

THE MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRESSIVELY, stage by stage, the modern world of serious thought is coming to recognize the historical tragedy in the conversion of vision into slogans, which means the degradation of ideals into opinions which are no longer supported by innovative ideas. This was the situation of the Athenians in the fourth century B.C., the time of Plato, and is very much our condition today. Plato abandoned his plans for a political career, having become convinced that in a time of corruption nothing important could be accomplished by political means without a prior regeneration of the moral qualities of the people, and he devoted his life to inquiring into the question of whether it was possible to teach virtue.

He ended his inquiry with the conclusion that success in political forms of action would not be possible without prior instruction in philosophy. After speaking of the fate of Socrates at the hands of his fellow citizens, he wrote in one of his letters:

Hence I was forced to say in praise of the correct philosophy that it affords a vantage point from which we can discern in all cases what is just for communities and for individuals, and that accordingly the human race will not see better days until either the stock of those who rightly and genuinely follow philosophy acquire political authority, or else the class who have political control be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers.

Does this conclusion apply today? What, we might ask, did Plato mean by "philosophy"? For reply we might take from Plato's *Gorgias* the Socratic maxim, "To suffer wrong is better than to do wrong," and see what this implies. Blaise Pascal, a thinker—certainly not a politician—who came much later, amended the Socratic rule by saying: "It is *right* to follow that which is just, it is *necessary* to follow that which is stronger." This compromise—which was not, let us note, adopted by Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Gandhi—has become the rule of modern statecraft and the opinion of practical men

throughout the world, although usually with the further amendment that what is "necessary" is also "right." This was the view of Plato's opponents in the dialogues.

How, we may ask, would the Socratic rule apply to the affairs of today? Take for example the issue of free speech in the twentieth century. Back in 1934, when thoughtful Americans were beginning to worry seriously about the abuses of free speech in this country by both Communists and sympathizers with the Nazis, Carl Becker, an eminent historian, examined the subject of "Freedom of Speech" in the *Nation* for Jan. 24 of that year. People were already saying that it was our duty to silence Communist and Nazi propagandists, since both abuse the privilege of free speech for their own antidemocratic ends. Becker says no. He turned to the definition of free speech, clearly expressed in the Virginia Constitution of 1780, and explained:

As thus defined, freedom of speech was the principal tenet of the eighteenth-century doctrine of liberal democracy. Its validity, for those who formulated it, rested on presuppositions which may be put in the form of a syllogism. *Major premise:* The sole method of arriving at truth is the application of human reason to the problems presented by the universe and the life of men in it. *Minor premise:* Men are rational creatures who can easily grasp and will gladly accept the truth once it is disclosed to them. *Conclusion:* By allowing men freedom of speech and the press, relevant knowledge will be made accessible, untrammelled discussion will reconcile divergent interests and opinions, and laws acceptable to all will be enacted. To the early prophets of democracy the syllogism seemed irrefutable: but to us, in the light of liberal democracy as we know it, the minor premise is obviously false, the conclusion invalid. There remains the major premise. What can we do with it?

Liberals are still prone, Becker says, to think in terms of the vision of the eighteenth century, summed up in Voltaire's epigram: "I disagree

absolutely with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." Becker continues:

Since the eighteenth century we have learned at least this much, that society is something more than a debating club of reasonable men in search of truth. We know what use men actually make of their liberties. We are therefore in a position to estimate the principle of free speech in terms, not of Man and Speech, but of men and speeches—in terms of the best that has been thought and said by the Honorable Members we have elected, the Attorney Generals we have known, the Insults we have suffered, the fruity-throated announcers who, every day for a profit, avail themselves of the liberty of Lying.

Becker did not regard either Communist or Nazi propaganda as a serious threat to American democracy, but saw great danger in other areas—a confirmation in our time of Plato's pessimistic conclusion. Continuing, he said:

The speech that is socially vicious, to the point of endangering all our liberties, functions chiefly as an instrument of the competitive "business" economy. Such an instrument it has always been, no doubt; but never before so important an instrument, for the reason that modern methods of communicating thought are more subtle and effective than any ever before known while the verification of the thought so communicated is far more difficult. The result is that there issues daily from the press and the radio a deluge of statements that are false in fact or misleading in implication, that are made for no other purpose than to fool most of the people most of the time for the economic advantage of a few of the people all of the time. . . . This manifestation of free speech is a far greater menace to liberal democracy than the freest dissemination of an alien political philosophy by Nazis or Communists is ever likely to be; and the only defense for it is that to restrict it would endanger the principles of free speech.

