

THE DAEMON OF SOCIETY

IT is an old custom to liken a butterfly or moth coming out of its chrysalis to an emerging angel. Often the transition from caterpillar to moth has been thought of as a miraculous process.

When a caterpillar or moth is ready for its metamorphosis it hangs itself up and takes the form of a chrysalis. Its internal organs dissolve into a milky mass, part of it with a stringy consistency. The caterpillar has "gone into the milk." Yet what emerges later is a mature moth or butterfly, of a certain species, with the definite but complex structure and pattern of action characteristic of that species. All during the transition, that "something" which determines the direction of development, perhaps an already existing incipient structure, has been in control. It is that seemingly mysterious continuing control which we speak of as the "daemon" of the butterfly.

The processes of deep-seated social control among men are somewhat analogous to the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly. There is a daemon or genius of society which in profound social change has continuing existence and some degree of control of the process of change, and which guides and directs the creation and emergence of a new social type and structure in conformity to the dictates of this daemon.

We can imagine that a caterpillar, as it becomes a chrysalis and loses its muscles and digestive organs, may feel that this is the end of things. Similarly, when society breaks down and goes into flux, it may seem that civilization is now coming to an end. Yet in some degree a continuing daemon of society is in control and will determine a continuity of tendency until a new social structure emerges which is an expression of the daemon.

Insects have been in existence for probably two hundred million years. During that period they have developed very smooth working processes of transition or metamorphosis. Perhaps for the first few million years, while the complex metamorphosis was being evolved, it may have been immature and troublesome. The processes of transition in human society have not yet matured. Though the social daemon is present and somewhat in control, giving continuity of direction to social transition, its methods are still awkward, wasteful, and sometimes violent, as witness the French Revolution and present-day changes.

All actual embodiments of the daemon of society are limited both by circumstances and by causes, and fall short of the complete pattern of the daemon. Thus every actual society is imperfect. In the course of time these imperfections may bring about decline and decrepitude, or may set up severe internal stresses. Then society may again experience a metamorphosis. It may "go into the milk," wholly or partly losing its obvious structure, and may finally emerge as a new and closer approximation to the pattern of its daemon.

Analogies are never exact. In some important respects social transition differs from insect metamorphosis. In the long process of the evolution of insects there have been conflicts within the daemon which guides the metamorphosis. Often these internal conflicts of the insect daemon have been ended, not by achieving unity in place of conflict, but by a parting of the ways, by splitting up the type into separate species. As a result of this manner of resolving stresses there are an estimated 10,000,000 species of insects in existence, while probably a much larger number of species have become extinct. These species have resolved their

problems in many different ways, often by a high degree of specialization. Some insect species are social, living in compact societies; some are loosely social, some solitary. Some insect species seem to have purely democratic societies, some are tyrannies, some pacifist and some very militant.

Human societies in the past, with very limited intercommunication, tended to similar diversities. Athens and Sparta, seventy-five miles apart as the crow flies, had strikingly different social patterns. Switzerland and Iceland were almost pure democracies, Russia an absolute monarchy. Human social patterns had almost endless diversity. With that isolation, physical types also became quite distinct. Now, however, with constantly increasing interrelations and intercommunication, it seems certain that mankind is destined not to break up into a number of distinct species, but to develop a single over-all type of society or social species, though with many local variations.

This being the case, the daemon of society must work out many inner conflicts within this single over-all pattern. This is an inherently difficult process, for many conflicting elements of social design contest within the social daemon for supremacy.

Mankind has not yet worked out a smooth, economical way of "going into the milk," of dissolving an existing social pattern and of emerging with a new and more nearly universal pattern. Many more metamorphoses may be necessary before full success is achieved. Painful as the process is, it probably is better that such repeated, if painful, transitions be made rather than that social organization should be static at its present low level. No crude, make-do social structure, such as a vested aristocracy, or rule of the proletariat, or authoritarianism, or what is called democracy, is an adequate stopping place. Transitions should continue, preferably in an orderly nonviolent manner, until the social organization which emerges embraces far more of

the potential values of social life than any that has yet existed. In fact, that process of "going into the milk," and of emerging with a closer approach to fulfilment of social possibilities, should be a continuing characteristic of society, though we should learn to do it with skill and without waste.

If we can discern some of the main characteristics of the daemon of universal social organization which vaguely presses for expression, we may help it to emerge more quickly, and with less waste and violence. Some elements of that pattern are determined beyond doubt. As to other elements, there are great internal conflicts to be resolved. As to still other elements, no uniform determination is necessary, and local societies are free to design for themselves, and to develop local traits.

