



The Ghost in the Machine

By Arthur Koestler

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In *The Sleepwalkers* and *The Act of Creation* Arthur Koestler provided pioneering studies of scientific discovery and artistic inspiration, the twin pinnacles of human achievement. *The Ghost in the Machine* looks at the dark side of the coin: our terrible urge to self-destruction...

Could the human species be a gigantic evolutionary mistake? To answer that startling question Koestler examines how experts on evolution and psychology all too often write about people with an 'antiquated slot-machine model based on the naively mechanistic world-view of the nineteenth century. His brilliant polemic helped to instigate a major revolution in the life sciences, yet its 'glimpses of an alternative world-view' form only the background to an even more challenging analysis of the human predicament. Perhaps, he suggests, we are a species in which ancient and recent brain structures - or reason and emotion - are not fully co-ordinated. Such in-built deficiencies may explain the paranoia, violence and insanity that are central strands of human history. And however disturbing we find such issues, Koestler contends, it is only when we face our limitations head-on that we can hope to find a remedy.

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