Our weakness, Becker maintains, is not vulnerability to Communist or Nazi arguments, but the use of our free speech for nothing more than unadulterated self-interest—the same affliction that Plato found undermining the political order of the Athenians. As Becker puts it:

The real danger, from the liberal point of view, is not that Nazis and Communists will destroy liberal democracy by free speaking, but that liberal democracy, through its own failure to cure social ills, will destroy itself by breeding Nazis and Communists. . .

Whatever may be the virtues of freedom of speech in the abstract world of ideas, as a rule of political action it is like any other law—it works well only if the conditions are favorable. It works not too badly in a society in which the material conditions of life, being relatively easy, create no radical conflicts of interest, and in which a common tradition of moral and social ideas, one of which is that just government rests upon the consent, freely expressed and given, of the governed. A long-time view of human civilization discloses the fact that such favorable conditions have existed only in a few places or for short times. . . . Even in this Land of the Free there are developing, under the pressure of continued economic stress, significant movements to the left and to the right. These movements can surely not be checked by declaring a quarantine—by pronouncing them "unhealthy," and closing the mouths of Nazis and Communists in order to prevent verbal infection.

Becker could not, in 1934, foresee the issues of the present—the threat to the planet and to public health of the ravages of exploitive technological development, and the menace of nuclear war, now so much in the minds of all thoughtful people—but he did predict that, with the moral decay which goes with rampant industrialism, people would sooner or later demand "drastic action." Events themselves, Becker predicted, would then confront liberals "with nothing better than that choice of evils which liberals always have to face in times when armies speak and laws are silent, the choice of joining one armed camp or the other." He adds:

There would, it is true, be another way out for any liberal who wished to take it. Any man might in desperation cry, "A plague on both your houses!" Withdrawing from the world of affairs, he might, as a non-resistant pacifist, still exercise the right of private judgment, having deliberately fortified himself to face. . . "the consequences." In short, he might, as a last refuge from imbecility, turn Christian and practice the precept that it is better to suffer evil than to do it.

The precept, as Becker well knew, was Platonic as well as Christian, and it was Tolstoyan as well as Gandhian. And it is also Buddhist. But what if these Teachers were right? This is what the man in the street is far from ready to decide, and so we go on with Pascalian compromises, siding with the stronger force, as we suppose we must, until the

final ruin of civilization and the practice of Socratic common sense appears to be a species of heroic madness.

Few writers have found reason to face this dilemma directly, but Hannah Arendt examines its meaning and application in her essay in the *New Yorker* for Feb. 23, 1967. She says:

To the philosopher—or rather, to man insofar as he is a thinking being—this ethical proposition about doing and suffering wrong is no less compelling than mathematical truth. But to man insofar as he is a citizen, an active being concerned with the world and the public welfare rather than with his own well-being—including for instance his "immortal soul" whose "health" should have precedence over the needs of a perishable body—the Socratic statement is not true at all.

This notable difference of opinion—between the philosopher and the man in the street—is the heart of the argument which runs throughout the Platonic dialogues. Socrates maintains uncompromisingly that it is the business of the human being to discover through dialogue with himself what is *right*, and then, having found out what he must do, to stick to his principles through thick and thin. His opponents all maintain that the practice of virtue no matter what the result is impractical—it will not *work*—and only a fool or a madman will insist on it. So, consistent to the end, Socrates drank the hemlock and died when he had no other moral choice open to him, and the Athens which he had tried to save was swallowed up by the vicissitudes of history, as he predicted.

Large questions grow out of this great event in Greek history, such as why should men decide for righteousness when it is wholly against the grain of the times. But there is a background to the asking of this question, whatever answer we give. The few human beings who have chosen the path of virtue, regardless of its earthly consequences to them, are the ones whose lives we cannot forget, and whose example we repeat, over and over, to ourselves and to our children. Why do we do this, if we think them impractical and wrong? Why do we honor them in the rituals we adopt, and make of them cultural heroes, instead of the great conquerors of history—the Alexanders and the Caesars? What will account for this deep contradiction in our own lives? Why do

we preach the great saviors but follow the example of and send our children to school to the great Sophists?

Or, why do some men and women, the few, cleave to their inner convictions and follow their inner sense of what is right, while others—no doubt the great majority—feel insecure and lost unless they are able to find confirmation of their decisions in the prevailing opinions of the majority? Why has the great discovery and inspiration of the revolutions of the eighteenth century—the essential equality of all humans—not been sufficient to bring about and support a truly good society?