What appear to be some of the fundamentals of human society on which the daemon of society seems to be definitely settled? One of these universal characteristics is that men will be social and not solitary creatures. Another is that men will play specialized parts in society. Human society will be an organism, not an aggregation. However, specialization will be learned by each individual, and not determined before birth, as in case of many species of ants and bees. Men will not give up all-round individuality for the sake of society. A man's specialization will be founded upon all-round personal development.

Social organizations will use *all* sources of judgment, wisdom and experience, and will not limit control of events to any limited fraction of society, such as a proletariat, a führer, an aristocracy, or an economic autocracy. All social capacity to contribute will be used.

The capacity of men to design their social structure with intelligence, research, experiment and conscious selection makes the process more complex, but more promising, with few limits to the possibilities. The daemon of innate direction is partly generic and partly cultural. The cultural elements, at least, can be refined, guided, selected and designed. The tendency to design is general,

not specific. It is subject to conscious control. Men not only follow the daemon of society, they tend to create it.

Successful emergence of a social pattern depends partly on circumstance. In 1931 I went the length of Czechoslovakia, and observed emerging there a hopeful pattern. There was a pattern of free and varied initiative, and great hope. Life was hard, but interesting and promising. Then came Munich, and the turning over of Czechoslovakia to the Nazis. When the second World War was over the battered and broken country gathered itself together and had another period of hope. Then came another conquest and subjugation to a pattern foreign to that which was emerging in the early thirties. I was reminded of once when I found a silk covered cocoon one fall, prepared to wait over the winter and to emerge in the spring. I put it in a small box, planning to take it out in time to see it emerge, and then forgot it. When I did open it, months too late, I found the distorted body of a beautiful moth, which had struggled to get free from its cocoon, but did not have space. Many societies have had fine patterns destroyed, not because of any inner defect, but because outward circumstance prevented.

Freedom to explore social types is necessary to social progress. It demands tolerance from without, and persistence from within. We do well to see the struggles of the daemon of society to express itself for what they are, not chiefly as the struggles of bad men against good men, but as the struggles of humanity to harmonize the internal conflicts of the daemon of society, and to overcome external handicaps to the end that it will achieve a structure and spirit of society which will include all potential values.

Yellow Springs, Ohio

ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Letter from **CENTRAL EUROPE**

INNSBRUCK.—Most of the Austrian newspapers are the property of political parties. A great number are owned either by the Austrian Peoples' Party (OVP) or by the Social Democratic Party (SPQ), while a few belong to the Independents (VDU) or Communists (KPO).—Some papers are free of any specific political backing, but are generally anti-communist. As in some other regards, the Austrian press seems to offer a micro-mirror of the world-situation: the Eastern parts of the country are largely under the influence of Communist papers, the central parts are inclined to be interested in both sides, and the Western parts are the supporters of church and democracy.

In keeping with the continental European mentality, as manifested for many years, these papers see no fault in the party whose ideas they represent. They try to whitewash even officials of their particular organization who have been proved corrupt, while all those who belong to other parties are regarded as "traitors." The Communists, especially, do not hesitate to attack anyone who is supposed to be a non-sympathizer and do their best to widen the gap between the different sections of the Austrian population, while at the same time they attempt to unite all Austrians in hate of the United States. Headlines like "Austrian Government Supports Fascists," "Austrian Ministers Blackmailers," "Western Powers Prevent State Treaty for Austria," "American Spies Killers," "Austrian Priests Political Gangsters," and "USA Soldiers Shoot at Austrian Children," are proof of that attitude. But the policy of the other papers is not much better. Their language is as abusive as it is intolerant.

It is most deplorable when foreign correspondents on duty in Austria are frivolous enough to uselessly increase the trouble and unrest. There is the case of the New York *Times* correspondent in Vienna who reported to America that, since the negotiations for a State Treaty with Austria seem to have finally foundered, it is now time to re-arm Western Austria in the same way that Western Germany has been re-armed, thus including Austrian territory in the Western defence-system after the model of Western Germany.

A report like this has far-reaching consequences. It creates the impression that a division of Austria is

inevitable; it offers material for propaganda to the Communists and spreads panic among the population, while diminishing confidence in the Western Powers—and helps . . . whom? After this incident the Austrian Government notified the State Department in Washington that the correspondent in question has often supplied the newspapers with reports which are far from facts. Although the State Department immediately repudiated the above-mentioned report, its impression, once created, can by no possible means be blotted out.

