

THE TANGIBLE AND THE INTANGIBLE

AN inevitable awkwardness attends the attempt to write about education. A common-sense definition is that education prepares the young for getting on in the world. But today, getting on, as we look around, seems largely a way of going bad, so far as society as a whole is concerned. The sum total of human messes is incalculable. Moreover, getting on has conflicting definitions. For some it means learning how to arrange the conditions of life according to one's liking. For others it means developing the ability to cope adequately with any and all conditions. Learning to choose worthy goals is another way of speaking of the purpose of education. The formation of character is a similar objective. We are able to give various illustrations of the result of this last process, but its operation remains mysterious.

Education has some kind of bearing on the capacity to decide what is worth doing with one's life, and it is also concerned with the means of doing it, but from beginning to end there remains a distinction between what you do and why you do it. The failure to make this distinction throws public education into confusion. Ignazio Silone put it well:

Every means tends to become an end. To understand the tragedy of history it is necessary to grasp that fact. Machines, which ought to be man's instruments, enslave him, the state enslaves religion, parliament enslaves democracy, institutions enslave justice, academies enslave art, the party enslaves the cause, the dictatorship of the proletariat enslaves Socialism.

Thoreau said it more briefly: "The opportunities for living are diminished in proportion as what are called the 'means' are increased." A modern American might reply, "But the more means I have available, the more opportunities are open to me," which might bring from Thoreau the retort, "You haven't decided

what you really want because all those means are in the way."

Why is the distinction between ends and means so difficult to preserve? Mainly because in everyday life they are practically inseparable, as well as in most attempts to talk about one or the other. In theory, means have no meaning except in relation to ends, and, more or less, vice versa. In theory, again, we believe that every child should be brought up to select his own ends in life, forgetting, sometimes, that the environment is full of propaganda and prejudices. In short, it is quite impossible to isolate the young from the goals and habits of the people around them. We try, of course; we talk about "alternative" societies, and we make a stab at giving examples of different ways of living in diverse cultures. We try to make the influence of the environment wide and free, and that, obviously, is good. But that there are limits to even the best environment is also a part of the human condition—a "natural" condition, we may say. After all, a seed must germinate and grow where the wind deposits it, and as Gandhi reminded, not everyone can be born by the side of a river.

The environment, we could say, sets only the problem of means. Siberians require means different from the Tahitians'; the externals of life in Alaska will need skills that people in Florida can ignore. There was a great difference between the means used by Americans in 1850 and those common in 1950. Education, no doubt, must keep pace with such changes, but how, at the same time, do you inspire the young to question the value of some of the changes while embracing others as good? Common sense will no doubt answer most such questions, but how do you clarify the implications of common sense when it must operate under the constraints of sanctified habit?

Americans believe they are amply endowed with common sense, yet collectively they have done things during the past fifty years that now seem appallingly stupid. A lot of very little things which we all do, over the years, produce environmental and other effects that have the irresistible force of a glacier, if not, just yet, a tidal wave. We have dozens of experts who point these things out. But if we hear what the experts say, and not very many do, no real remedy suggests itself in, as we say, a free country.

And so, in consequence, we talk about "society" instead of education. Education, we say, is a good and necessary thing, but ineffective. The time is short, and we must find a powerful political solution. There are dozens, even scores and hundreds of people around the country who are trying to incubate a new political solution, sending out mailings, holding meetings, raising money, and lobbying in various ways. They talk of society as if it were a person you could inspire or direct, or possibly bulldoze, when, quite plainly, "society" is a headless monster that continually rides off in all directions. Yet people *can* be collectively influenced in some ways, and up to a point. When the price of gas goes up and it is announced that there will be less and less of it, they acquire smaller cars and drive less. When they are tired of and disappointed in one President, they elect another. If they are troubled by the statistics of crime, they buy guns and locks and build high fences. More impressive examples, perhaps, may be found, but one thing is sure—if you want to influence "society," you must say nothing the least bit ambiguous. Politics is the art of literal bombast, of unequivocal claim. If you want to get through to the people at a mass level, don't talk about doubts and problems, talk about solutions. Practical politics is entirely the science of means. Ends are not its business. Ends are for *the people* to decide upon. But of course this isn't really true because all means have ends as silent partners.