These are among the questions which increasingly haunt us today. If we could understand a little more about the radical differences in human beings, we might be able to differentiate more successfully among our fellows, and see that the equality lies in the ideal *potentiality* of them all, while the differences among them need to be understood and wisely coped with. The historian, Carl Becker, in his discussion of free speech, made one approach to this problem. In his *Eupsychian Management*, A. H. Maslow made another, saying:

In a nation in which most people do not have an identity or a real self, in which they are all confused about right and wrong, about good and evil, in which they are basically uncertain about what they want and what they don't want, then they are apt to admire and succumb to and look for leadership to any person who seems to know definitely what he wants. Since the democratic leader, the non-authoritarian person in general, is apt to be marked by tolerance and admission of ignorance, by willingness to admit that he doesn't know everything, sometimes for less educated people the decisive paranoid authoritarian can look very attractive and relieve the follower of all anxiety. . . .

The person who is able to be decisive, who is able to make a decision and stick to it, who is able to know definitely what he wants . . . who is less influenced by contradiction—such a person is in general more apt to be selected out by others as a leader. I think this may be one reason why so frequently obsessional persons are more apt to be chosen as the administrative type or the executive type or the leadership type. They are simply more predictable, more definite about what they like and dislike, less changeable. The fact that this may be for

pathological reasons need not be visible to the psychologically unsophisticated person.

If this analysis is correct—and it certainly seems to be, not only today but for much of the past—one might ask: What is the political remedy for such shortcomings in the electorate? And the answer must be: There is *no* political remedy in a democracy—the form of government under which all citizens are rulers. Yet there are nonpolitical remedies of a sort, remedies which depend entirely upon the characterological structure of the people, and in particular of those who enter politics. Overcoming in some measure this weakness might result if the politicians began to regard themselves as teachers or educators instead of manipulators of public feelings and opinions.

Is that even imaginable in these days? Only with difficulty. Yet there seems no other remedy. The social evolution of the human race has brought us to the place where the responsibilities of democracy belong to us all, and we cannot go back to other forms of government in a time when political power can be so easily misused. It remains, therefore, for us to raise the level of individual responsibility as well as we can, an obligation which makes us all educators of a sort. This, in a way, was also the conclusion that Plato came to, making him take up philosophy.

What then is philosophy? It is what we think of ourselves and of the world. Do our lives have meaning beyond self-interest and acquisition? Is the world something besides a vast but rapidly diminishing store of resources for us to manipulate and exploit?

But who will teach philosophy to the people of our time? Certainly neither the public schools nor the universities. The schools, as recent critics have pointed out, are failing to communicate the basic necessities of citizenship, while the universities are busy with their academic specialties. The kind of education that is needed is that provided by writers like Lewis Mumford and Theodore Roszak, who, while widely read, are unable to affect the great majority. Curiously, in looking about for a culture that performed the kind of education we now need,

we were led to the ancient Greeks, despite the fact that it was the best of the Greeks, the Athenians, that condemned Socrates to death. We take from Werner Jaeger's *Paideia* a passage dealing with the transmission of Greek culture.

It is a mark of the close connection between the productive artistic and intellectual life and the community that the greatest Greeks always felt they were its servants. This attitude is well known in the East also: it seems to be the most natural in a state where life is organized by quasi-religious rules. Yet the great men of Greece came forward not to utter the word of God, but to teach the people what they themselves knew, and to give shape to their ideals. Even when they spoke in the form of religious inspiration, they translated their inspiration into personal knowledge and personal form. But personal as it might be in shape and purpose, they themselves felt it fully and compellingly social. The Greek trinity of poet, statesman, and sage embodied the nation's highest ideal of leadership. In that atmosphere of spiritual liberty, bound by deep knowledge (as if by a divine law) to the service of the community, the Greek creative genius conceived and attained that lofty educational ideal which sets it far above the more superficial artistic and intellectual brilliance of our individualistic civilization. That is what lifts classical Greek literature out of the category of pure aesthetics, in which many have vainly tried to understand it, and gives it the immeasurable influence on human nature which it has exercised for thousands of years.

Called for, we can only say, is a renaissance of this spirit in a modern form, for which it is useless to look in present-day institutions. It can exist only in outstanding individuals who have combined a sense of emergency with the feeling of a great opportunity for making a new beginning. Here we shall say that such individuals exist and are at work, doing all they can to demonstrate the possibility, the health and promise in another way of life. From week to week, in *MANAS*, we call attention to these men and women, who come from all walks of life, suggesting that they, collectively, represent a fundamental transition in the way human beings may work for good with one another and carry on their lives.