What remains is the problem of the freedom of the press, which is as old as the press itself. Yet the problem has in reality little to do with the press. It turns on the meaning of "freedom." There can be no doubt that, in a modern state, everybody ought to have the right to express his opinion, however eccentric it may sound. But if this opinion is disturbing, and the one who expresses it is able (in consequence of his position or standing) to procure wide publicity for misleading and destructive ideas . . . what then? And if that freedom to express opinion is used to distribute lies, either to create a sensation or for purely egoistic ends, or from other unworthy motives?

The problem will not be solved by the simple view that an irresponsible correspondent should be fired from his job. In politics, especially, some would regard his statement as a lie, while others would declare it a true summary of the facts.

Probably, we are not yet sufficiently matured—in Europe as well as in U.S.A. and other parts of the world—to free ourselves from selfishness, hate, and envy, before we speak or write. It seems that such problems will remain unsolvable until we reach that state.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

THE RARE CONSISTENT

IF one is set upon arguing for the value of inventive writing, as we often do here in quoting exceptional passages which spring to life in post-war fiction, it is also well to have a few examples of consistency in the production of the worthwhile. Nevil Shute, we are becoming convinced, is a rather rare example of an always-constructive writer, and his recently reprinted 1947 novel, *The Chequer Board*, seems a good illustration of the qualities which make him constructive all the time, instead of only now and then, as is unfortunately the case with so many other fictioneers.

Shute could easily be an extremely poor novelist instead of a good one—that is, if he had less subtlety and less philosophy. For Mr. Shute is usually a double-dyed moralist, and moralists, when given to enunciating moralisms, are difficult persons to have to listen to or read. Mr. Shute, however, does not enunciate moralisms, and to call him a moralist means only that he has obviously reflected upon what themes are most instructive to humanity, and what plots can best serve to awaken a sense of brotherhood among readers, before he begins to write.

Ordinarily, this propensity can be expected to turn into some sort of missionary complex, productive of the same tiresome results as usually follow from conventional missionary effort, but Mr. Shute has proved that a writer can conceive a plot with mature deliberation, with a determination to make it useful, and still provide absorbing reading. Perhaps the assumption that art must be entirely "spontaneous" in order to deserve the name is in need of revision. If the human race as a whole has yet a long way to go in developing what Harry Overstreet calls "the mature mind," it is quite conceivable that some day many great artists may be as deliberately philosophical as good moralists are today.

The Chequer Board is a post-war novel which takes the reader to Burma and Nashville,

Tennessee, and around and about England. Shute traces the lives of men who spent time in hospital together, near the end of hostilities, after an airplane crash. Three of the men were to have faced military trial at the end of their flight, and a fourth, the pilot, was currently confronted with the results of a marriage capable of dealing him as much punishment as any military tribunal might bring to the other three. One of the criminals is an American charged with assault of a young girl. Another is a young British corporal charged with murder, and the third, the narrator, an officer charged with black-market thievery. But all these men have the capacity for a warm-hearted humanitarianism, and because they show each other so much mutual kindness during their common sojourn in a combined physical and mental hell, each one, when his situation improves after the war, desires to contact the others to see if they perhaps "can do with a little help."

The American soldier charged with assault is a Negro; at first, the pilot is incensed at having this "off-color" person for a ward-mate, and after discharge from the hospital is little concerned with the justice of the Negro's trial. But when the pilot is later shot down behind Japanese lines in Burma and comes to love a cultured Burmese girl in a way he never loved the partner of his brittle marriage at home, he takes several new looks at color demarcations. He also takes a new look at Western culture generally, and, recapitulating in a modest and brief way some of the observations of Fielding Hall and Edmond Taylor, decides to marry and remain in a country which attracts him more than his native land.

The Buddhist religion is therefore a subject for discussion and pondering, at which point Shute renews a former theme of his—that Christianity must be evaluated in comparison with the religious teachings of other and perhaps more inspired traditions. The young RAF pilot, perhaps like Shute himself, finds a kind of sublime truth in the Eastern teaching of periodical reincarnations on earth for each human soul, according to the

merits or demerits achieved for or against *nature* in its totality—not against "God" nor a formal set of commandments.

One of the first discussions on religion between the pilot and the Burmese girl shows what Shute is trying to do. The girl has been explaining the meaning of the Buddhist "Ladder of Existence," and the Englishman wants to know about ultimate goals and ideals:

"What happens when you get to the top of the ladder? What happens when you are as good as you can be?"

She said, "You can only reach that point after countless thousands of lives. But ultimately, if you receive the Final Enlightenment, so that you are wholly good and completely wise, so that everything you say or do is the perfection of truth and wisdom, you are then the Buddha."

