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THE SMALL COMMUNITY

AMONG the books which give attention to the meaning, fortunes, and character of the entire human race there seem to be two sorts. One sort presents studies of what humans, in their various divisions, are like at the present time. These are commonly regarded as or aspire to be scientific works embodying more or less precise description. They include therefore history books, human geographies, sociologies and social psychologies. The other sort of books, while they take into account what *is*—what are the facts of human behavior in the past and the present—are primarily concerned with what *might be*. Depending upon what are held to be possibilities of individual and group development, these are named utopias, ideologies, and sometimes calls to revolution.

If the focus is on individuals, such studies are usually psychological in character and are devoted to the dynamics of human change, insofar as they can be found out. Instead of concentrating on descriptive reality of the way people are now—the status quo of the human situation—these works try to get at and understand the process of *becoming* in human beings. Abraham Maslow, for example, felt that psychology should be the study of becoming, of the realization of high possibility in human life, rather than a classification of human flaws and limitations, considered in contrast with the vague notion of "normality," which is always imperfectly defined. The goal of transcendence was for Maslow a key conception and the "Psychology" which resulted from his lifetime of work is a view of the *mean*ing of human existence. Meaning was what he sought to make objective as the content of psychological science. Facts and processes have of course their place, but their importance is in their service to the explication of meaning.

For Maslow psychology became a part of the humanities, and the humanities some of the raw material of its practice. In effect, he turned modern psychology around. There is much to be said against the twentieth century as an epoch of history, but twentieth-century psychology, in consequence of Maslow's vision and contribution, is radically different from its nineteenth-century forms, in that it is now concerned with the unfolding of the human spirit. No longer merely an "academic discipline," at its best it touches the heart and answers to our longings, is grounded in ethics and the high capacities of the mind.

Something similar might be said of Ortega y Gasset, of the use he made of history and philosophy. For him, as for Maslow, human life was a process of becoming—that was the thing to understand and pursue with better understanding. Yet he, no more than Maslow, neglected the "facts" of life and the problems presented by circumstances and habit. For brief introduction to the themes of his work, the collection of essays under the title *Meditations on Quixote* is perhaps the best.

We come now to the work of another American, Arthur E. Morgan, a man both known and unknown—that is, a man who should be far better known for what his long life of ninety-seven years stood for and accomplished. (He died in 1975.) He was above all an educator, one who early in life decided that the most important inquiry he could pursue was study of the formation of human character. How does it take place? Its origin may remain a mystery, but the contributing factors, he came to believe, could be identified, in some sense measured and deliberately made part of an environmental design. Occasion for speaking of Dr. Morgan is the republication this year of a book central to the work of his life, which first appeared more than

forty years ago—*The Small Community—Foundation of Democratic Life*, now again available from Community Service, Inc., P.O. Box 243, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387, the organization Morgan founded after he retired from his engineering post as chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority. (The price is $10.00.)

Morgan was the leading flood control engineer in this country. His answer to a question put to him a few years before he died—by Donald Harrington of the Community Church in New York—seems a good way to convey his intense interest in the small community. What value, Harrington asked, did he place on his work with TVA? Harrington says in his Foreword to the new edition of *The Small Community:*

> His response, as I recall it, was that he believed his work with the TVA to have been an important contribution, especially because of the concept of regional, multi-purpose water development which was designed and carried out in a way that paid full attention to the development of human beings and human community in the process, making it a kind of model of the right way to undertake such developments, as contrasted with the human disregarding methods followed by most large construction engineering firms. However, he said his years with the TVA were precisely the years when he should have been out around the country arousing interest in America's small communities and raising the endowment necessary to fund a great national effort at small community renewal. By the time he had finished with the TVA and its aftermath, he felt that he was too old to undertake this on the scale required and no longer able to interest those who would have been necessary for the undergirding of such an effort. So deep was his commitment to the cause of the small community development and what he felt would be its immediate consequence, the strengthening of family life and individual human character, that from the point of view of his long-range life goals, he felt he may have made the wrong choice in accepting the chairmanship of TVA.