REVIEW

GARDENING FOR HEALTH AND ENJOYMENT

VERY slowly, little by little, we are recovering from our dependency on the supermarket for what we eat. This is the conclusion of a non-gardening reviewer with a small patch of vegetables garnished by flowers outside his window, drawn from reading for nearly a whole day in a book that came out recently. Our garden is cared for by an idiosyncratic member of the household who likes to plant flowers, believes there are flowers from which gophers stay away, and has read— or looked at—*How to Grow More Vegetables* by John Jeavons. The new book, on which our prediction of the doom of the supermarket is based—a very distant fate—is a large volume of 378 pages titled *Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Landscape Naturally*, self-published by Robert Kourik, a Californian who has spent some eight years proving to his prosperous clients that vegetable gardens can be delightful to look at and healthy to eat. He establishes his point with several photographs in full color and an extensive text on nutrition. The price, including tax and shipping, is \$19.97.

The author begins by explaining that he learned about "really good food" from two aunts who lived in different parts of rural Missouri. Visiting these aunts, he discovered the pleasure in home-grown and home-cooked foods. "My reason for starting to garden was to have those home-grown tastes no money can buy." He gives the grounds for outgrowing the supermarket:

Shopping at a supermarket, the buyer is dependent upon the limitations of modern agriculture. Supermarket produce is often mediocre—bland and travel-worn. Recently, I wandered among the produce stands of New York City's West Side and looked through the shipping cartons behind each shop. Though it was mid-May, I was amazed to find nothing from the eastern seaboard and very little from the United States mainland. The airplane, the truck, and the train have made it possible to sooth cosmopolitan palates with almost any food, regardless

of the season. But the cost is high—huge amounts of energy, mainly from irreplaceable fossil fuels, are used to ship our produce, not to mention grow it.

If you grow a percentage of your own food, you have a measure of independence, and the skill to grow more if need be. An edible landscape produces more calories than it consumes and can make suburban lawns into food-producing areas, and suburban dwellers into growers, not just consumers.

Health is at issue:

The agriculturing practices of harvesting green fruit and immature vegetables and long-distance shipping have done a lot to reduce the nutritional value of supermarket food. Just as lost nutrients erode our chances for a healthy diet, so do agricultural chemicals. The arsenal of weapons used to eradicate pests and weeds in our amber waves of grain is frightening. Chemicals like 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T (which can contain Dioxin) are still used on pastures, rice fields, and cotton fields.

There is also loss of variety:

If agriculture were a true service to consumers, the variety of food it offered would be increasing, not narrowing. There are 3,000 to 10,000 edible plants in the world (depending on who is doing the estimating), but the National Academy of Science estimated in 1975 that only 150 edible plants have had any large-scale commercial use worldwide. Worse still, the diet of most of the world's people consists of about 20 basic foods. The report cautions, "These plants are the main bulwark between mankind and starvation. It is a very small bastion."

Gazing from my desk out the window, I count over 60 types of vegetables, fruits and nuts growing in my newest edible landscape. By next year, the variety it offers me will have doubled. That's my kind of landscape—one I can count on to provide me with plentiful, healthy food.

Toward the end of the book, Kourik ranks homegrown edibles according to the effort required to produce them:

The lowest-effort plants are ranked #1. Persimmons, pineapple guavas, Chilean guavas, figs, loquats, and mulberries are in this category; they are disease-resistant and their fruit can be eaten right off the tree. On the other hand, to have a good looking, worm-free apple using organic methods is one of the most time-consuming challenges of fruit culture—and would rate a #5, at the top of the effort scale. (If you

were to grow a disease-resistant variety and didn't mind a few wormy apples, then the effort would be #3 or a #4.) Other edibles deserving a #5 are: cabbage, free of insect holes; black walnuts, without walnut husk flies, peaches without peach leaf curl in cool-summer areas; carrots, during the season of carrot rot maggot; blanched endive; and espalier apple and pear trees.