"That's the statue in the pagodas, isn't it?" he asked.

"The statue that you see in the pagodas is the last Buddha," she replied, "Prince Shin Gautama. Twenty-eight souls have attained this perfection in the history of the Universe, and only four in this world; you see, it is not very easy. Prince Shin Gautama was the last, the twenty-eighth, and it is his example that we try to follow in our daily life."

"Rather like our Christ," he said thoughtfully.

"Exactly like your Christ," she said. "But you believe that your Christ was a God, the son of a God who lives somewhere in the outer realms of space and who created you for this one life. I don't quite understand that part of your religion. We have the same idea of a supremely perfect Being, but we believe that any one of us can reach that same perfection if we try hard enough to live a holy life, in age after age. We have the statue of Prince Shin Gautama in our prayer houses as an example, to remind us of what any one of us can attain to. Frankly, Mr. Morgan, I like our idea better than yours, though for practical purposes there's not much in it."

Shute has two further "moral aims" in view, along with attempting to indicate that the West may learn a deeper and more humane philosophy from the best of Eastern religious tradition. He really works over race relations, showing why the

people of the little English countryside community of Trenarth liked Negro American soldiers much more than the white soldiers. The Negroes were courteous, interested in the people they met, and helpful. One old resident summed the matter up by replying, when asked how he liked Americans: "I like them fine. I don't much care for the white ones that have been coming in lately, though. Hope they don't send any more." The proprietor of the White Hart, a Trenarth pub, so far disagreed with the segregation policy which white southern officers of the Negro troops tried to have him adopt that he braved all manner of apoplectic reactions by posting a sign: "This establishment for Englishmen and Coloured American Soldiers Only." The Negro boy finally courts and wins the white girl he was charged with assaulting, which shows, incidentally, that Mr. Shute is very determined to do all a novelist can to eliminate the concept of basic racial divisions.

Another passage we should like to quote is a classic of a sort—the sort one might be glad to see multiply. Duggie Brent, Paratrooper Corporal, is on trial for murder, having killed a man in a brawl concerning Brent's young lady. The lawyer for the defense is the officer who in military school helped to train Duggie to kill with silence and precision, and his appeal to the judge and jury is a macabre but just indictment of the complicity of the Army in Duggie's crime:

"All soldiers are trained to kill men quickly and efficiently; we cannot overlook that this is the very substance of war. Corporal Brent was trained as an infantry soldier; he then volunteered for Commando service, and later for service in the Parachute Regiment. In those units of the Army it is necessary to teach men certain ways of killing the enemy, certain deadly and ruthless ways of ending human life, which are beyond the education of the ordinary soldier. For many months, by the delegated order of the King executed through his officers, this immature young man has learned these deadly crafts."

He stood in silence for a minute, staring at the foreman of the jury, marshaling his thoughts; in the court there was a long, tense pause. "I speak of what I know," he said quietly. "I have come here to defend this man for other reasons than because I want to take

the fee marked on the brief. You have heard it stated in the evidence that I myself taught Douglas Theodore Brent to creep up in the darkness behind an unsuspecting man, and stab him with a knife, and kill him. I taught him to do that in three different ways, so that whatever method of approach was forced on him by circumstances he could kill his man immediately and without noise. I taught him more than that. With other instructors I endeavored to secure that Douglas Theodore Brent, the man on trial before you, would act instinctively to choose the one of the three methods he was taught which would serve him best in his assault. We reasoned, we instructors, that in desperate circumstances he would have no time to stop and think. He must know his craft so well, the knife must be so familiar in his hand, that he would act instinctively in what he had to do, without the least hesitation, without any thought. Members of the jury, those are the principles that I have endeavored to instill into the man before you.

"I have dwelt on my own association with the accused because it is a prototype of the unarmed-combat instruction which he subsequently received, and which resulted lamentably in the death of Michael Seddon. Again, I ask you to consider for one moment what would have happened in peacetime if I and others like me had taught these deadly crafts to this young man before you. I do not think we should have escaped the censure of this court. We should have been involved in this matter with him, very rightly, as aiding and abetting in the crime of which he is charged. If I had taught Brent in time of peace to creep up behind a man and stab him in the back, and if he had done so in a private quarrel, I should have been implicated in his crime."

He raised his head and faced the jury. "I am not implicated in this crime, nor is Captain Willis, who taught him the deadly methods of unarmed combat which he used, inadvertently, with such terrible effect. Why is not Captain Willis charged in this court with Corporal Brent as aiding and abetting in his crime? It is because Captain Willis did what he did by order of the King, passed indirectly to him through his various officers. The Crown protects Captain Willis, and myself, from the consequences of our acts, of our instruction to innocent men in these terrible crafts. Are we to say, then, that the Crown throws a cloak of immunity around myself and Captain Willis, but leaves Corporal Brent unprotected to face a trial for murder, for doing what we have taught him to do by instinct and without thought?"