Concern with the formation of human character began early in Morgan's life. When he was in his nineties, he would sometimes confide to his secretary, Margaret Ensign, his experiences as a youth. Among these was something he did when a boy of ten or eleven. The time was 1888 when he was growing up in the small Minnesota town of St. Cloud. He had noticed that when people gathered on street corners to talk, they didn't say much worth listening to. He was troubled by this and tried to think of a remedy. Fortunately, St. Cloud had a fine public library—gift of the governor of an eastern state—and the boy had already made himself familiar with a number of good books. So, hoping to feed the minds of the people in the town, he went to the library and copied out of books he had read what seemed to him some of the best passages. He took them to the editor of the local newspaper, suggesting that they be printed. He was told if he wanted such material to be published, he would have to pay for its insertion as advertisements. So he raised the money for this by growing vegetables in his garden and then peddling them. After a time the editor decided to print the extracts free, but Morgan began by paying for them. This effort in behalf of the cultural community of his town went on for several years.

We have here evidence of the shaping of the emerging character of a pioneer, one whose mind inclines naturally to the needs of other human beings, who focuses spontaneously on the factors, circumstantial and human, which affect human decision for good, play a part in the formation of constructive habits, and encourage a sense of self which has extended social radius. Is there, we may ask, a characteristic quality or theme which prevails in the thinking and work of the pioneers of the twentieth century? The answer seems clear: Responsibility, the generation of a sense of obligation, individual and social, is the keynote of the best thinking of the present age. In Morgan's case, community seemed the best environment for carrying on this work. The human relationships of the small community, he saw, provided an ideal ground for the development of character and responsibility.

Another pioneer of the generation succeeding Morgan's put this idea in the form of a law. E. F. Schumacher developed it in *Small Is Beautiful.* It might be called the true moral discovery of our age. In the eighteenth century, the moral discovery of the time was the rights of man, the human need for freedom, and the universalizing of this need through the principle and doctrine of equality. The twentieth-century discovery has been that rights have little or no meaning unless created and supported by a growing sense of responsibility. In one of his most important articles ("The Critical Question of Size," *Resurgence,* May-June, 1975), Schumacher stated the rule briefly:

> Many books have been written about moral individuals in immoral society. As society is composed of individuals, how could a society be more immoral than its members? It becomes immoral if its structure is such that moral individuals cannot act in accordance with their moral impulses. And one method of achieving this dreadful result is by letting organization become too large. (I am not asserting that there are no evil individuals capable of doing evil things no matter what may be the size of the organization or, generally, the structure of society. It is when ordinary, decent, harmless people do evil things that society gets into the deepest troubles.)

Here Schumacher is stressing the importance of *design* for the fostering of human development and excellence—to give play to the better human qualities that we all have, but which are suppressed and allowed to atrophy in an environment which has been allowed to grow up without any concern at all for such development. We must, the pioneers of the twentieth century tell us, give conscious, deliberate attention to the design of society, the human environment, in which we grow and through which actual human evolution is either encouraged or blocked. The small community became for Morgan the type and ideal of the best educational environment for human beings, and he devoted his life to showing why and how this is the case. As he put it in the first pages of *The Small Community:*

> Today, as in the ancient past, the small community is the home, the refuge, the seed bed, of some of the finest qualities of civilization. But just as the precious values of the ancient community were submerged and largely destroyed by empire and feudalism, so the present-day community with its invaluable cultural tradition is being dissolved, diluted, and submerged by modern technology, commercialism, mass production, propaganda, and centralized government. Should that process not be checked, a great cultural tradition may be largely lost.

This vision had been stated before, never more explicitly, although in the abstract, than by Joseph Mazzini, Italian revolutionist and pioneer of the nineteenth century. Mazzini saw clearly both the necessity and the limitation of the eighteenth-century revolution, putting his finger on its dream and declaring what must come after. In "Faith and the Future," written in 1835, he said:

> Rousseau . . . had no conception of the collective life of humanity, of its tradition, of the law of progress appointed for the generations, of a common end toward which we ought to strive, of association that can alone attain it step by step. Starting from the philosophy of the *ego* and of individual liberty, he robbed that principle of fruit by basing it . . . on a simple convention, avowed or understood. All Rousseau's teaching proceeds from the assertion "that social right is not derived from nature, but based on conventions."
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> That first statement, the key of the whole system, is by now proven to be false, and because false, fatal to the development of the principle of popular sovereignty. It is not by the force of conventions or of aught else, but by a necessity of our nature, that societies are founded and grow. . . .
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> Right is the faith of the individual. Duty is the common collective faith. Right can but organize resistance: it may destroy, it cannot found. Duty builds up, associates, unites it is derived from a general law, whereas Right is derived only from human will. . . .
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> Is this all we seek? Ought man, gifted with progressive activity, to remain quiescent like an emancipated slave, satisfied with his solitary liberty? . . . Because man, consecrated by the power of thought, king of the earth, has burst the bonds of a worn-out religious form that imprisoned and restrained his activity and independence, are we to have no new bond of universal fraternity? no religion? no recognized and accepted conception of a general and providential law?