A particular value of this study is the way in which the author warns against flat statements found in books. No book, however valuable—and he recommends a great many excellent books—can take the place of the gardener's personal experience. Beginners may, to their sorrow, jump to conclusions which do not stand up against years of experience. For example:

While the guideline "least is best" should be foremost in the mind of an organic gardener, many end up using sprays to attack insects in the belief that "organic" insecticides are completely safe. *Organic insecticide* is a confusing term, but the common assumption is that a spray made from natural materials (roots, bark, flowers, and so on) is a safe way to kill pests. All pesticides are toxic. They are toxic by degrees; some are more harmful than others, Pyrethrum, derris or rotenone, ryania, and sabadilla—all plant-derived insecticides—are poisonous compounds. . . . Never forget to treat *all* insecticides with respect.

A further caution:

Be wary of condemning an insect. Aphids are on everyone's list of dreaded pests, and gardeners often wage war against aphids at any cost. Yet some open-minded scientists have documented benevolent influences of this besieged bug.

It has been found that aphids may help to fertilize lime trees! Caterpillars, too, are in some cases beneficial.

Our author says:

One bug does not a problem make. We are not as perceptive or fully understanding of nature's complexity as we would like to believe. Good stewardship of our land and forests demands that we try hard to perceive nature's interactions. To maintain nature's intended balance, we need bugs—good and bad alike. No book can delineate the healthiest population densities for your landscape. Explore and experience in your own backyard.

The book is full of briefly stated principles, such as the rule: "Nature abhors bare soil."

Sunlight can heat bare soil enough to flamelessly burn the organic matter of the surface layer, diminishing or destroying its fertility. . . . Gardeners should do their best to avoid bare soil and imitate instead nature's model. Nature combines a mulch to cool and shield the soil, roots of weeds and other plants to conserve nutrients, plus a canopy to shelter the soil from wind and rain. If gardeners bare the soil by cultivating and tilling, they should turn to mulches such as leaves and straw to reduce the problems of spot erosion and overheating. The cooler temperatures under a mulch encourage an active soil life even in the hottest climates. And the mulch also helps to prevent erosion that reduces the nutrients available to the plant. . . .

It's not necessary to till the soil in order to garden. Instead of digging, you can create a garden with surface layers of compost and mulches—less strenuous chores. Initially the amount of time spent may equal the demands of a dug garden, but the effort is less. . . . You have a wide range of methods to choose from. Pick those that suit your yard physical fitness, and level of ambition. A garden does not have to be monopolized by one method of growing. Nature is diverse—gardening should be, too.

We have seldom come across a book on gardening with so much practical information in it. It does about all a book can do to help. The price of the book, as said, is \$19.97. It may be ordered from the Edible Landscape Book, P.O. Box 1841, Dept. P.C., Santa Rosa, Calif., 95402.

* * *

A book in striking contrast with the Kourik volume is *Agricide* by Michael W. Fox (Schocken paperback, \$7.95), an unrelieved horror story of what has happened to American agriculture and animal husbandry as a result of industrialization. Fox is scientific director of the Humane Society of the United States and an authority on animal behavior and welfare. In the eyes of agribusiness, both plants and animals are no longer treated as living things but as nothing more than commodities, without meaning or purpose except as a possible source of profits.

The author says in his introduction

This book is not to be construed as an attack on the family farmer, animal scientist, veterinarian, and others dedicated to the efficient production of wholesome food for domestic consumption and for export. Nor is it—as some critics of my position have stated—a Communist-inspired (and -funded) plot to destroy American agriculture. Rather, it is a critique to convince all sectors of agribusiness, as well as consumers, that a system of agriculture has evolved over the past twenty years which is so flawed as to be ultimately self-destructive.

The book is based on facts and its arguments are convincing. However, its depressing effect might have been somewhat relieved had the author given at least some serious attention to the efforts of such men as Wes Jackson, Wendell Berry, John Jeavons, John Todd, and others who have been calling for change for years and who are out on the land demonstrating what can be done.

COMMENTARY

THE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK

IN the Oct. 15 *Washington Spectator*, Tristram Coffin collects material on the plight of the public schools of the nation. He begins by reminding his readers that there are 23 million illiterates in the United States, explaining:

The 23 million illiterates cannot read a street sign, understand directions on a medicine bottle or write a letter. They can perform only the most menial tasks. Another 44 million adults over 18 years are marginally illiterate.

Then he turns to the shortage of teachers:

The crying need for competent teachers cannot be met because of low salaries and poor working conditions. "Many of our current teachers will retire in the coming decade, and there is a smaller number of teacher college graduates to replace them. Of the nation's over two million elementary and secondary school teachers, one-half will have to be replaced within the next decade because of retirement and attrition." (Senator Charles Grassley.)

