immediate object of a "practical" nature, and, ideally, was concerned only with the purity of his presentation. Those who heard him were not enjoined to adopt an allegiance or a special faith—each being entitled to make the story mean what he would; for this reason, perhaps, receptivity of mind is still and always better for stories than for arguments. The difference between storytelling and preachments is also a difference which the children everywhere must feel and instinctively appreciate.

The most meaningful of ancient legends were often perpetuated by stories. Perhaps a bit was added with each transmission, but the essential plot continued because of some quality which made it the story of *every* man and child. When such a tale stands the test of centuries, it becomes a part of the heart and mind of the people among whom it circulates—not so much, really, by courtesy of cultural conditioning as through a common thrilling of imagination. Imagination is surely a universal faculty, and thus each enduring tale can have a nearly equal significance to other cultures than that in which it originated. Stories from other lands, moreover, may help to bridge the gap of differing provincialisms and to establish an essential human kinship in respect to values which have no geographical bounds.

The best stories, doubtless, are those which appeal alike to young and old. This of course requires that the young gradually "grow up" to full comprehension of the tale, surely a natural process, especially in the family. We have never been too enthusiastic about a steady diet of special "children's literature." The young are capable of more comprehension than they are usually given credit for,

while an adult's reading to children inclines to be artificial unless the adult can also enjoy and gain from appreciation of and reflection upon what he reads.

All of this may serve as partial introduction to the suggestion that John Steinbeck's rendition of *The Pearl*, an old Mexican folk tale, may be tried for home reading—with editing and interpolation if one feels the plot too stark and shattering for the young. *The Pearl's* virtues are numerous. It contains so much of simple beauty, so much nature background, so much pathos and such a universally applicable moral that it will bear re-reading, or re-telling, many times. It is the story of an Indian fisherman who finds one of the greatest pearls of La Paz, of the greed which the sight of this wondrous wealth inspires in many men who want it for themselves, of the poisons of fear and fierceness which work to corrode the delicate fabric of a gentle family life, of a journey to escape those who would take the pearl by force, of the death of the fisherman's baby during an escape; finally, it is the story of how Kino, the fisherman, cast his treasure back into the sea, to have done with the havoc it made.

For once, the publisher's account of a book needs no revision or qualification:

Here, in this short book illuminated by the deep understanding and love of humanity that have made John Steinbeck one of the most beloved writers of our day, is an old Mexican folk tale: the story of the great pearl, how it was found, and how it was lost again. It represents Steinbeck in the vein which his readers like most, a simple story of simple people, recounted with the warmth and sincerity and unrivaled craftsmanship he brings to his writing. It is one of the most deeply moving tales he has ever told, tragedy in the great tradition, so beautifully and unerringly presented that the reader feels not despair but hope for mankind.

It is a story, too, of a family, the special solidarity of a man and a woman and their child. Kino, the fisherman, his wife, Juana, and the baby, Coyotito, have a closeness that is indestructible, even in the terrible events that follow the discovery of the pearl, the destruction of the dream. "As with all retold tales that are in people's hearts," the author says, "there are only good and bad things and black and white things . . . and no in-between anywhere. If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it."



It may, as we have suggested, be held that *The Pearl* is too harsh for the young, dealing as it does with avarice, with disappointment, with death and with sorrow. Yet these things must be known, in truth, and, since they must be known, *The Pearl* is a fitting avenue through which the knowledge may come. For the intent of the tale is not to horrify or sadden, but only to show, as in a mirror, the essences of life's experiences as we presently know them. Love and beauty are the true themes, and these are so clearly and constantly present that the shock of tragic events is somehow felt "at a distance."

Perhaps we should let Mr. Steinbeck speak for himself, as he does while describing the scene, the habits, and the spirit of the people of whom he writes:

Now, Kino's people had sung of everything that happened or existed. They had made songs to the fishes, to the sea in anger and to the sea in calm, to the light and the dark and the sun and the moon, and the songs were all in Kino and in his people—every song that had ever been made, even the ones forgotten.

Kino heard the little splash of morning waves on the beach. It was very good—Kino closed his eyes again to listen to his music. Perhaps he alone did this and perhaps all of his people did it. His people had once been great makers of songs so that everything they saw or thought or did or heard became a song. That was very long ago. The songs remained; Kino knew them, but no new songs were added. That does not mean that there were no personal songs. In Kino's head there was a song now, clear and soft, and if he had been able to speak of it, he would have called it the Song of the Family.

Although the morning was young, the hazy mirage was up. The uncertain air that magnified some things and blotted out others hung over the whole Gulf so that all sights were unreal and vision could not be trusted; so that sea and land had the sharp clarities and the vagueness of a dream. Thus it might be that the people of the Gulf trust things of the spirit and things of the imagination, but they do not trust their eyes to show them distance or clear outline or any optical exactness.