He smiled thoughtfully. "No, justice cannot be served in that way. If Douglas Theodore Brent is held to be guilty of the crime of murder, then Captain Willis must be held guilty of aiding and abetting in his crime."

All this is the way of Mr. Shute's war against war, his war against racial discrimination, and his war against self-righteousness in Christianity. On the affirmative side is his consistent portrayal of the decent, humanitarian aspects of all men, of even the criminal and the callow. Mr. Shute may also be regarded a pioneer. He was a pioneer—that is, someone who travelled far beyond the currently acceptable—when he wrote *An Old Captivity*, a novel about immortality. This was pioneering in mysticism and religion. His *No Highway* explored the possibilities in extra-sensory perception; and in *The Chequer Board*, which, much more than the others, is a social commentary, he does a bit of everything.

COMMENTARY

RESPONSIBILITY TO TRUTH

ALTHOUGH, in *The Need for Roots*, there are barely four pages in the short sub-section devoted by Simone Weil to the soul's need for Truth, we find their content practically unforgettable. Editors and publishers, in particular, have need of keeping these ideas alive, at least until they are viably reborn in current opinion. This week's Letter from Central Europe, for example, gives special point to one passage by Miss Weil:

We all know that when journalism becomes indistinguishable from organized lying, it constitutes a crime. But we think it is a crime impossible to punish. What is there to stop the punishment of activities once they are recognized to be criminal ones? Where does this strange notion of nonpunishable crimes come from? It constitutes one of the most monstrous deformations of the judicial spirit.

Although our Central European Correspondent's account of Austrian (and European) journalism may stop short of the charge of "organized lying," the partisanship of these publishers and the irresponsibility of the American foreign correspondent come perilously close to being crimes. And while some may prefer the idea of "restraint" to that of punishment, the seriousness of these offenses is beyond question. As Simone Weil says:

There are men who work eight hours a day and make the immense effort of reading in the evenings so as to acquire knowledge. It is impossible for them to go and verify their sources in the big libraries. They have to take the book [or article] on trust. One has no right to give them spurious provender.

Part of her solution would be to limit the daily press and the radio to non-tendentious information: let them be organs of information, no more. All matters of opinion, she urges, can be adequately discussed in weeklies, fortnightlies, or monthlies. "There is absolutely no need to appear more frequently in print, if one's object is to make people think instead of stupefying them." Special

courts would then be established to maintain responsibility to truth in publishing.

Miss Weil recognized the difficulties—almost insuperable ones, today—in this plan by saying that the presiding judges of these courts would have to be wholly impartial men and lovers of truth. Yet her idea is worth discussing, if only to disturb and arrest our casual acceptance of the present policies of newspaper and some other publishers. It seems important to recognize that crimes against truth do not lose their offensiveness by being beyond control; on the contrary, they might be regarded as much greater crimes for this very reason.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

IN general, two sorts of books are discussed here. In one sort we find ideas which seem useful as points of departure for further investigation, while the other sort includes volumes that deserve thorough reading and study by parents and teachers. *Leadership of Teen-Age Groups*, by Dorothy M. Roberts (Association Press, New York, 1950), we are sure, belongs in the latter category. This short volume has an unusual integration of basic thesis and illustrative material and, approaching adolescent problems from the standpoint of voluntary Youth Association groups, affords a fresh perspective on both home and classroom puzzles.

An introduction by George B. Corwin, the YMCA's Secretary for Youth Programs, is also short and to the point—affording, incidentally, some evidence that the YMCA is developing new insights. Corwin writes:

Psychotherapists and counselors are discovering that individuals and groups have within themselves more resources and insights for solving their problems than has heretofore been recognized. The task then of the counselor and the group leader is to provide the kind of permissive, understanding, and accepting atmosphere in which the individual or group can examine those insights and develop these resources.

On the basis of many years spent in counselling teen-age groups, Mrs. Roberts amplifies:

We know that the teen-ager, if given more or less help and maximum freedom within the boundaries of necessary protective authority, will and can solve successfully his teen-age personal problems. He will then move on to assume responsibility for himself and will begin to sense his responsibility toward others. We, as advisors, must learn to discern the kind and the degree of help that is needed at each stage of the boy's or girl's development.