Coffin expands on this:

A survey of teacher attitudes by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. predicts that 27% of teachers will leave the classroom within the next five years, and 51% have considered taking this step.

The teacher shortage is so acute that hundreds of teachers are being pushed "into jobs for which they had no training." (*USA Today*.) After 20 years as a coach and gym teacher, Betty Melton was told that she had to teach science in her Sacramento, Calif., high school "or find another job."

According to a report by the Department of Education, the typical starting salary for teachers is \$15,394. Coffin tells of a woman teacher in Hartford, Conn., who left teaching after 13 years, earning \$18,500, and now makes more than \$40,000 as an officer of an insurance company. Other considerations than money cause teachers to seek other work. According to the National Education Association, among them are:

"The lack of time teachers have to work with individual students. . . . The constant shortage of textbooks makes it impossible for students to take

their books home and study. . . . Teachers have an inadequate amount of time to critique students' writing assignments. . . . Work schedules are so tight that teachers have no time to observe other classes and learn from other teachers. . . . Decisions are imposed upon teachers by people who haven't set foot in a classroom since blackboards turned green.

Coffin recounts various suggestions for improvement, but they will hardly be adopted without a fundamental change in attitude by all concerned.

* * *

Having a little more space here this week, we switch to something we found on page 10 of the *New Alchemy Quarterly* (Fall, 1986)—for a change of pace and a change of mood. It is a report on some new institutions which are growing up around the country, offering "educational opportunities" for older youngsters. This story tells about opportunities in "small-scale, regenerative farming in the northeast part of the United States," ranging from apprenticeships on organic farms to college level programs in alternative agriculture. For example, the New England small Farms Institute (Lepson House, Belchertown, Mass. 01007) "maintains a listing of approximately forty farms throughout the New England region and sponsors about fifteen farm apprenticeships a year." Information on request. Another group, the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, arranges apprenticeships on organic farms in Maine. Those interested are invited to contact Cynthia Taylor, coordinator of the apprentice program, Box 520, Gouldsboro, Maine 04330. A similar program in New York is sponsored by the Center for Local Food and Agriculture and the New York Natural Organic Farmers Association. For information contact Darrelle Halverson, New York Workers on Farms, 22 Blackwatch Trail, Apt. 3, Fairport, N.Y. 14450.

For still other programs along these lines, see the Fall *New Alchemy Quarterly*, published at 237 Hatchville Road, E. Falmouth, Mass. 02536.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

THE WORLD OF DREAMS

ONE thing that parents who have children in school can do to improve their education is to make them aware of areas entirely omitted from the conventional curriculum, yet which have manifest importance. What, for example, is the significance of dreams? A book in the MANAS library, *The Dream World*, by R. L. Mégroz, was brought out by Dutton in 1939. The author uses material found in *The Dream in Primitive Culture* by J. S. Lincoln in order to show the limitations of Freudian theory. Mégroz writes:

Dr. Lincoln himself quotes numerous interesting instances, without any suggestion that they may have any intrinsic significance apart from psychoanalytical theory. . . . The exact emotional direction of primitive man's commonest dreams is still in dispute among the experts, though there is no question about their influence in forming social customs, such as the various methods of governing the tribe and the creation and modification of moral "taboos." But while the anthropologists all show that primitive men claim powers of divination and believe that dreams can reveal otherwise inaccessible truth, never do they or the academic psychologists attempt to consider what significance, other than superstitious wish-fulfillment, may be implied by those claims. Dr. Lincoln thus examines the dreams of Navajo Indians, and their ceremonies, and finds the evidence he wants in support of the Freudian theory of an Œdipus complex, but does not comment upon the fact that nine of the collected dreams were prophetic (seven others were of death, three about being caught in dangerous places or slipping down; thirteen about being chased or attacked by animal or man).

Some of these prophetic dreams anticipated a coming disaster such as an uncommon storm or a serious epidemic causing many deaths. Others foretold the death of a relative. A man named Hasteen Hal dreamed that he saw "a white aeroplane" that landed near his tent. "I didn't believe in aeroplanes in those days," he said, "and I hadn't even seen an automobile. I hadn't even heard of aeroplanes at the time. When I woke up I told the Indians of my dream, but they wouldn't believe me. I said if it is true we shall hear about planes. Since

then I have been to Gallup (the nearest town) and have seen lots of white planes just as in the dream."

Presumably if Dr. Lincoln had shown any serious interest in the marvelous claims of savage dreamers to divine the future, he would not be regarded as a "scientific" student.