Portions of a recent *Saturday Evening Post* article offer some interesting supplementary thoughts on this point, highlighting the contrasts between Mexican and North American "common people" cultures. Speaking of the village Mexican, Thomas S. Sutherland writes:

Deep in their personality is the patient and indestructible Indian with his love of children, flowers and little animals, and his incomparable visual perception. Also from the Indian has come the trait of learning how to live with scarcity, rather than inventing techniques for production. So long have these Mexican folk survived with so little—since even before the Spanish conquest—that what seems to us abject poverty has become to them a normal way of life.

On the other hand, this lack of materialism has enriched their lives with spiritual qualities. They have a superior understanding of love, friendship, beauty and death. Honor and dignity are valued more than getting ahead. They are reserved and cautious in their approach, waiting to see evidence of good will, but anyone who wishes to be a friend will find them more than willing to meet him halfway. Few people in the Southwest have availed themselves of this opportunity to understand the Mexicans. While we cipher, they sing.

Those who have heard the story of *The Pearl* well told will find it long remembered. It will stay in the mind and heart of a child, too, for it is real and true as all lasting legends are. As Steinbeck relates it, moreover, it often becomes an introduction to that poetry of words so essential to development of a delicate sense of appreciation in children's future reading. So while this is but one short book, it may be used as a kind of "entertainment" far surpassing in value anything which can be viewed through television; the values of reading and telling are far greater.

The child—and we adults too—need to be encouraged to retain that kingly faculty of imagination which allows us to create our own mental images. So important is this need for our becoming our *own* art interpreters that we recommend securing a copy of *The Pearl*, or any similar legend of great meaning, *without illustrations*; pictorial art can often restrict and confine, and lessen the depth of effect. And if we can become good story-tellers in our own home, we shall encourage our children to do the same, which is a worth-while heritage to pass on.

## *FRONTIERS*

### "The Meaning of Evolution"

A BOOK like George Gaylord Simpson's *The Meaning of Evolution* (Yale University Press, 1950) ought to lead to considerable reflection—reflection in several directions. First of all, it may be regarded as evidence that the advocates of Evolution have gained a kind of "second wind" in their contest with what they regard as human ignorance and the backwardness of "the masses." It shows, further, that the popularizers of the idea of evolution no longer feel the need to be "aggressive" toward opposing doctrines, and that as a result, evolutionists now indulge in some mild self-criticism.

It is probably even a little artificial to speak of Evolution having "advocates," today. Almost no one argues any more about whether, broadly, the world and its living things were "evolved" or "created." In all but the most "Fundamental" religious circles, it is conceded that evolution is a great, natural fact, and that if there was a "creation," it made use of the processes of evolution.

So the contemporary argument, if there is an argument, is about the *meaning* of evolution. Prof. Simpson's volume is made up of the twenty-fifth series of Terry Lectures, which were endowed by the late Dwight H. Terry for the delivery and publication of "Lectures on Religion in the Light of Science and Philosophy." We are sure that Mr. Terry would approve of Prof. Simpson's contribution, for he specified that no lecturer should be disqualified "because his views seem radical or destructive of existing beliefs." He asked only that the lecturer be capable, and "an earnest seeker after truth." Professor Simpson is surely both. But we cannot resist the comment that this book is really concerned with what sort of religion modern scientific knowledge will permit.

Briefly, *The Meaning of Evolution* tells what is left to religion after science has had its say. The

answer is, not much. We might agree that not much of traditional Western religion is worth saving, and that Prof. Simpson's restrictions upon any future religious philosophy doubtless seem entirely justified to him, in the light of the religious past of the West. In many places in his book, on the other hand, one feels the weight of assumptions which were made, generations ago, by anti-religious controversialists who became, without knowing it, anti-philosophical controversialists. He writes, in short, as a man trained in the conviction that the physical world is the primary reality in human experience. It is just possible that this is not so.

A passage from Prof. Simpson's chapter, "Man's Place in Nature," quickly locates the author's choice among theories about evolution. Man, he proposes, has instituted a new scheme of evolution. Superimposed upon the essentially materialistic past of the physical and biological world, man exhibits "intellectual, social, and spiritual natures" which "are altogether exceptional among animals in degree." He continues:

They [these "natures"] usher in a new phase of evolution, and not a new phase merely but also a new kind, which is thus also a product of organic evolution and can be no less materialistic in its essence even though its organization and activities are essentially different from those in the process that brought it into being.

It has . . . also been shown that purpose and plan are not characteristic of organic evolution and are not a key to any of its operations. But purpose and plan are characteristic in the new evolution, because man has purposes and he makes plans. Here purpose and plan do definitely enter into evolution, as a result and not as a cause of the processes seen in the long history of life. The purposes and plans are ours, not those of the universe, which displays convincing evidence of their absence.

