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SIMPLY AS A MAN

READING in a little book which the editor, T. W. Rolleston, put together from Arrian's collection of the sayings and teachings of Epictetus, we found in the Introduction a quotation from Chrysippus (who had studied with Zeno, the founder of Stoicism) which seems to have application today. This was a period of intense interest in politics, almost to the exclusion of all else, and philosophy seemed the appropriate response of a thoughtful man, as it had to Plato during the days of Athenian decline. We quote from Mr. Rolleston (the book is *The Teaching of Epictetus: Being the "Encheiridion of Epictetus," with Selections from the "Dissertations" and "Fragments,"* translated from the Greek, and published by Walter Scott in London in 1888):

> In a word, man, as an individual, began to be too much lost sight of in the consideration of man as a citizen; his uses, his duties, the whole worth and significance of his life, came to be estimated too exclusively by his relations to the visible society about him. It was when the great Stoic Chrysippus found himself obliged to stand aloof from all participation in politics—"For if I counsel honourably I shall offend the citizens, and if basely, the Gods"—that such men as he were led to ask themselves: Is there then any sphere of human endeavour out of the reach of the tyranny of circumstance? If I cannot be a citizen, what am I worth then simply as a man?

Some might answer this question by saying, "Not much, unless you give attention to the welfare of the town, city, and country, and indeed the world in which you live!" But a modern stoic might rejoin, pointing out that unless one takes seriously the issue raised by Chrysippus, one's political opinions are likely to degrade into casual self-interest. It is this attitude, in the end, which makes political affairs an arena not worth entering.

In any event, the present is a time when the stoic sort of question seems more and more in order, if only as a possible alternative to sheer desperation. Inquiry into oneself—into the meaning of a human life—is certainly increasing. Such wondering and search are part of the spirit of the age. As long ago as 1933, Carl Jung took note of this tendency (in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*):

> The rapid and world-wide growth of a "psychological" interest over the last two decades shows unmistakably that modern man has to some extent turned his attention from material things to his own subjective processes. Should we call this mere curiosity? At any rate, art has a way of anticipating future changes in man's fundamental outlook and expressionist art has taken this subjective turn well in advance of the more general change.
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> This "psychological" interest of the present time shows that man expects something from psychic life which he has not received from the outer world: something which our religions, doubtless, ought to contain—at least for the modern man. The various forms of religion no longer appear to the modern man to come from within—to be expressions of his own life; for him they are to be classed with the things of the outer world. He is vouchsafed no revelation of a spirit that is not of this world; but he tries on a number of religions and convictions as if they were Sunday attire, only to lay them aside again like worn-out clothes.

Jung here wrote about a major historical tendency, unhappily doomed to become a fashion, yet with an underlying seriousness that persists and grows. It is not difficult to locate earlier expressions of this quest for self-knowledge; one could go back to Socrates, who was its first great exemplar in the West; and in Epictetus there are passages which anticipate with remarkable clarity the distinction made by A. H. Maslow a few years ago, between intrinsic and extrinsic learning. Consider, for example, chapter III of Rolleston's translation of Epictetus, which begins:

> Of all our faculties ye shall find but one that can contemplate itself, or, therefore, approve or disapprove itself. How far hath grammar the power of contemplation? Only so far as to judge concerning

letters. And music? Only so far as to judge concerning melodies. Doth any of them, then, contemplate itself? Not one. But when you have need to write to your friend, grammar will tell you how to write; but whether to write or not, grammar will not tell. And so with the musical art in the case of melodies; but whether it is now meet or not to sing or to play, music will not tell. What, then, will tell it? That faculty which both contemplates itself and all other things. And what is this? It is the faculty of Reason; for we have received none other which can consider itself—what it is, and what it can, and what it is worth—and all the other faculties as well.