Ends and means cannot be separated. Ends, as philosophers say, are wrapped up in means. There can be no moral neutrality. There is moral import in the direction and momentum of every deliberated act and most habitual ones. The isolated objectivity of facts and acts is deceiving. Two men go to the bank and make deposits. One is saving up to start a foundation to bring food to hungry people in Asia—or the Deep South; the other man wants to buy an island where he can live without threat or troubled mind. The bank, you could say, is a neutral instrument. But then, if you study banking operations, moral shadings appear. Banks prefer to lend to big operations, they like to red-line non-profit neighborhoods when it comes to mortgages, and their tendency is to support the status quo. Here and there a banker manages to support sensible innovations without much risk to his depositors, but on the whole, banking institutions represent the motives of people who have money and want to keep and add to it. Perhaps it is important for them to stay that way—institutions like banks are supposed to be predictable in their behavior, so that the people who use them know what to expect. Who would put money in a "radical" bank?

This is only a way of saying that changes in motive need to begin with people, who may then start another sort of bank. Meanwhile defective institutions are used in a limited way by people who have other plans for their money. Progressive people still shop in chain stores when they are the only ones around, until someone gets a co-op going, or someone with a Briarpatch mentality opens a shop that begins as a marginal operation to meet actual human needs.

Social changes that work or last come about in this way—inch by inch. It needs to be added that a shop like that, especially at the beginning, needs a certain sort of customer. It will need buyers who don't like the atmosphere of chain stores and supermarkets. A feeling for one's surroundings, matters of taste, are involved. Without customers like that the store won't go.

More than the cash nexus is involved. Buying is not just buying but a sort of social occasion. Shy motives of friendliness have a chance. There may be an exchange of ideas, a comment on common problems, a new form of cooperation in self-help conceived. The flow of human invention may be stirred and go in a good direction. Such currents, over the years, or sometimes even within months, may become strong. There are various ways to raise a barn. There is education for the young in exposure to such tendencies. Even schools can communicate such impulses by reflecting the ways of community, if the community already exists. Otherwise schools are practically helpless, except for a teacher or two, who have to work against the grain.

Education involves learning things that can be taught and things which can't. Both are important, but what can't be taught is the more important of the two. The importance of the things that can be taught diminishes as you learn them. These are skills and techniques. The three Rs are skills and techniques. Once you know them, you take them for granted. Reading is a skill of communication; after you have it you still have to decide what to read. That can't be taught, since it is a matter of internal inclination. People can be taught to imitate the inclination or taste of other people, but this is anti-educational since it produces a fraudulent culture dependent on authority—the various "academies"—for deciding what is good. Of course, a person brought up in an environment of sound intellectual taste may be helped by others to think about his decisions on what to read, and to develop independent measures of quality. What begins as a sort of imitation may develop into something else. Much depends upon teachers, some of whom know how to throw students back on themselves, although others regard students of independent mind as a threat and offense.

How do you tell the difference between the two sorts of teachers? Well, you do or you don't; this is not a matter of public truth. Where the life

emerges in the flow of literature, from year to year, is not easy to determine and it should not be a group decision. Rules may exist, but if they do they probably shouldn't be published. The misuse of rules is worse than having none, in many cases.

All this applies more or less to writing, too. Also, in a way, to arithmetic. As Scott Buchanan has said:

Mathematics is not what most teachers of mathematics teach. They, with the good intention of conveying what they themselves have only as a skill of manipulation, have unconsciously worked a hocus-pocus on their pupils. They have repeated and illustrated opaque formulae, sometimes to the admiration, but almost always to the bewilderment, of their students.

Teachers are able to free their students from the limitations imposed by ignorance of technique, which gives them a power of choice. Are there subtle influences involved even in the teaching of technique? Of course. The teacher is a human being. The texts are written by people. The school carries the atmosphere of its founders and maintainers. These are all influences, colored by past and present motivation. You wouldn't go to business school to be a Henry David Thoreau. To become one of that breed, you probably wouldn't go to any school at all, but you might just go to *some* school, as he did, and then pursue a purposeful education on your own. The purpose is of course there to begin with, more in some than in others—an essential mystery—but it needs to surface and be interpreted in terms of what the world is like just now. And from either opposition or encouragement, it may attain greater strength.

The definable can be taught. And it needs to be, since who can grasp the idea of the indefinable without getting a grip on finite reality? The definable is what we walk on, as earthly beings. The indefinable is what we reach for, as unearthly beings. And life—what is life? Life is a mix of the two, definable and indefinable. And so, in our lives, are we. A child is a being fated to move from mastery of the definable to the mystery of

the indefinable, and to work out an unstable equilibrium between the two. He gets the mastery from his parents and teachers, and perhaps some unmarked inspiration for the other, more important task. But the inspiration is in no teacher's contract. You don't hire to inspire. No cash value is involved. To *pay* someone to give an "inspirational" lecture is a piece of blasphemy. Giving, but no transaction, is involved in inspiration, and it may be best when no one notices what is happening, the inspirer least of all.