The Dream World draws on the vast literature of dream for similar material that seems largely ignored by conventional psychologists and anthropologists. Louisa E. Rhine, wife of the well-known parapsychologist, J. B. Rhine, contributed to the March 1955 *Journal of Parapsychology* an article based upon 462 reported cases of "precognition," or foretelling the future. One of these cases was supplied by a Navy wife who said:

During the war my husband was in command of a Naval ship, and naturally thoughts of him were often in my mind. After he had been away for almost two years I dreamed one night that he started home by plane. The plane was wrecked and everyone aboard was killed. I had that dream on 14 consecutive nights. I wrote him asking him when he returned that if it were humanly possible not to come by plane. Several months passed and early one morning he called me from a California airport saying he had just arrived and would leave in about an hour. He asked me to meet him in Washington the following day. I was horror stricken. My feelings are difficult to describe, but I felt he must not fly. I persuaded him to come by train. He cancelled his reservation and had coffee with several officers who had flown in with him, and turned in for a few hours of sleep. When he got up he found the plane on which he was to have left had crashed about 10 minutes after it left the field and everyone aboard was killed.

There is of course no conventionally scientific hypothesis available in explanation of the Navy wife's repeated prophetic dream. Mrs. Rhine remarked:

After all, a hypothesis that could fully explain precognition would have to say how the personality, whether as a whole or in part, could foresee the future, or else it would have to explain the nature of time in such a way that the logical barrier to foreknowledge would be removed. It is no

explanation merely to assume that some part of the personality is able to cross the time boundary.

Yet the MANAS contributor at the time of reviewing this article by Mrs. Rhine dared to propose an analogy, if not a hypothesis, to show how foresight might be understood. He wrote:

A man is seated on a great rock which abuts at the apex of an acute angle into a flat plain. He is elevated, say, a thousand feet above the plain. Two highways intersect on the plain where the point of the rock ends. The man sees two cars approaching the intersection. He sees, because he can look down on each side of the rock, but the drivers cannot see each other. They are equidistant from the intersection and driving at the same rate of speed. The spectator at once anticipates a collision. His voice will not carry and he has no ordinary means of warning the drivers. He may throw a boulder down in front of one car to slow him down. He may shoot a gun, if he has one. In any event, he will feel an intense wish to communicate with the drivers.

How can he communicate his thought to one or both of the drivers? Is there, one may wonder, some sort of elevation in human beings, experienced in sleep, where this sort of vision of the future, or some part of it, becomes possible? Is this the source of what we call "intuitions" or even hunches?

What makes us receptive to an elevated sight? What are the obstacles to such communications? We may not feel we have any sort of answer to such questions, but the fact is that these communications do exist, and are sometimes received, and they may save lives. It is this reality that our materialistic psychology ignores, and we should at least be sure that the young learn about this omission in their education. The literature of psychic research teems with anecdotes about prophetic dreams.

We found in *The Dream World* another report that should be of general interest:

A well-known and very good story is that of H. V. Hilprecht, the Professor of Assyriology in Pennsylvania University, which was fully recorded in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (Vol. 12). Hilprecht went with an

archaeological expedition from Pennsylvania to explore the ruins of Babylon. Two inscribed fragments of agate puzzled him. Their significance and the meaning of the characters inscribed on them remained a mystery. He sent home separate drawings of them, and other objects, and in a dream he saw a priest of pre-Christian Nippur who led him to the treasure-chamber of the ancient temple, the ruins of which Hilprecht had been excavating. On the floor of the treasure chamber the dreamer saw scraps of agate and of lapis lazuli. The priest told him that the two fragments he was puzzled about should be joined together, and explained the use they had all been put to, all of which was confirmed. This kind of creative energy in dreams is beyond the scepticism of the most orthodox critic, and there is no need to exemplify it further. In such experiences as Hilprecht's dream, however, there seems to be a curious anticipation of what is to happen in time, the detailed and unexpected fulfillment of an event seen only in the dream.

The comment of R. L. Mégroz, made in 1939, is still pertinent

Mystical apprehension is still, for science, in the domain of pathology, and if we want an intellectual comprehension of mankind's homogeneity, without omitting the more mysterious elements, we must get it for ourselves by the eclectic method, admitting "unscientific" synthesis . . . as well as the evidence collected by orthodox psychologists devoted to establishing proofs of a theory. . . . After all, we have behind us the wider views of dreams propounded by many fine thinkers and writers.