We cannot hold them back from growing and developing; we can only retard that growth by being too far ahead of them and trying to pull them after us. To do this is to be like the mother in a hurry to get home who pulls the little child along behind her by

the hand. The child struggles to keep on his feet and all but falls, neither seeing nor understanding the reason for the hurry.

The key to Mrs. Roberts' success seems to be that she has conceived her task as advisor and assistant organizer of youth groups to be that of learning how to transfer authority to the youths themselves. She recommends that provisions always be made for self-government and self-control—a far more effective procedure than rewards or punishments doled out by elders. She produces pertinent evidence to show that self-discipline is not only ideally the best sort of discipline, but also, when developed by a constructively oriented youth-group, the most effective variety. Mrs. Roberts is not partial to what might be loosely regarded as the "church viewpoint," since church groups are usually still burdened by the theory that boys are "bad" until they are frightened or pushed into goodness. She states that, in church schools, "Opportunity is limited for raising questions on other than religious subjects. Sometimes it is limited even on these. The lessons taught and the organization of classes are both adult planned and adult controlled." Further:

Attendance is largely by compulsion from parents. The young person is supposed to be interested in and to learn what adults want him to know. In the short lesson period with the study course planned in advance there is little time to question religious ideas or to discuss other questions on the teenage mind. Yet all of their questions need to be answered from a basically religious or spiritual point of view.

A Sunday School teacher confronted a parent with this comment: "You should be worried about that boy of yours." When the parent asked why, the answer was, "He asks more questions about God and the church than a twelve-year-old should."

Mrs. Roberts challenges this attitude toward questions, just as she challenges all conclusions to the effect that youths are not capable of planning their own activities, selecting worth-while goals, and maintaining their own disciplines when given intelligent assistance at the outset. Counsel offered in the chapter, "A Summary of Leadership Principles," should be useful at home and at school as well as among "organizers." Mrs. Roberts has

known singular individuals who were able to "clear up" high juvenile delinquency areas by first gaining the confidence of the young and then being patient enough to disarm the inevitably recurring suspicions that some new adult conspiracy is about to be foisted upon them. Her "Summary" admonishes:

Avoid as far as possible the teacher-pupil relationship. Substitute for it a friendship relationship.

In being friendly never fail to maintain your adult status, which involves the dignity of being yourself. Your younger friends expect this. You *may* be and, at best, you can be the embodiment of an ideal for which they are striving.

When disciplinary action is necessary, place the problem, if possible, in the hands of a representative group of teenagers. State all the facts and ask them to work out a solution to the cause of the trouble. They are often more strict than an adult would be. Teenagers will accept the verdict, conform to it, and profit by it when handed down by their contemporaries.

If authority has to be exercised, do it positively. Present a complete explanation of the reason why it must be so. Allow questions but do not back down. Evaluation of the situation must be carefully made before arriving at a decision to exercise authority.

Be ready to admit fault or mistakes. Never be afraid to say "I don't know."

Above all, do not be afraid. Young people often possess amazingly sound ideas. They will carry through, with success, meaningful projects adults would not dream they could undertake. Let the natural group leaders show the way. Let them know you stand back of them ready to help. They will call on you—be sure of that.

We should sometime like to see a clever psychologist explore the thesis that the typical adult is genuinely afraid of the typical youth. Mrs. Roberts' advice would, on this view, be regarded as reassurance that such fears can and should be transcended. Immature parents and teachers, like dictators, are ill at ease among their subjects, for the simple reason that the opportunity for learning how other "lesser" beings live and feel has passed them by.

Not all parents and teachers, certainly, are "immature" in this sense, yet they may be so

thoroughly immersed in the peculiar attitudes of the adult world that their own childhood no longer seems a part of them. A feeling of uncomfortable alienation from youth ensues, producing a gap which one may attempt to bridge by bluster and impatience. But youth will not accept the stereotypes of the adult world, nor authority wielded simply to ensure a smooth *status quo*.

Children have their own stereotypes, it is true, as Mrs. Roberts points out, but these are molded along lines quite different from those of adults. The "Teen-age Group Leader" cannot qualify unless he is just as sensitive to one variety of mores as to the other; and he can never accomplish anything with the young if his feeling response to them parallels the emotional reactions of a middle-aged business man when confronted with a childhood sweetheart he discarded for "social reasons." "Social reasons" never explain matters of the heart to anyone, and relations between young and old, just as between men and women, will not rest easily without a breadth of sympathetic and joyful comprehension.

We have often spoken of the fine opportunities existing in each neighborhood for companionship between children and adults, providing that the adults are intelligent enough to recognize that the children are truly a part of themselves, and that companionships offered in terms of the sharing of special interests may bring fresh perspectives of value to all concerned.