In ancient times, the Gods were teachers of men. The ancients, at any rate, so reported. If we take them at their word—which is surely as good as ours—then we might suppose that the gods were the graduating class of an evolution on some other world than this. It might have been a generational thing on a planetary scale. Being finished with their own education, they volunteered to help with ours. Some of them remained remote and obscure, like the "Unknown God" of the Athenians, while others disported themselves on Mount Olympus and issued decrees, omens and oblique instructions. Some of them dipped themselves in sin to be more like us in all things, and performed various peccadilloes in the grand manner, to what pedagogic end heaven only knows. (See Homer and the *Mahabharata*.) Yet out of the relation between the gods and men was born our classical literature.

What are the classics, study of which is pursued in what we now term the Humanities? They are works in which the finite and the indefinable are joined in the embrace called human nature. They undertake the most difficult of all studies—the meaning of human life. Since the range of human life matches the range of our awareness, the material is extraordinarily diverse. It extends from the clod of earth to the Unknowable. It is difficult to classify some of the studies of our time, as Roger Scruton shows in his article, "Humane Education," in the *American Scholar* for last Autumn. He says:

I shall take architecture as an example. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that there is a conflict between those who regard architecture as a science, and those who regard it as a skill, and those who regard it as something different from both. Now if to regard architecture as a skill is to regard it as a means to an end (however complicated the end and however sophisticated the means to it), then the first two parties will agree about what is to be taught in a school of architecture. The "science" of architecture will be nothing more than the theory of a skill, concerned with representing, in theoretical terms, the means to given ends. The acquisition of the skill is the acquisition of the ability to employ those means, and so depends upon their discovery.

The third party will not concede that architecture can be so easily defined. He will say that it involves something else—the exploration of style, the knowledge of the aesthetic properties of details, of materials, of manners, of light and shade. Is this knowledge practical or theoretical? You could put the difficulty in another way: architectural knowledge is not of means but of ends. It is therefore not a skill, and is irreducible to the scientific methods that are subservient to skill. It retains something of the practical, for it involves knowing what to do, and something of the theoretical, since it requires classification and comparison. But the classifications and comparisons point not to scientific truth but to human interest; they are concerned with the understanding of architecture as a feature of the human, and not of the natural world.

So then, as Mr. Scruton says later:

Properly understood, architecture involves a knowledge of the properties of materials, forms, and structures in terms of their resonance in the human spirit. . . . The constraint implicit in humane education is always of that kind: it involves the discovery of spiritual relationships. These relationships are real, but not scientific. In understanding them we are understanding ourselves.

Here we begin to get an understanding of why it is that when essayists set out to deal with some great question, no one of them will start at the same place as any other; the development will in each case be different, and the conclusion will likewise be different, although there may be some family resemblance in what a number of them say. Yet all may be useful or even valuable. The realities considered by the essayist are subtle,

vital, protean, and transcendent in essence. He will make an *essay*, not an answer. He will bring you no Ten Commandments and you will bless him for his reverent abstinence and for his bit of Promethean fire. Toward the end of his article, Mr. Scruton says:

Everything worthwhile in education stems from the attempt to answer the question "Why?" . . . The scientific "Why?" seeks a cause and the laws from which causes emanate. The humane "Why?" seeks a reason. This reason usually names no laws and forswears prediction; it is concerned to make the phenomenon intelligible. It enables the observer to see an order and reason in events; this order lies on the surface like the meaning in a sentence or the spirit in a face.

It is of interest to trace the tensions between the scientific "Why?" and the humane "Why?" in Western history, to see how the preference for the first "why" has affected our lives. Writing (in *The Modern Theme*) of the influence of Descartes, whose life spanned the first half of the seventeenth century, Ortega said:

With heroic audacity, Descartes decides that the true world is the quantitative, the geometrical; the other, the qualitative and immediate world that surrounds us in all the plenitude of its beauty and suggestive force, is dismissed, and assumed to be, in a way, illusory. The physics and philosophy of Descartes were the first manifestations of a spiritual state which, a century later, came to overspread all the forms of human life and predominated in the drawing-room, the law court and the market-place. The convergence of the features of this spiritual state produced the sensibility which is specifically "modern." Mistrust and contempt of everything spontaneous and immediate. Enthusiasm for all the constructions of reason. To the Cartesian or "modern" man the past will be antipathetic because then things were not done *"more geometrico."*