FRONTIERS

Earth Ethics

Is it proper to use the word "ethics" in thinking about our relationship to the earth? Or should the word be reserved for the moral lives of humans in their relations with each other? Thinkers through the centuries have developed a branch of formal philosophic discourse concerned with issues of right action and called this discipline, Ethics. Medical ethics, business ethics, and numerous other subfields have flourished in recent years. The legacies of Aristotle and Kant, as well as the great religious teachers, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammed, form the basis of the moral perspective we each bring to the everyday problems and crises of our lives.

We form, we acquire a conscience slowly, imperceptibly at first, then later in bursts of experience and leaps of insight. In childhood scruples accrete like stalagmites in a cave. Interestingly, the origin of the word scruple goes back to the Latin, *scrupus*, or rough stone. When we have an ethical objection to a certain action, a rough stone rubbed against our conscience lets us know. Right action on the other hand feels smooth and does not abrade our moral sensibility.

If the concern of ethics is the moral relationships and moral tenor of a culture, by what great flight can we say that ethics should concern itself with humankind's transactions with the natural world? Is it not somewhat daft to talk in terms of a person's relations with a white pine, or a prairie, or an otter? Looked at in uncompromising economic terms, we calculate board-feet of lumber in trees, acres of wheat on prairies, and pelts and dollars in furbearers. The poverty of this view is unfortunately the lens the dominant culture uses to see the natural world. Laws of economics, born of industrialization, belief in endless economic growth, and faith in technology have paid no particular attention to the non-economic qualities of the universe. The collapse of religious faith coupled with the rise of

philosophical cynicism and despair have the twentieth century collectively writhing in loneliness, anxiety, and isolation. In part this emptiness is due to our cut-off-ness from Nature.

Moral events occur in the context of the created, evolving, and mysterious universe we each encounter. Physically earthbound, we sometimes feel our souls pulled upward mightily. Momentarily unbound, we are free to attempt connections with the world beyond measurement and description—the felt universe. The glorious procession of life which began in primeval slime, ascends to flesh born of flesh, human beings restlessly planted on this planet, nourished by its fruits, hardened by its seasons, awed by its splendors, terrified by its power, and finally incorporated into the soil itself in death.

Despite our deep and abiding contact with the physical world, we tend to believe that we merely live on the earth.

Seldom do we feel that we live in and of the earth, "with and within its life," as ecologist-poet Wendell Berry says. But suppose we could imagine the earth as a kind of grand, whole, living organism. Humans as self-conscious, reflective beings are free to make choices about how to relate to this created universe. Our grandeur as the ethical center of the created world implies a connection to this world that is both deep in time and texture and resonant with the Creator's intent. Clearly we are more in and of the earth than merely on it.

As creation is a continuing process, we become more and more human as we grow with the world. Our roles are cast as co-creators of the universe.

What then is our moral obligation to this earth? Aldo Leopold, the Wisconsin naturalist and writer, observed "that land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics."

I think there are at least three ways to open ourselves to the music of Nature's instruments:

respect, wonder, and nurture. Respect implies responsibility. Wonder begets the sacred. Nurture reflects love.

Henry David Thoreau unflinchingly devoted his energies to the realization of his place in Nature. "My profession," he wrote, "is to be always on the alert to find God in Nature, to know his lurking places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, in nature." Thoreau wore the natural world, opened himself up to its powers, and accepted the wisdom of its lessons. Our task is no less. As stewards of Nature we are responsible for our part in the plan. Given our freedom and power, the human community bears a collective responsibility for the well-being of our great blue-green sphere.

Poet Gary Snyder is one among many poets who celebrate the spiritual possibilities in Nature: "The point is in making intimate contact with wild world, wild self. *Sacred* refers to that which helps take us out of our little selves into the larger self of the universe." In the exploration of wonder and awe in the natural world, we end up exploring the universe within, companions with H. D. Thoreau who urged us to "migrate interiorly without intermission." Blake and Wordsworth, Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and E. E. Cummings all shared the vision of Nature as cathedral, the dwelling place of infinite powers, the source of creative energy, and a place where Cummings reminds us "that not all matterings of mind equal one violet."

And finally there is the love born of nurture. Whether we nurture Chinese pea-pods in the garden, chickadees and nuthatches at the feeder, or an ever wilier species of brook trout in the river, the impulse is really the same. For in participating with the seed and soil and sky and stream, this life flows through us and in flowing through us enriches us beyond all measure. In loving this earth we are loving our true selves. The spreading of this love, this richness, is the ultimate end of any ethics.

—CHARLES RADEY