FRONTIERS Psychic Mysteries

A CORRESPONDENT quotes and comments upon a passage in MANAS for Sept. 3:

I must take issue with the statement that "The fact that crowds, as such, show forth traits which seem radically different from the sum of the behavior of the people in them may be taken as evidence of the reality of inner, psychic connections uniting communities and groups." This is simply not so. As Egon Brunswik points out, "In proceeding from inanimate to biological and sociological occurrences there appears to be, on the descriptive level, an increasing 'novelty' of structures and laws. Although this more complex relationship and its elements may not be reducible to simpler-level elements, no special explanatory principles may be needed."

Although the properties of water could never be predicted by a thorough knowledge of isolated oxygen and isolated hydrogen, I have not recently heard anyone therefore refer to these properties as evidence for "psychical connections" between them. Brunswik notes Feigl's example: a single body might serve to demonstrate the law of inertia, but two bodies will reveal a new "emergent" and (from an analysis of individual bodies) previously unpredictable law of gravity.

Thus, if physics, the methodological prototype of objectivity, accepts in practice the principle of non-vitalistic emergentism as we ascend to higher levels of complexity, I fail to see why psychology, or, indeed, any scientific endeavor, should not do likewise. Surely, the new phenomena associated with the crowd, above and beyond that evidenced in individuals, have not been shown to be inaccessible to scientific methodology. . . .

Vitalism and emergentism are two different things, and a hasty metaphysical solution by postulating an extra-scientific, ontological dualism may not be the best way to get where we're going, particularly if, as some of us believe, reality doesn't happen to be that way.

While the particular "explanatory principles" to which this reader thinks we ought to restrict ourselves are not named, his letter is a plain invitation to apply the famous "principle of parsimony" in what explanation is attempted, and to beware of inventing elaborate theories to

account for happenings which might be more simply (*i.e.*, more "physically"?) explained. We had not, however, intended to declare that the psychic factor in the behavior of crowds is really a new and different principle, but rather a principle which manifests in a special way through crowds, telling us, perhaps, something of its character under "crowd" conditions. Nor need the suggestion that an unusual psychic unity operates to produce the typical phenomena of crowd behavior be taken as a mere speculation which requires support from "research." Individual experience, which we all have had as members of crowds, may be sufficient to identify the special pressures and tugging compulsions of crowd emotion. It is the *connectedness* of these feelings for which we argued, feelings which tend to operate as a great, irrational tide, often leading to actions which almost none of the individuals concerned would do of his own will.

Our proposition was of the possibility of what may be called a *psychic continuum* whose properties come into noticeable play under the conditions of crowd or mob emotion, imparting to those conditions their leading attributes. For example, many species of birds have, so to say, a "private life" during the summer season, but when the time for migration arrives they congregate and move southward in definite formations which are capable of precise description. Students of bird migration have seriously proposed that a psychic factor may explain the extraordinary coordination manifest in the mass flight of birds. In other words, the idea of "psychic connectedness" is already a respectable hypothesis for some ornithologists, as a means of accounting for the special phenomena of bird migration.

Turning to more general considerations, biologists have for years recognized that individual organisms are built upon a model which is somehow present in an energetic field surrounding each organism—a model which "molds and fashions the individual after a specific predetermined pattern." (See report by Dr. H. S.

Burr in the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, January, 1940.) The existence of a psychic field which relates the wider ranging phenomena of psychic activity seems not so unimaginably remote. As to possible "psychic connections" between oxygen and hydrogen, we have no experimental data to offer, although an eminent chemist, Albert P. Mathews, once wrote:

Living things show an attribute which we may call mentality or psychism, and this psychism is as yet unrecognized elsewhere than in living things. No one speaks of the psychology of this great rock upon the illuminated surface of which we crawl. . . . But who can deny to the inorganic earth that which is in the same inorganic elements when in the organized, the organic form? The biochemist of the future, then, must be more than an electrical engineer, for he must be a poet and a psychologist as well.

The psychologist of the future will discuss the psychology of hydrogen, of oxygen, indeed, that of the electrons, positive and negative, themselves. For who can doubt that those properties of the atoms which show themselves in the psychical phenomena of living things are also present in the same atoms in the inorganic form? For the atoms are the same in living and lifeless, and every moment they are turning from the one to the other. . . .