And in the second half of the seventeenth century Jean Baptiste Colbert, minister of Louis XIV's Welfare State, abolished the historic guild ways of teaching architecture and established the French Royal Academy of Architecture with courses which omitted training in craft. The graduates were all theorists, while the laborers would know nothing of design. The students

learned Galilean mechanics and design based on empirical principles. This "revolution" affected all Europe. As two writers in the *Journal of Architectural Education* (September, 1975) say:

Although there might not have existed academies or exact equivalents of the "diplôme," it is a fact that in the countries of the so-called advancing bourgeois society, guilds were shut down, archaic methods of design shunned, "academic" courses adopted as the new vehicle for education and a new, rational, empirical methodology and conceptual framework developed and put into practice.

What was lost?

The building is a human body: to accept such a concept is to commit oneself to the overall framework of archaic methodology, i.e., sacred harmony as an ultimate warrant, a quasi-deductive logic of inference, a classificatory foundation for the justification of design decisions and authority backings to validate them, and a concentration of the repertory of design decisions around proportion, size, and shape.

These conceptions were replaced by a scheme having two variants: "one is the body of the building as a machine, the other is the bodies of the users of the building as machines."

Education has two aspects: the tangible and the intangible; the taught and the untaught, the declared and the implied. The one is but matrix for the other, yet a necessity which goes awry, or even mad, when it fails to do service as a shrine.

REVIEW

A SOCIOLOGIST ON NONVIOLENCE

WHILE Gene Sharp's *Social Power and Political Freedom* (Porter Sargent, 1980, \$15.95) is not an inspiring book—it is difficult to find inspiration in any aspect of politics, these days—the reading of it is largely informing. The author is a professor of sociology with wide knowledge of the literature of this field. He is also a man who does not believe in either war or violence and who did time in prison during 1953 as a conscientious objector to military service in the Korean war. He was for a while secretary to the well-known pacifist, A. J. Muste, and also served as an editor of the London *Peace News*. Among his earlier books are the three volumes of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973) and *Gandhi as a Political Strategist* (1979). Some idea of the content of *Social Power and Political Freedom* may be gained by noting the authors on whom he draws, who include Hannah Arendt, Bertrand de Jouvenel, George F. Kennan, Walter Lippmann, Louis Lochner, Karl Mannheim, Montesquieu, Mosca, Hans Morgenthau, and Georg Simmel.

We found the chapter on control of the power of a ruler by the people the most interesting. The key to Popular control, the writer shows, is a wide distribution of centers of power:

When the *loci* of power are too numerous and strong to permit the ruler to exercise unlimited control or to destroy them, it may still be possible for the ruler to obtain from them the sources of power which he needs. In order to do so, however, the ruler must keep such social groups and institutions sufficiently sympathetic to him, his policies and measures, and his regime as a whole, so that they are willing to submit, cooperate, and make available the sources of power. To achieve this, the ruler must adjust his behavior and policies in order to keep the goodwill and cooperation of the people who constitute the groups and institutions of the society. This is one type of indirect control which these *loci* of power exercise over a ruler. If such an adjustment is not attempted or is unsuccessful, and the ruler offends the population he would rule, then the society's strong *loci* of power may, in open conflict, withhold the sources of power which they control and which the

ruler requires. In this way the population acting through their groups and institutions may impose control over an ambitious antidemocratic ruler or even disintegrate the regime and dissolve the ruler's power.

The reverse is also true. When these social groups and institutions lose their capacity for independent decision and action, their control of the sources of power, or are themselves drastically weakened or destroyed, such loss will contribute significantly to make the ruler's power unlimited and uncontrollable. Under conditions in which such *loci* of power do not significantly exist and the subjects are a mass of atomized individuals incapable of effective group action the ruler's power will be the least controllable by the subjects.

We can see the sense of this, but the analysis doesn't come alive without illustrations, one good one being the French Revolution and its consequences for post-revolutionary France. The Revolution sought to put an end to despotism, and while it destroyed the old regime, it also destroyed those centers of opposition to the king which had exercised some restraint. Following Tocqueville, Prof. Sharp says:

Previously, the provinces and towns were able to resist the ruler. The revolution, however, destroyed their immunities customs, traditions, and even names, and subjected them all to the same laws. Consequently, "it is not more difficult to oppress them collectively than it was formerly to oppress them singly." Whereas family feeling previously supported the individual in opposing the ruler, the drastic weakening or destruction of family feeling left the individual alone in a constantly changing society. . . .