Writing, say, a century later, Morgan was able, whether or not he had read Mazzini, to confirm the disastrous social consequences of unrestrained individualism. The principles of the eighteenth-century revolution had run amok. This is what we did with our "freedom" divorced from human responsibility, indifferent to the role and fostering of moral impulses, careless of the environment we were making for our children and our children's children. He became fully aware of the qualities and tendencies that needed to be overcome, and replaced by what he saw to be the natural motives and habits that emerge in small community life. He saw this clearly and wrote in a little book—perhaps the best of all his works—*The Long Road* (1936):

> We must begin far back, in the slow, thorough building of character which will be tried out in the realities of everyday living, and which by aspiration, disciplined by open-minded, critical inquiry, will mature a philosophy of life reasonably adequate to the present day. As that quality of character is matured, it will result in leadership that will . . . give concrete expression in everyday life to a new vision of the quality that life may have. When that vision is clearly expressed and clearly defined the people will gradually receive it as their own, and we shall in large measure have found the solvent for the complexities and limitations of government and business—and of human life itself. The long way round, of building character, in the end will prove to have been the short way home to a good social order.

The ideas of duty and responsibility, verbally moralistic, lose this annoying quality as he shows how they appear naturally and serve the common good in the life of the small community. Arthur Morgan was a utopian and visionary but also a pre-eminently practical man, an engineer who spent his professional career in making things work. When he speaks, then, of the life of the small community, his generalizations all have a ground in intimate experience and observation. In his book he names places where good things were made to happen, tells how, and then points to opposite results in other towns where the practices were different. If there is such a thing as social science, Morgan showed how to practice it. But for him it was no academic specialty or "field," but life as he believed it should be. Naturally, he was well aware of the counter tendencies in our society, of the obstacles in ingrained beliefs and habits. He was confronted by these barriers again and again, in his personal life, his work as an educator, and in the great engineering projects he undertook and brought to more or less successful finish. His hopes, however, were based on experience of the good in human beings, the good that he found had the best chance to flower and become influential in the small community.

His view of what to do, for himself and for others of like mind, was set down in *The Long Road:*

> A relatively small number of persons, determined to work out the necessary implications of a good design of life in relation to the social order, both in ideas and action, without limitation or compromise, might achieve a pattern of living of great value, which would have general and friendly, even if imperfect, reception. The possibilities of freedom, of good will, of beauty, and progress in our society are so far beyond present realities that mild amelioration of the present defects of present character are not enough. We need action that is as radical in many respects as that of the founder of the religion many of us profess. Such radical departure from prevailing custom will at first be limited to relatively few persons.

Why didn't he talk more about religion? He thought about it a lot for himself, and set some things down, but he was well aware that true religion is something that is slowly forged in the practice of a life, and that little is accomplished nowadays by preaching. Actually, the modern world is quite evidently in a transition phase between past religion and religions and whatever is to be the faith of the future. Such a transition cannot be hurried—no more than the formation of character can be hurried. So, instead of talking about spiritual truth as the Buddha or the Christ taught it, he took for his laboratory and field of work the family and core community where actual truth about life is either discovered or pushed to

one side. He gave definition to this field, using the term community, which nowadays probably has more moral potency than any other word in our language. Community as a concept is a term to conjure with. Morgan was able to give this idea rich substance as the focus for very nearly anything we think about in social terms. And the social, although metaphysically separate and derived from the religious, may be the necessary introduction in our time to meaningful religious thinking. But it also has a scientific side, since community has many objective aspects and can be endlessly studied, as Morgan's work shows. He was a reformer, then, who understood his time and saw what *could* be done at our stage of development. *The Small Community* is a record of his vision, his critical analysis, his plans and his achievement.

Morgan, we may say, was one who belonged to a distinctive class of human beings—the conscious and deliberate pioneers. In any period of history it is well to look out for such individuals, to mark them for identification, to recognize their need for support, and above all to see the promise for mankind in what they undertake. Like others in this group, Morgan knew that while he could attract friends and helpers, the actual pioneers are few and often lonely. As he put it. "Only rarely are people creative. Far more frequently they are ready to imitate whatever of excellence may appear." He saw community life as a human association whose small size made good example stand out and followership reasonably easy. It is by this means that genuine culture takes root and spreads. Again as he put it:

> Every addition to human culture, every development of good will, courtesy, fair play and dependableness, originated with pioneers who in their own living demonstrated those traits. Then gradually other people, seeing and admiring those traits, imitated or deliberately achieved them. By that process civilization advances. The problem is, how to find or to develop or to encourage such leadership. For the leaders, the problem is how to bring into being the picture of the full, well-proportioned community as it might be, and how to turn indifference and unconcern into critical but active interest.