Man certainly was not the goal of evolution, which evidently had no goal. He was not planned, in an operation wholly planless. He is not the ultimate in a single constant trend toward higher things, in a history of life with innumerable trends, none of them constant, and some toward the lower rather than the

higher. Is his place in nature, then, that of a mere accident, without significance? The affirmative answer that some have felt constrained to give is another example of the "nothing but" fallacy. The situation is as badly misrepresented and the lesson as poorly learned when man is considered as the destined crown of creation. His rise was neither insignificant nor inevitable. Man *did* originate after a tremendously long sequence of events in which both chance and orientation played a part. Not all the chance favored his appearance, none *might* have, but enough did. Not all the orientation was in his direction, it did not lead unerringly human-ward, but some of it came this way. The result is the most highly endowed organization of matter that has yet appeared on the earth—and we certainly have no good reason to believe there is any higher in the universe. To think that this result is insignificant would be unworthy of that high endowment, which includes among its riches a sense of value.

Prof. Simpson calls the primary forces of evolution "materialistic" for the reason that so many of the factors affecting, if not contributing to, the evolution of species betray no evidence of "meaning" or larger "purpose." He calls them "random"—chance happenings—which may or may not lead to the "progress" of living forms. Nevertheless, the cosmos has somehow managed in the course of millions or billions of years to "secrete" both consciousness and moral purpose, in the person of the human being. So far as Prof. Simpson's reading of the evolutionary record is concerned, the emergence of man—which means, basically, the emergence of the qualities of his mind and his so-called "spiritual" attributes—brought the addition of something *new* to the scheme of things, something which did not exist before at all.

This, perhaps, is an advance over the ideas of many earlier evolutionists, which was to the effect that both mind and moral ideas are "epiphenomena" (to use T. H. Huxley's pedantic term)—manifestations which have no more intrinsic meaning than the noise a train makes in passing. Now mind and morality are allowed by Prof. Simpson a certain subordinate dignity in the evolutionary scale. But regardless of how

wonderful they may be, they came from matter—blind, insensate matter, ruled by aimless, physical laws—and must therefore be "materialistic in essence," despite the fact that through mind and morals we are able to conceive theories of causation and doctrines of meaning which are the opposite of materialistic.

What will explain this wary avoidance of a view of life and nature based on a conception of general purpose for the great, universal Whole? The answer is not far to seek. The scientist does not want to be disqualified in his search for knowledge by an authority superior to reason. The postulate of "general purpose" could easily be rendered into "God's Purpose," and with God's purpose back in the running as a source of explanation, almost any nonsense could be defined as representing the Divine Purpose, with science relegated to mere technological enterprise, without the right to speak on any matter on which the Divine Party Line has already been declared. This was the unhappy position of science during several past centuries, and the scientists—especially those who know history—will do everything they can to prevent a return to power of irrational religious authority.

No criticism of scientific thinking which ignores this background and orientation can be either just or intelligent. The great question is not whether science is materialistic or not, but, *Why is it materialistic?*

A further important question would be: Can there be a spiritual or idealistic or non-materialistic view of life, nature, and evolution which permits no irrationalism, which will never threaten to restrict the just application of the scientific method anywhere throughout the entire field of human knowledge and inquiry?

As a matter of information, we reproduce from Prof. Simpson's book a passage which suggests the *status quo* of theory on the origin of man. He writes:

Hominoid radiation reached an early climax in the Miocene, since then there has been a weeding out of its lines, many of which became extinct, with increasing specialization and divergence of the relatively few surviving lines. Recent discoveries increasingly emphasize the diversity of this radiation and show how baseless were the old arguments as to whether man is nearer or more closely related to one or another of the recent apes. The argument rested on false premises, a misconception of the sort of evolutionary pattern here exemplified. . . . It now seems reasonably certain that the four (main) types of apes and man are independent surviving lines, divergently specialized, all deriving separately from the Miocene radiation. The characters shared by any two or more of them may assist in inference as to the basic type from which the radiation rose, but are irrelevant as to nearness or distance of special blood affinity between particular survivors. . . .

Besides giving a prevailing view of human origins, this passage illustrates an interesting lack of concern with the great controversial issue of evolution during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prof. Simpson writes from a technical point of view, not caring about, or at least not paying much attention to, the philosophical or moral questions which haunted the older participants in the controversy. The fact remains, however, that the anti-God psychology of nineteenth-century science took particular delight in linking man with slaving jungle apes. Educational psychologists, also, arguing from this premise, made out a case for animalism in human life as being entirely "natural" and even necessary to a "well-adjusted" existence. It is true that so-called "animal" functions have a legitimate role in human life, but the influence of these early evolutionist doctrines tended to shut out from serious consideration the far more ancient humanist view of man as engaged in a moral struggle within himself—this being the classical version of the drama of human "evolution." Anthropological theory which, in its attack on dogmatic religion, overshadows this traditional wisdom about man, has been devastating in its effects, although these effects are not of a sort that would naturally interest specialists in anthropology. That is why it is always necessary

to question the findings of the specialists—not their facts, when they *are* facts, but the elaboration of those facts into a more or less complete "philosophy."

Prof. Simpson, we think, if read, should be read quite carefully, to distinguish his facts from his interpretations. Meanwhile, as a book which summarizes the present views of a large number of scientists, *The Meaning of Evolution* is undoubtedly excellent.