Thus, said Tocqueville, the French Revolution overthrew both the "despotic power and the checks to its abuses . . . its tendency was at once to overthrow and centralise." The destruction of the nobility and the upper middle class made possible the centralization of power under Napoleon. Jouvenel similarly pointed to the post-revolutionary concentration of power and the destruction of significant *loci* of power as acts which laid the foundation for the monolithic state.

It should be noted that this is the consequence of *violent* revolution. As Sharp points out in connection with the "equality" achieved by the revolution: "the violent means of struggle and violent State sanctions

relied upon to produce such 'equality' have frequently contributed to increased concentration of power in the State. It is these particular types of changes in the name of a movement toward equality which constitute a significant contribution to the modern forms of tyranny." The same argument applies to the habit of demanding the application of State power to achieve needed reforms. Prof. Sharp observes:

Reliance on the State to achieve those objectives not only utilizes the existing concentration of power in the State, but also contributes to its growth both absolutely and in comparison to other institutions of the society. Further, that reliance on the State not only does not strengthen the population and its independent institutions, but is likely to weaken them both absolutely and relatively. For example, the establishment of State control over the economy may provide the present or a future ruler with the means by which to "hold in closer dependence the population which they govern," as Tocqueville put it. State ownership of the economy has, for example, provided Communist regimes with the capacity to apply a massive blacklist against political dissidents. This capacity far exceeds that of earlier capitalists, who used such lists far less efficiently to keep trade union organizers from obtaining jobs.

This book is an invitation to think seriously about the psychodynamics of social change. The author proposes that the nonviolent method affords a "political equivalent of war" and he provides a long list of examples in which it has been effective. The weakness of the nonviolent way is not that it does not work, but that it requires thought, preparation, vision, and moral determination. Governments will least of all respond to the reasoning of the nonviolent advocate for the reason that government officials are normally preoccupied with the lowest common denominators of human behavior, in which hardly any of these qualities are present. Meanwhile, reliance on violence is really policy according to habit. Mr. Sharp shows from history that, after a revolution—

The new regime born out of violence will require reliance on violence, and therefore centralization, to defend itself from internal and external enemies. In a society in which subjects and ruler alike regard violence as the only kind of effective power and the only real means of struggle, and in which the ruler has a vast capacity to wield

political violence, the subjects are likely to feel helpless.

In contrast—

The centralizing forces operating in political violence are not present in nonviolent action. The degree of dependence on the nonviolent leaders is reduced as the campaign proceeds. If they are to continue as leaders, it is only because of their voluntarily accepted moral authority and of people's perception of them as skillful leaders and strategists, not because of any capacity to enforce their will by threats or infliction of violence against the participants themselves. . . . The social groups and institutions throughout the society will not have been weakened or destroyed by political violence, or subordinated to its requirements. To the contrary, in nonviolent struggle these *loci* of power are likely to have been strengthened. The experience of working closely together in the struggle, demonstrating greater self-reliance, and gaining experience in means of asserting their ability to continue and to resist the opponent's repression and regimentation, are likely in a successful nonviolent struggle to have strengthened such *loci* appreciably. Gandhi often described a nonviolent campaign as a means by which the people would generate the strength to enable them to advance toward achieving their political goals.

When discussing the possibility of nonviolent action, skeptics are likely to propose examples of situations in which nonviolence appears ridiculous, as will seem the case in, say, an attack by nuclear projectiles from thousands of miles away. But this is the final climax of the violent method and, as many point out, the violent response with nuclear counter-attack is unlikely to reduce the mutual destruction, but will rather make it more extensive.

Nonviolence is at root a way of thinking about the problem of evil as it manifests in human life. Its long-term objective is the transformation of human attitudes and the beginnings of such an enterprise are bound to seem uncertain. This is the reason for reading books of the sort that Gene Sharp writes.

COMMENTARY

NO MILITARY SOLUTIONS

NONVIOLENT action, the theme of Gene Sharp's book (see Review), is not as uncertain in its result as many people imagine. Two books which are generally available are Richard Gregg's *The Power of Nonviolence* and Joan Bondurant's *The Conquest of Violence*. Then, of course, there are the books and periodical writings of Gandhi, many of which can be obtained at modest cost from Greenleaf Books, Weare, New Hampshire, from a dealer interested in distributing Gandhian literature without making a profit—as anyone will see from the catalog sent on request.