A great many people have never thought at all about this wonder of reason—this capacity of self-consciousness for self-criticism. Epictetus is right, it is the master-faculty. There seems a sense in which it is the most extraordinary thing in the universe, and for all our troubles and confusions, *ours.* Next, for Epictetus, comes its use.

> The subject for the good and wise man is his own master-faculty, as the body is for the physician and the trainer, and the soil is for the husbandman. . . For it is the nature of every soul to consent to what is good and to reject what is evil, and to hold back about what is uncertain, and thus to be moved to pursue the good and to avoid the evil, and neither way toward what is neither good nor evil. . . .
>
> The nature and essence of the Good is in a certain disposition of the Will; likewise that of the Evil. What, then of the outward things? Matter for the Will, about which being occupied it shall attain its own good or evil. How shall it attain the Good? Through not being dazzled with admiration of what it works on. For our opinions of this, when right, make the will right, and when wrong make it evil. This law hath God established, and saith, "If thou wouldst have aught of good, have it from thyself."

The Stoics, one could say, took man as given in experience and developed a philosophy of self-reliance based on what they found to be the primary human capacity, even in the face of complete external disaster. Rolleston put the words of Epictetus into Elizabethan English, because it seemed suitable for what he was translating. If we look to the meaning instead of the picturesque words, we may recognize a rigor of thought and informed reflection. And we may also wonder about the improvements in the common social life that might result from the adoption of Stoic habits of decision by a modern community. Epictetus said:

> Give me one man that cares how he shall do anything— that thinks not of the gaining of the thing, but thinks of his own energy.
>
> Chrysippus, therefore, said well—"As long as future things are hidden from me, I hold always by whatever state is the most favourable for gaining the things that are according to nature. . . . For to what end, think you, are ears of corn produced? Is it not that they may become dry and parched? And the reason they are parched, is it not that they may be reaped? For it is not to exist for themselves alone that they come into the world. If, then, they had perception would it be proper for them to pray that they should never be reaped? Since never to be reaped is for ears of corn a curse. So understand that for men it is a curse not to die, just as not to be ripened and not to be reaped. But we since we are both the things to be reaped and are also conscious that we shall be reaped, have indignation thereat. For we know not what we are, nor have we studied what concerns humanity, as those that have the care of horses study what concerns them."

Surely, the time has come to begin this sort of thinking about ourselves. It is thinking which leads, soon enough, to the realization that, as Ortega put it some thirty years ago, our capacity for thought "is always in danger of being lost, and considerable quantities of it have been lost, many times in fact, in the past, and today we are on the point of losing it again." He added:

> To this extent, unlike all other beings in the universe, man is never surely *man;* on the contrary, *being* man signifies precisely being always on the point of not being man, being a living problem, an absolute and hazardous adventure, or, as I am wont to say: being, in essence, drama!

Stoic revivals have been various. One began toward the end of the nineteenth century in the thought of Arthur Morgan, who became the country's leading flood control engineer (designer of TVA) and a great educator (reviver of Antioch College). When he was ninety years old (in 1968) he gave a talk in Yellow Springs, Ohio, titled "Necessity," in which he quoted from some of his notes set down in 1902, when he was twenty-four,

after a day of surveying in the Minnesota woods (in January). These were the thoughts that engrossed him on that winter's night:

> Why is right conduct the main issue of life? What do I mean by right conduct? It is conduct which makes me approach the truth. What is truth? Truth is the expression of necessity. Necessity says, "One and one make two." Truth obediently reports, "One and one make two."
>
> How shall I free myself from necessity? If I rebel, and become immoral, she masters me by force. If I am obedient and moral, I am her slave. If I am her enthusiastic lover, her kind embrace but disguises the immutable grasp she has upon me. The more I love her, the softer and kinder is her embrace. But it is just as immutable as ever. She treats me just as convicts are treated in our reformatory. When they try to escape, they are shut up close. When they show no desire to escape, they are given more liberty. So, the only way I see for being free from necessity is to follow her eagerly and to hunt out her desires before she enforces them upon me. In that way she gives continually larger range to move about in.
>
> The chances are perhaps one to one that there is no virtue in being free from necessity. The chances seem nothing to one that we can be free from her.