Today it seems evident that Morgan's influence has been in the air for some time; or, we may say, he saw in advance the spirit and kind of undertaking this country needs. He has something to say on every aspect of the communal effort that now has many forms. Regionalism—today called bioregionalism—is an example. The work of the Todds with the New Alchemy Institute and with Ocean Arks International, Wes Jackson's Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, John Jeavons' intensive gardening program in Ecology Action—all these are particularized applications of the community ideal, practical, successful, and having ever widening effect.

REVIEW
MORAL RECOVERY

FOR American readers wanting to keep track of the recent course of European thought, and who find the works of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger forbiddingly abstract, Erazim Kohak's book, *The Embers and the Stars* (University of Chicago Press, 1984, $17.50), is likely to be a welcome relief. He is, the jacket flap says, a Czech by birth and a New Hampshire man by adoption. He teaches philosophy at Boston University and lives on a homestead in rural New Hampshire. He brings his knowledge of Old World thought to the New World in a way that does not require the reader to acquire a new vocabulary. What one gathers from his book is a sense of the vast and underlying change in thought now going on, to which Husserl and Heidegger have been contributors, putting its significance in language the ordinary reader can understand. He seems a mild but penetrating thinker, saying in his preface that he has not "sought some alternative 'more natural lifestyle' nor some 'more authentic' mode of being human." He continues:

> Artifacts, I am convinced, are as "natural" to humans as the dam and the lodge are to beavers, culture as "authentic" to them as nature. Nor do I wish to call humanity to an earlier stage of its technological development. It is, surely, good that there are synthetic medicines to ease the surplus of pain, telephones to break through loneliness, and electric lights to keep the wayfarer from stumbling.

Now comes the statement of balance:

> There is, though, something wrong when we use medicine to deaden our sensitivity, when we obliterate solitude with electronics and blind ourselves with the very lights we devised to help us see. There is nothing wrong with our artifacts; there *is* something wrong with us: we have lost sight of the sense, the purpose of our production and our products. Artifacts, finally, are good only extrinsically, as tools. They have no intrinsic sense of their own. A humanity which knew only a world of artifacts might justly conclude that the world and its life therein are absurd.
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> Too often we have so concluded, having sought the sense of life where it cannot be found, in the products of our artifice. To recapture the moral sense of that life and its world, even the world of artifacts, humans need to bracket it, seeing beyond to the living world of nature. It takes the virgin darkness to teach us the moral sense of the electric light. It takes the beauty of solitude to enable us to grasp the sense of the world spoken over the distance, the crystal bright gift of pain to teach us the moral sense of penicillin.
>
> Through the years beyond the powerline I have sought to rediscover that moral sense of life, too easily lost amid the seeming absurdity of our artifacts. In writing of those years, I have not sought to "prove a point" but to evoke and to share a vision. Thus my primary tool has been the metaphor, not the argument, and the product of my labors is not a doctrine but an invitation to look and see.

In place of the "naturalism" defined and delimited by the axioms formulated by the sciences, he proposes a "philosophy which recognizes the being of humans as integrally linked to the being of nature, however conceived, treating humans as distinctive only as much as any distinct species is that, but fundamentally *at home* in the cosmos, not 'contingently thrown' into it as into an alien context and 'ek-sisting' from it in an act of Promethean defiance." The world now being outgrown by the current of serious thought—of which the author is an example—is described in a suggestive passage:

> Actually, our world of artifacts may be no more than the thinnest of layers covering the rhythm of living nature, but it is that layer that we confront in our daily experience. Once we come to take it for "nature," then our impersonal nature-construct appears an accurate description. Then too, the conviction that humans must conceive of themselves either as complex robots and so in tune with a mechanical nature or as moral subjects in defiance of it becomes experientially compelling. Though the theoretical construct of a mechanically ordered matter in motion may bear little resemblance to the living nature of the field and the forest and so may never have appeared convincing before, it is a faithful reflection of a world of artifacts and as such compelling to a humanity whose experience of nature is restricted to contact with artifacts. To insist, as the existentialists did, that though nature be meaningless, humans are yet bearers of meaning, is a noble but an

> infinitely wearying position. It was more with a sense of relief than of regret that the West welcomed the new gospel, proclaimed on the authority of science, that humans are not human after all. The generic naturalism of the Western philosophical tradition broke down, I would submit, because the Western conception *and effective experience* of nature broke down first. To recover the moral sense of our humanity, we would need to recover first the moral sense of nature.