We cannot understand chemistry, therefore, and certainly not biochemistry, the chemistry of cells, until the relation between material and psychic things is worked out. . . . We must leave out, because of our ignorance, the psychic side of chemical reactions. Our equations, therefore, will be as incomplete as if energy were omitted. The transformation of matter and energy alone can be considered . . . which becomes hence like Hamlet with Hamlet left out. Let us not blind ourselves to this fact. (*General Cytology*, Cowdry, University of Chicago Press, 1924.)

Now, as to following the methods of physics in the field of psychological phenomena, because, as our correspondent proposes, physics is "the methodological prototype of objectivity," we wonder if method must not change with subject-matter. As Ortega pointed out so effectively in *Toward a Philosophy of History*: Concerning the problems of man, which are the problems of psychology, "science"—which, here, is physical

science—"strictly so-called, has got nothing to say." Ortega continues:

The thing is so enormous that it straightway reveals to us the reason. For it causes us to note that science, the reason, in which modern man placed his social faith is, speaking strictly, merely physico-mathematical science together with biological science, the latter based directly on the former and benefiting, in its weakness, from the other's prestige—in short, summing both up together, what is called natural science or reason.

. . . If there is anything in the repertory of human activities and pursuits that has not proved a failure, it is precisely this science, when one considers it circumscribed within its genuine territory, nature. . . . This is so unquestionable that one has difficulty in understanding straightway why man is not today on his knees before science as before some magic power. The fact remains that he is not on his knees; on the contrary, he is beginning to turn his back. He does not deny, he is not unaware of, its marvelous power, but he realizes at the same time that nature is only one dimension of human life and that a resounding success with regard to nature does not preclude failure with regard to the totality of existence. . . .

In the upshot the paradox resolves itself into a supremely simple observation. What has not collapsed in physics is physics. What has collapsed in it is the rhetoric, the trimmings of childish presumption, of irrational and arbitrary additions it gave rise to, what, many years ago, I styled "the terrorism of the laboratory."

Whether or not the phenomena of crowd behavior, and their possibly psychic correlations, will become wholly accessible to scientific methodology will depend, we think, upon the evolution of scientific methodology. It seems certain, at any rate, that any methodology really competent to investigate human behavior, either individual or *en masse*, will find it necessary, before many more years have passed, to take account of the findings of modern psychic research. And if this, as Mathews might put it, returns the principal player to the drama of the gloomy Dane, then both science and man will be the gainers.

Finally, concerning Vitalism and the theory of Emergent Evolution, we see no reason for heavy-

handed rejection of the one, nor for eager acceptance of the other. The Vitalists have far too much evidence in their favor to need assistance from literary amateurs. About the easiest project that we can imagine would be to compile a list of biological phenomena for which the Mechanists have no adequate explanation. The rising of sap in the stems of plants, for example, so dramatically exceeds the bounds of all mechanistic explanations that a long and intensely interesting paper on the subject was printed in a Smithsonian Institution Report of several years ago. This is from the viewpoint of the energy potential of living things. The problems of structure—of morphogenesis—are even greater for the Mechanist to face. The biologists who study the mysteries of organic form find it increasingly necessary to use a vocabulary that verges on mysticism. It is well known that electrical polarity governs the over-all structure and proportions of cellular organisms, and one research worker, Dr. Ethel Brown Harvey, discovered that a fertilized ovum would develop into a primitive embryo even after the chromosomes—which are supposed to be the bearers of heredity—had been completely removed by centrifuging. Some hidden metastructure, it seems, determines the actual pattern and growth processes of all living things.

Thus the Vitalists have ample foundations to support their case—the important question being, what is their case? Here, we think, lies the weakness of most Vitalist contentions—at the theoretical level. Usually, the arguments of the Vitalists issue in little more than expressions of moral repugnance for Mechanism and Materialism. They have no metaphysical scheme with which to organize their facts, being content, apparently, to fight a "holding action" against the implications of Materialism.

Emergent Evolution, it seems to us, is a purely verbal way of disposing of the wonders of intelligence in living things, including man. The theologians obtained something from nothing by

granting miraculous powers to Jehovah. Having established the omnipotence of a personal creator, they found a ready explanation for anything and everything in God's will. Emergent Evolution is the scientifically respectable substitute for producing much the same miracles—obtaining, from blind, unintelligent matter, without assistance from any general principle of mind in nature, the genius of a Mozart, a Shakespeare, or an Einstein.

Some day, we think, there will be scientists who will attempt a synthesis between psychic and evolutionary forces, accepting both as natural and complementary. Meanwhile, as we await the verdict of future generations, we may reflect upon the relative futility of matching conflicting "authorities." Brunswik and Feigl, Mathews and Ortega—whom shall we be quoting a quarter- or half- century hence?