Commenting, at ninety, on these thoughts he had when twenty-four, Morgan said:

> Necessity, I came to conclude, is the innate structure of the universe. Without it there would be no universal natural law, but only universal chaos. We live in a world where we can be sure that two and two make four. We can learn what to count on. The person of caprice or of traditional conformity would like the universe in general to be run by necessity, but with special exceptions in his case. He prays for rain when his crops need it, and for clear weather at harvest time.
>
> Necessity is the texture man should use to build his world. From its patterns he creates his designs. As he learns the ways of necessity he discovers what necessity does allow.

At the end of this article, Morgan reflected:

> If for the past few centuries men over the world had been mastering themselves, learning honesty and brotherhood and the ways of the open mind, we would be in no danger today of atomic war. If a person, allowing his imagination to play, looks to the future, he may see crises looming which may make most crises of today seem small and simple. To those who look back from that future, the simple, relatively primitive life of today may seem like the golden age. These possible crises may be real possibilities, not idle dreams. The world of today and tomorrow is creating risks which man never knew, with new hopes and new dangers. . . . I think it is highly probable that the greatest of human achievements have been by men and women whose names never were known beyond a narrow neighborhood. Quite probably in the future as in the past the winning of beauty, truth and excellence may be by persons who were long unknown who left behind living seed of new insight and quality.

These were the thoughts with which we began this discussion, to the effect that the problems of the world, which seem problems of the misuse of power, of manipulation of vast numbers of human beings, and the ever-present threat of mindless slaughtering and destructive force, are really the problems made by people who have never attempted to think the way Epictetus thought, the way Socrates thought, and Arthur Morgan thought. Hence they resort to politics—the politics of power—and if invited to reflect on the true human realities which power cannot serve, but rather conceals and represses, they say that they may consider such matters later on, after they have put the world to rights.

Yet there are those who quietly go on working for a wider awakening to what it means to be human—to have possession of that "master-faculty" celebrated by the Stoic philosophers, and by a number of honored humans down through the centuries, keeping the tradition of self-created excellence and responsibility alive.

We spoke earlier of an awakening to the self—of the recognition that we are indeed selves with parts to play, work to do, heights to envision and to climb toward, once we convince ourselves that that is what intelligences which have the "master-faculty" have come here to do. Are there any precedents for such an awakening? Could it ever take place on a historical (social) scale? Judging from what the best of humans have said and done with their lives, it is at least a possibility, and might also be seen, eventually, as a necessity, in the terms Arthur Morgan has proposed.

In lieu of providing evidence for this hope or expectation, we offer a parallel in the lives of children—the *kind* of discovery that comes to some in sufficient number to give the illumination a name—the "I-am-me" experience, as the psychologists say. Recounting such experiences ought to be a part of the educational framework for inquiry into the nature of man—of ourselves. One of those who set down what and how he felt about himself was Jean Paul Richter (1763-1825), a German writer of genius, called "a pure and sensitive spirit, with a passionate scorn for pretense and an ardent enthusiasm for truth and goodness." He wrote:

> I shall never forget what I have never revealed to anyone, the phenomenon which accompanied the birth of my consciousness of self and of which I can specify both the place and the time. One morning, as a very young child, I was standing in our front door and was looking over to the wood pile on the left, when suddenly the inner vision "I am a me" shot down before me like a flash of lightning from the sky, and ever since it has remained with me luminously; at that moment my ego had seen itself for the first time, and forever. One can hardly conceive of deceptions of memory in this case, since no one else's reporting could mix additions with such an occurrence, which happened merely in the curtained holy of holies of man and whose novelty alone had lent permanence to such everyday concomitants.