This book is a long essay on the recovery of both senses. It is an effort toward restoration of the human sense of the importance and primary validity of the inner life. We do not attempt to "review" this book, so rich in the values of modern European thought, so well adapted to the genius and insight of the author's adopted country, America. Robert Frost has been a major inspiration to Mr. Kohák. There is a passage toward the end which well illustrates how his mind proceeds, embodying the spirit of the great change that is proceeding in the sensitive modern mind. He says:

> Beyond the point of satisfying need, redundant capacity becomes a burden, not a gain. Greed, the attempt to fill an empty spirit with possessions, is a great producer of depersonalization.
>
> Our preoccupation with labor saving, beyond the elimination of soul-destroying drudgery, is no less counterproductive. To have without doing corrodes the soul: it is precisely in investing life, love, and labor that we constitute the world as personal, as the place of intimate dwelling. In our earlier metaphor, the idea of buying a home is an illusion: it is a house we buy; we make it a home by giving ourselves to it. Generosity of spirit personalizes as greed depersonalizes.

The harsh realities of our alienated lives are still everywhere in evidence, but we are beginning to see them for what they are—our own creations. They can be changed. Nothing substantial stands in the way.

* * *

Rex Tremlett, an English mining engineer now in his seventies, or perhaps his early eighties, is also an excellent writer, a man of principle with a strong sense of humor, all of which make, taken together, reading him a delight. Back in the 70s we came across his book, *The Road to Ophir*, published in London in 1956, and reviewed it with pleasure (Jan. 26, 1972), returning to it thereafter for quotation of his experience while looking for gold, copper, and other minerals. His career in mining was a natural choice because his father was also a mining engineer who had been a pioneer of the Kimberley diamond fields with Cecil Rhodes, and "at the discovery of gold at Witwatersrand in 1886 had pitched the fifth tent in what was to become the city of Johannesburg." *The Road to Ophir* tells the story of Tremlett's life in Africa, adventurous and intensely interesting. He saw what happened to the African natives when Europeans came to their country to exploit the discovery of valuable mineral deposits. The bigger the "strike," the more complete the subjection of the people. But he was a mining engineer. What should he do? The conclusion he reached was this:

> A few small mines, dotted about the veldt like the ones at Sabie, were good things. The vast network of gold-mines and uranium plants surrounding Johannesburg had created such appalling degradation in the black people, and such unbridled avarice in the white, that it was about as evil a thing as man had ever done.
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> I determined that if I found a mineral deposit in Uganda which appeared capable of supporting one large mine, or several scattered small ones, I would report it. But if I found indications of another Witwatersrand or Northern Rhodesian copper belt, I would remain silent.

Tremlett put into practice the ideas of present-day critics of a technology applied without regard for its social consequences. A book like that is bound to be worth reading. *Road to Ophir* is about the author's life in Africa. It now turns out that his life as a miner has two chapters. The first was in Africa, but the second was in Australia, where he went in the middle sixties and found a job with a large firm, the Western Mining Corporation, for whom he worked as an editor and did public relations. There was an interlude between. He went from

Africa to Cornwall, where he and his wife Dinah operated a dairy farm for twenty years. He doesn't say much about this, calling life on the farm "dreary," yet he loved the Cornish country and had family roots there.

Now Tremlett has written another book—*Gold in the Morning Sun*, which is about mining in Australia and lots of other things. For us the new book has two noticeable values. First, it repeats our favorite stories that were told in *Road*—his experiences of African "magic"—psychological telegraphy and unusual healing powers—getting across to the reader the grain of life of the African people in their villages. Second, with the help of friends, he published it himself. The text is legible, the cover design charming, by his wife, the writing, being Tremlett's, enjoyable and good. It is distributed by Pickwick Books, Wellington St., Perth, Australia. (We found no note on the price.) We are delighted that this book is now available since, in the case of *Road to Ophir* (as with some others that can no longer be bought), one feels scruples about urging the acquisition of a book that is out of print. But now its substance is no longer out of print, but can be obtained from Pickwick.