In a recent book, *Tell the American People: Perspectives on the Iranian Revolution* (paperbound at \$5.95, including postage, from the Movement for a New Society, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia, Pa., 19143), a Pakistani contributor, Eqbal Ahmad, notes the uselessness of the Rapid Deployment Force for problems in the Persian Gulf, since it could serve neither as a deterrent nor a means of rescue. He adds in conclusion:

Given the realities of the world today, there are no military solutions to the problems of international relations. As long as we remain focused on the military equation, the solutions will evade us, and we shall remain victims of war.

Meanwhile, citizens of the United States who wish to be informed of their own country's plans and preparations for war find it necessary to pursue intensive research—a careful daily reading of the responsible press and the analyses of national policy found in journals like the *Nation* and the *Progressive*. How many people are aware that the U.S. now has what is called a Rapid Deployment Force, first announced by President Carter in 1977 and presently involving about 200,000 men plus 100,000 reservists. According to John Swomley in *Facts for Action*, "Four Army and Marine divisions as well as Navy and Air Force units are being prepared for use in the Persian Gulf." Simulated practice battles have

been conducted in Southern Idaho, "with weapons and troops being airlifted from other states as if they were being flown to the Mid East." By now the plan may have changed, but the point is that such moves go on over our heads, without our choice or any real knowledge of what is happening. Effective violence, it will be pointed out, requires this untrammled exercise of centralized authority.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves SPRING FEVER

[This is another of the heretofore unpublished papers of Harold Goddard, provided to MANAS by a member of his family. We have been saving it for appearance near the first day of spring.]

TODAY is the 21st of March. It is far and away the most important day in the whole year. Yes, it is the Vernal Equinox. Better let Christmas go by without celebration than miss the advent of spring.

You remember what the Vernal Equinox is astronomically: the passage of the sun across the equator of the celestial sphere. We might call it THE SUNRISE OF THE YEAR for the northern hemisphere, for the equator is to the year what the horizon is to the day. Dawn, especially at this season, is the Vernal Equinox of the day. Dawn and sunrise.

Notice how beautifully, how mathematically even, it works out! From the Winter Solstice, December 21 (the shortest day), to the Vernal Equinox: January, February, March, three months, one quarter of the year. From midnight to 6 o'clock: six hours, one quarter of the day. What is a quarter of a life? Reckoning a full life anywhere from 68 to 88 years, divide by four and you get from 17 to 22. I won't ask for a show of hands, but if I did you know that nearly all of you would fall within those six years. You are at the Vernal Equinox, the boundary between boyhood and manhood, girlhood and womanhood. In fact you *are* the Vernal Equinox of human life. *Gnothi seauton*. Know thyself. That is why, to you at any rate, Spring with its attendant phenomenon of Spring Fever is the most important subject in the world.

Not one man in a thousand, says George Gissing, realizes the possibilities of life and joy in the decade between 17 and 27 years—the spring decade. How tragic to realize them only after it is too late.

All the older cultures and civilizations recognized this, and education, for their chosen youth at least, did not consist, as with us, of vocational or intellectual training, but was a genuine Initiation into the mysteries of life. When we are wiser, education will become that again.

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that all these initiations were based on myths of Sun and Earth, of Spring, of Resurrection and Rebirth, and were often created to accompany agricultural rites of putting the seed in the soil. When you step out of this building you will see tiny blades of green pushing up through the ground. To the Greeks those shoots, especially if they were grain, were Proserpina coming back from darkness into light and the upper world after her winter stay with Pluto in his kingdom of night in the underworld. Or, as we would put it, less poetically, emerging from the unconscious into the conscious. Daphne and Apollo, Venus and Adonis, Prometheus, Balder, Christ: they are all stories of love, or sacrifice, or death and resurrection, all in one sense or another spring myths. The very name of the Christian festival of resurrection, Easter, is derived from Eostre, the goddess of the East or of Dawn.

And so when you go out on the first warm days and see the blue sky and the greening earth and feel the sun on your face and the wind in your hair and Spring Fever in your blood, it is of course partly just bodily regeneration, but much of the finer exhilaration and ecstasy is an unconscious memory of early religion, of the thousands of times that in the persons of your ancestors you have bowed down to and worshipped sun and earth and that miracle of their union that is spring.

Why can't we have myths of our own? Today we have right here two of the most perfect symbols of spring that can be imagined. I'm not aware that the Greeks had either. The bluebird: his back made of the blue of heaven, his breast of the reddish brown of earth, half and half, a Vernal Equinox in feathers. And the trailing arbutus: not quite white nor full rose color, but the delicatest

pink, memory of winter and fragrant prophecy of summer in one blossom, another Vernal Equinox.