How did he get the job in Australia? After giving the qualifications that would fit him to edit the company magazine, and learning what would be expected of him, he felt a compunction:

> In England it was constantly drummed into you that you were too old at forty. "You have not asked how old I am," I said apprehensively. "No," was his reply, looking surprised. "If you think it important, how old are you?"
>
> "Sixty-three."
>
> His office door opened on to a corridor. From an office on the other side a harsh Australian voice could be heard lambasting someone down the telephone. "You hear that? That is old Paul Mclrney, he is seventy-four, and is evidently putting a rocket under some tardy contractor. If you are as good as he is when you are seventy-four, I'll be delighted. I don't care if you are one hundred and three, so long as you can do the job.
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> I came away a young man. . . .

COMMENTARY
ON "BUILDING CHARACTER"

IS it possible to speak of what used to be called the "virtues" without naming them? Can we discuss "building character" in ways that don't sound moralistic?

These are interesting questions. Why are they pertinent? We don't like direct discussion of character and virtue because it is so difficult to speak of such things without seeming both preachy and egoistic. But take the little list of virtues given by Morgan on page eight—"good will, courtesy, fair play and dependableness." These are fairly acceptable subjects for consideration, perhaps because a human being is able to say that he tries to practice them without seeming to put himself on a pedestal. But if someone undertakes to describe to you the progressive stages of his "spiritual development," the discourse can be quite embarrassing to those obliged to listen. Dependability, on the other hand, is a quality we usually assign to others after a time, having noted that they seem to make a particular effort to do what they say they will do. They don't go about saying, "I make it a practice of being dependable."

Courtesy, at root, is a spontaneous regard for other human beings, at a superficial level becoming good manners, or merely the *forms* of consideration for others.

But "building character," with which the paragraph (on page 7) from *The Long Road* is concerned, is more difficult to make palatable. This may be because, if we say "all men are equal," and believe this means that we all have the same amount of "character," building it is hardly required. We don't like to talk about it because, first, individuals of good character tend to be separated from more ordinary humans, which looks undemocratic; and second, the idea seems to demand that we improve our own character, which is hardly necessary if we are all equal anyway. It sounds like an elitist aspiration.

The thing to do, no doubt, is to clean up the associations of these old words and expressions, and at the same time find new, less "personal" ways of saying the same thing.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

SELF-SALVAGE AT BETTERWAY

WHAT is the shadowed world of juvenile delinquency like? Unless one has a particular interest in this subject, one is likely to have no more information about it than the occasional stories in the newspapers, concerned with increases in the number of offenses or trials of youngsters who have lurid backgrounds. Juvenile delinquency is a problem which no one understands very well, yet which bursts into headlines from time to time, as in the case of Charles Manson, who at thirty-five stood trial for the Sharon Tate-La Bianca murders a few years ago.

Can Manson be regarded as a juvenile? He can if you look up what happened to him in his formative years. Kenneth Wooden devotes ten pages of his book, *Weeping in the Playtime of Others*, to telling the story of Manson's early life. Summing up, Wooden wrote:

> Manson did not choose his own pathway to oblivion and crime. It was charted for him, first by parental abandonment, and then, in a far greater sense, by the massive failure of the correctional system, particularly those in charge of juvenile offenders. Manson was the product of too many impersonal institutions, too many endless days of solitary confinement, too many sexual assaults by older boys, and far too many beatings by guardians and institutional personnel. . . .
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> A review of all Manson's prison records reveals some interesting facts: of twenty-two years in prison, seventeen were spent in federal facilities for crimes that, under state jurisdiction would carry sentences totaling less than five years. There was never once a serious treatment program for young Manson. . . .
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> Manson and countless thousands of children locked away from society during the late forties and fifties became part of the bitter harvest of crime this country reaped in the late sixties and early seventies. What of future children? According to the FBI's annual report, more than 80,000 children under ten were arrested in 1972. Charges were placed against 585,000 children between eleven and fourteen years of age. Without proper treatment, without proper care and education, how many future Charles Mansons will emerge from these statistics?