Bluebirds and arbutus: isn't it a crime to stop to talk of these at a time when the whole world is arming to the teeth, when millions of men are out of work and thousands actually suffering? There are many who will think so, think it pure sentimentalism. Fiddling while Rome is burning. Little do they know that they are the real sentimentalists.

What causes war? Fear and greed, the struggle for world markets, economic imperialism—that is the answer in fashion today. And a very good answer it is, as far as it goes. But it doesn't go far enough. What causes the fear and greed? Why are people afraid and unsatisfied and unhappy? The minute you ask those questions you pass out of the world of economics into the world of psychology, and you are plumb up against the question of our inherited instincts, the question of Spring Fever and other allied fevers. Spring expressed is an ecstasy: it means man's most precious inheritances, religion and poetry and love, all the things that bring men together. But Spring *suppressed* is a turmoil: it means jealousy and envy and avarice and finally, like an exploding volcano, strife and war, all the things that tear people apart. It may turn out that bluebirds and arbutus will have more to do with abolishing war than we imagined.

This is a tremendous subject, too big for a short talk. It is the whole question of the harmonizing of opposites. Equinox means equal night, the time when the Day and the Night are of equal length, when the principles of Light and Darkness, of Sleeping and Waking are in equipoise. Whenever two "mighty opposites," as Hamlet calls them, meet and embrace, you get an equinox in a metaphorical sense. The most exciting moments of life are of this sort. Love affairs, every one of them.

Dawn is neither night nor day, but the two in one. Then, for a moment, the dream world in which all desires come true and the waking world

of stern realities are reconciled. "Our truest life is when we are in dreams awake," says Thoreau. Who hasn't received an inspiration at the awakening hour?

The most significant moments of evolution are those of transition between two worlds. When the first eye first saw light. Think how overwhelmingly real the world of touch must still have seemed at that time, and yet those faint flashes of light were the all-important thing. When the first amphibian came out of the water, and sea and land were wedded. When the first butterfly came out of the chrysalis, and earth and air were wedded. When man stole fire from heaven, or when Prometheus stole it for him. Borderlands, horizons, thresholds of new worlds. What is *our* new world?

All the supreme religious thinkers and artists of the world have understood this principle of polarity: Lao-Tse, Zoroaster, Heraclitus, Jesus, Dante, Michael-Angelo, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Beethoven. They knew. They created. We have forgotten. We make war. This principle of attraction of opposites runs all through nature. In the physical world it is gravitation, magnetism, electricity. In the biological world it is sex. In the human world it is love. In the mental and psychological world it is imagination which brings things together. And it is this last which we forget. We would never dream of trying to produce a child from one parent, a father with no mother or a mother with no father. Yet that is exactly what we attempt in the mental world. We try to solve our problems by reason, and, failing, we fall back and try to solve them by emotion. And emotion leads to war. What wonder that we end, either way, in sterility. We have forgotten that psychological creation, like physiological, demands two parents. We have forgotten that first and last of metaphors: the metaphor of sun and earth. If we want creation and growth we must study Spring, the method of life and of the imagination. When we remember it the prophecy

of Shelley may come true: Shelley, perhaps above
all others the poet of spring:

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth cloth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream. . .
Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendour of its prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

But perhaps that, magnificent as it is, seems
too utopian and far-off. Let me end with
something nearer, A. E. Housman's poem:

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.
Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.
And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

Swarthmore College HAROLD C. GODDARD
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FRONTIERS Molecular Changes

FRED J. COOK, an investigative reporter responsible for prize-winning muckraking journalism during the middle years of this century, is now doing another sort of investigating. In the *Nation* for last Dec. 13, he told about a "solar village" in Massachusetts, near Boston, that is said by its builders to be "the only solar-heated community in the nation." After visiting North Easton, Cook said: "I have seen it; I have talked to its residents—and I have found that it works."

Carey McWilliams, editor of the *Nation* in the fifties (and for some twenty years thereafter), found Fred Cook working for the *New York World-Telegram* and persuaded him to look into the conviction of Alger Hiss as a "spy." Cook took the assignment and became persuaded of Hiss's innocence, which he reported in the *Nation*, and then did a book, *The Unfinished Case of Alger Hiss*. He later explored the misbehavior of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI, producing another book which ended the immunity to criticism of Hoover's organization. His next enterprise was an expose of corruption in New York City, and this was followed by a critical study of the "unwarranted influence" of the military-industrial complex which Eisenhower warned against in his farewell address in 1961. This also became a widely-read book—*The Warfare State*. He then gave attention to some of the "incredibly stupid" covert operations of the CIA.

We needed to know about all these disgraceful and discouraging misuses of the power of elected and appointed officials—about how the modern nation-state conducts its affairs—but such reports generate little more than disgust and distrust. What can anyone do? Electing other people brings only other styles in wrong-doing.

For this reason, Cook's attention to the achievement of a small town in Massachusetts is a welcome change. Those enormous solar panels on fifty-six houses in North Easton amount to a

basic move toward decentralized economic independence. It represents a working with nature. Cook talked to a lot of homeowners. He describes the installations for space and water heating, the insulation required, the heat reservoir of small stones, the economy achieved, and the low (almost nonexistent) cost of maintenance. He gives figures and construction details. He ends his two-page article on this solar village, initially established by Quakers for elderly Friends, by saying:

The Quakers, it would seem, have demonstrated in their own way the unique advantages of solar heat. It is, unfortunately, a concept still struggling for more universal acceptance. A friend of mine who does a lot of work for some of the largest energy companies told me contemptuously: "We've looked into all of these alternative energy sources. Solar? Bah, there's nothing in it. It's good to heat water, but that's about all." Perhaps a visit to North Easton town houses might make him change his mind.

A drop in the bucket, some people will say. And others will ask how much a few solar installations that really work accomplish toward the radical transformation of human attitudes required to change the direction and meaning of enterprise in the United States. What such comment ignores is the need for precisely such grass-roots efforts to add to the momentum toward another kind of society. People who achieve one sort of independence will look for other kinds. Years ago, Albert Einstein said: "To the village square we must carry the facts about the energy crisis. From there must come America's voice."

Along with the development of self-reliance and independence comes a renewal of feelings of both responsibility and capacity. These are qualities which contribute to the matrix for vision. And people who learn how to do things for themselves become more receptive to vision. There is an unmistakable synergistic effect. If people learn to distinguish between the right way and the wrong way to live on the earth, the pragmatic habits of Americans begin to acquire another dimension.

That dimension becomes evident in the thinking of the pioneers in alternative ways of living. The first section of a recent book published by the New Alchemy Institute, Hatchville Road, East Falmouth, Mass. 02536, *The Village as Solar Ecology* (\$22.50, postpaid), is titled "The Historical, Anthropological, Sociological and Spiritual Roots of the Village as Solar Ecology." Here the multiple meanings of human community are explored at various levels. This book provides a philosophic foundation for the return to village life, a transition that will doubtless take many years, although beginnings are already made. It represents the combined thinking of a number of individuals working along these lines, among them Malcolm Wells, William Irwin Thompson, Jay Baldwin, Keith Critchlow, Amory and Hunter Lovins, Earle Barnhart, and John and Nancy Todd. In an early article, Mary Catherine Bateson writes on how the village, if sufficiently large, may provide all the diversity of services needed, becoming "a single shared world." She says:

Does village life inevitably have to be monotonous, so that regardless of who goes to start the village the next generations will become peasants? Unless this question is addressed, there seems to be little use in trying to swim against the tide which has made people through history anxious to get away from their villages, from the tedium of agriculture and from neighbors that know them all too well, and go to the city where the range of choice of all kinds is so much greater, using old villages as, at the most, bedroom communities. It seems important that even if a village is able to be largely self-sufficient in food and energy production, it should not try for cultural self-sufficiency and it should have some specialties which are wanted by surrounding communities, for through history such exchanges as the kula ring or rotating rural markets have provided the moments of excitement.

It seems unlikely that small communities will be able to strike a balance between cultural openness and local generativity, and to maintain the sense of common purpose and identity needed to balance the reduction in apparent choice that goes with leaving the city and reducing mobility, without a shared sense of the sacred and common rituals. . . . Closely linked

to the centrality of a common sense of sacred would be a provision for the very young and the very old, both groups a focus of common care, and neither segregated from the work and production of the community.

It is really only the automobile that makes us think of villages in primarily spatial rather than social terms. A village is not so much a place where a given house is located as the locus of a family, a festival, a garden or a fish pool, the major portion of the lives of many individuals, closely interlocked. In effect, we are talking about breathing new life into what we mean when we say that we *live* in a given place.

For the most part, this is a book by a new crop of scientists and professionals who are using an *educated* imagination to describe the possibilities, feasibilities, and practical intermediate technologies of deliberate community life. Not only the vision, but the nuts and bolts of what to do, based on what has already been accomplished, are in this book. We hope Fred Cook sees a copy.