What do the "statistics" tell us? Not much. Not much, that is, we feel able to do anything about. Yet there are those—a few—who have been moved to strenuous and persistent effort in behalf of the children who run afoul of the law. They make some of the statistics—they read the almost endless studies of "delinquency" that keep on coming out in the professional journals—and are able to compare what the reports say with their own experience in working with the young. We are thinking here of Tom Peters, founder of the Betterway group of halfway houses for juveniles in trouble, in Elyria, Ohio, whose work has been recognized and appreciated by the state agencies directly concerned with juvenile crime. Betterway publishes a newspaper, *Betterway*, which comes out several times a year and may be subscribed to for $2.50—the address is 700 Middle Avenue, Elyria, Ohio 44035. Peters, the Betterway staff, and some of the youngsters write the paper. The Spring 1984 issue (Vol. 8, No. 1) begins with a story headed: "Courts Are Harsher with Girls than Boys," which says:

> Ohio has eight state institutions for boys and one for girls. Those for boys are mostly filled and the one for girls is never full.
>
> Yet the studies in the United States and Europe show that courts are more inclined to punish girls more severely than boys for the same crimes. Boys can do certain crimes and they are ignored, while girls doing the same things are sent away to institutions. Males are seldom incarcerated for promiscuity, running away, or incorrigibility, whereas females are.

This issue of *Betterway* examines the differences and similarities between boys and girls in trouble, among the children who are sent or come to Betterway homes—a place for boys, one for girls, one that is co-ed, and a farm. The report relates:

> At Betterway we have just opened a second group home for girls because we have so many more requests now to take girls. Several years ago we

could not fill one home, and had to make our girls' home co-ed. . . . the increase in girls at Betterway could be related to the current feminist, women's rights mood of part of the country. If women are to be equal to men in many ways, should they also be equal to boys in the frequency of violence of their crimes?

This would mean in the areas of breaking and entering, burglary, theft, assault, gang fighting, carrying concealed weapons, hitting teachers, selling drugs, and driving while intoxicated.

At Betterway we do not see a trend for girls to do more serious crimes from identifying with feminist causes. Perhaps that is because most kids in trouble come from poor and uneducated and problem-filled families with little time or energy or interest for feminist causes. The parents of most kids at Betterway care little one way or the other about the Equal Rights Amendment.

From the days of the first juvenile reformatory in 1895 in the U.S., there was, it is said, a noticeable difference in the way girl offenders were treated. Girls who did what boys did were regarded as "very bad," fallen from the Victorian standards of the day. Black boys and girls were trained for lives of labor at the reformatory, the girls as domestic maids.

White boys, on the other hand, were to be given skills in machine work and educated for middle class ideals. . . . Girls are supposed to be nice girls. Boys can be rough and tumble and bad behavior can sometimes be overlooked. . . .

Our experience at Betterway pretty well reflects the studies on differences and similarities between boys and girls. Most boys and girls have been involved in drug and alcohol abuse. Most have had violent family happenings. Most have at least one step-parent. . . .

More of the boys have been in fights and have committed some crimes. But most of the inner city girls have also been in fights with other girls over boy friends and name calling. Some of these girls carried knives.

Many of the girls have been involved in incest with parents, step-parents, and adoptive parents and foster parents. Boys seldom have incest situations. . . We have had girls who helped boys in robbing places but cannot remember any who robbed alone. We have had boys and girls who shoplift and we cannot see any difference between boys and girls in this area. Nor can we see any differences in sexual promiscuity.

Girls seem to do better in school than boys at Betterway. And of course girls have babies and the babies have to go to foster homes or a relative or be taken care of by the girl. Some of the girls at Betterway have had more than one baby, and currently we have three pregnant girls.

Conclusions: More boys get in more serious trouble than girls. But boys and girls have a lot in common, too. Both need help in life's struggles. We hope we can help.

There doesn't seem to be any moral condemnation at Betterway, but sympathy, understanding, under necessarily firm rules and a watchful eye. Tragedies such as runaways into a life of crime occur; there was an attempted suicide, and other sorts of failure. But at Betterway the young have the example of those who are pulling themselves together and developing into useful persons. The administrators are as patient as practicality will allow, and they quietly care about the young.

The MANAS editors have been reading *Betterway,* issue after issue, for close to nine years. We have the impression that the people there, especially Tom Peters, have a better understanding of delinquent children than anyone else in the country, and have probably done more than anyone else to help the young in trouble.

FRONTIERS

Food Supply and Agricultural Education

WE live in a time of change. While the most evident and most widely reported changes seem largely for the worse, other changes, ignored except by a few publications, are also proceeding for the better. Last May, for example at the opening demonstration of New Alchemy's newest bioshelter, a composting greenhouse, the speaker, Arthur H. Whitman, former executive director of the Maine Organic Gardeners and Farmers Association, told what has been happening in behalf of long-term development of the food supply system.

His talk was reported by Nancy Todd in a column "New Alchemy News," which she contributes every two weeks to the Falmouth, Mass. *Enterprise.* She begins:

> According to Mr. Whitman, "Organic gardening was, of course, the only farming method for centuries, and only in the last three decades, has it given way to what is termed 'conventional' farming characterized by the use of chemically processed fertilizers and pesticides."
>
> Now, however, faith in "conventional agriculture" is beginning to give way to a form of permanent agriculture that is being called the "new method." Mr. Whitman considers that "one of the most significant revolutions in progress today is the revolution taking place in our agricultural schools and in our farming communities . . . at least among those who are deeply concerned about the long-term effect of current agricultural policies on our food supply system."
>
> Fundamental to the "new method" is an awareness stated as part of its philosophy by the Maine Organic Gardeners and Farmers Association, that "the food chain begins with and includes the soil; therefore, the emphasis in organic agriculture is on the proper husbandry of the soil. It is recognized, how, ever, that the ultimate objective is the proper nutrition of mankind, which demands a holistic system including farm, farmer, food and consumer."
>
> Although, according to Mr. Whitman, under the current administration in Washington there is little support for organic agriculture, he does see certain "significant steps in the essential process of bringing our agricultural enterprise around." The "new method" now emerging, he said, "will utilize all of the technology and knowledge we can muster without losing sight of the holistic, the systematic character of agriculture itself."

In a concluding comment, Nancy Todd recalled the remarks of Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau at the opening of the Ark installed by the New Alchemists some years ago on Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. He said:

> Those who are concerned about the future of mankind are haunted by three questions: Will there be enough food, will we have enough energy, and can we produce both without destroying the environment, without making the Earth a place which is not good to live upon?

The New Alchemy Institute was founded fifteen years ago in order to demonstrate that an affirmative answer to these questions is both possible and practicable.

Others are working to provide similar answers, concentrating on areas where specific effort is needed. Wes Jackson of the Land Institute in Kansas, for example, is focusing on the development of a perennial food grain modeled on the plant communities of the American prairie. Such a grain would not require annual plowing by farmers and would be a major step forward in preventing soil loss to erosion. Jackson is also concerned with the present trend in education for agriculture, which he finds giving too much emphasis to molecular biology—on the promise, that is, of gene manipulation for increased agricultural production. The so-called "Green Revolution," he says, has run its course. More of its techniques will not produce bigger harvests, and biologists (some of them) have decided that the new science and technology of gene manipulation needs now to be applied to agriculture. Not only does this sound progressive in scientific terms, it is also fashionable and helps to make research in this area a source of professional eminence and affluence. A high

official in the Department of Agriculture said recently: "There will be a swing toward mobilizing our resources toward biotechnology, genetic manipulation." Jackson notes that the scientists who have made great names in this area of research are not biologists, and that their modern descendants "may never have had a field biology course, never milked a cow or goat, maybe never have driven a tractor."

> They are offering the "specific problem-specific solution" approach as the infallible recipe. This approach assumes that everything outside the specific problem for which they intend to splice in a solution can be held still, that nothing else will wobble, or if it does, that they can splice in a correction for that, too.
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> All of this is high tech research and you can bet your bottom dollar that any outfit that gives you a crop with a spliced-in gene is going to demand a patent and some kind of royalty payment, and they will have the power of slick advertising. It is doubtful that their primary concern will be the high energy cost of American agriculture. One also doubts that they will care greatly about the national and global soil loss problem.

Jackson wants agricultural education to be in the hands of ecologically minded biologists who "are more in the tradition of the long distance runners in research than they are like the sprinters in molecular biology." They, too, have been carrying on research. Jackson says:

> But they are working so high above the individual gene that the nature of their research is fundamentally different from that of the molecular biologists. What they have accumulated and what they have to offer is what those of us interested in a sustainable agriculture need to pay attention to, for the sustainable agriculturalist begins with the notion that agriculture cannot be understood in its own terms—that it comes out of nature. The test for this is the question whether a crop plant should be regarded more as the property of the human or as a relative of wild things. If it is viewed primarily as the property of the human, then it is almost wide open for the kind of manipulation molecular biologists are good at. If, on the other hand, it is viewed as a product of nature primarily, as a relative of wild things, then we acknowledge that most of its evolution occurred in an ecological context, in a nature that was of a design not of our making. . . .
>
> *Molecular biologists can have a role, but they must follow, not lead.*

For background on this important subject one might read the papers and books of Erwin Chargaff, and an article by A. Sibatani, "Molecular Biology: A Scientific Critique," in *The Ecologist*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1984.