Well, someone may say, "You tell us about geniuses and how their self-awareness opens up, but what about ordinary folk like the rest of us?" To this we have only a familiar reply: Where should you look when you are investigating human possibility? To graphs of "average" mankind, or, as Maslow put it, the Olympic gold medal winners? If the goal is excellence, then those who have achieved it would naturally be our best teachers. "If," Maslow said (in *Farther Reaches of Human Nature*), "we want to know the possibilities for spiritual growth, value growth, or moral development in human beings, then I maintain that we can learn most by studying our most moral, ethical, or saintly people." He added:

> On the whole I think it fair to say that human history is a record of the ways in which human nature has been sold short. The highest possibilities of human nature have practically always been underrated. Even when "good specimens," the saints and sages and great leaders of history, have been available for study, the temptation too often has been to consider them not human but supernaturally endowed.

We might conclude with a comparison of what a modern humanistic psychologist has to say about the experience of self-recognition, with the ground of Stoic belief about the nature of man. Our psychologist, then, is Carl Rogers, and the following is what he said during a conversation with Martin Buber:

> It seems to me that one of the most important types of meeting or relationship is the person's relationship to himself. . . . there are some very vivid moments in which the individual is meeting some aspect of himself, a feeling which he has never recognized before, something of a meaning in himself that he has never known before.

For the Stoic doctrine we return to Mr. Rolleston, who says in his Introduction:

> At the beginning of things, so far as they can be said to have any beginning, is the Deity in his purest manifestation, which, be it observed, is . . . a sublimated and ethereal fire. In this fire dwelt the divine creative thought and impulse. . . . Though all . . . proceed from the substance of the Divine Being, the Stoics recognized, in the derived substances which make up the universe as we have it now various degrees of purity, of affinity to their original source. Man's body, for instance, with its passions and affections, lies comparatively far from the divine; but his soul is a veritable ray of the primitive fire. The popular mythology of the day was entirely rejected by the Stoics, although . . . they never attempted to "discredit orthdoxy," but, on the contrary, used its myths and ceremonies with the utmost reverence as vehicles of profound religious truths. But they certainly believed in intelligences above man, yet below the Supreme Being; thus the stars and the lightning are in some sense divinities, by virtue of the supposed purity of their fiery essence.

There are hardly grounds, here, for objecting to a Stoic renaissance, while the quotations from Epictetus seem much in its favor.

REVIEW
A POET'S MOURNINGS

FOR those with the time (and inclination) to be lighthearted now and then, *The Magpie's Bagpipe* (North Point Press, 1982, $12.50, paper), by Jonathan Williams, poet and slightly harum-scarum and bohemian publisher, will be a pleasant discovery. The name of his press is the Jargon Society, located in Highlands, North Carolina. He went to Black Mountain College after dropping out of Princeton. His book has thirty-nine essays concerned with poets, artists, and writers, most of them neglected, and most of them apparently worth hearing about. The essays are way stations on a tour into the lives of these people, intimately anecdotal, with breezy references to places and persons you've never heard of (except for a few), but since the writer's way of telling a story is fun one's ignorance doesn't much matter. Williams reports the joys of his life. He writes about literature, travel, and photography, the latter an interest he acquired at Black Mountain.

To the question of what Jonathan Williams (b. 1929) and his writing are like, the following provides part of an answer:

> It took me four years in an Episcopal school in Washington, D.C., and the help of a Quaker friend to learn that all Negroes weren't named Bessie, came to work at the back door, loved to work for white folks, were actually shiftless, but could be trusted at twenty-five cents an hour if they were fat, very black, and smiled a lot. That is one "place" where I and 90 per cent of the genteel people I know in the South part company. W. J. Cash pointed out definitively in *The Mind of the South* that Southerners have no minds, just tempers and passions. That most people are more concerned with the color of skin than with character as expressed in and around the eyes is something that strikes me as incredible. An utterly tragic error for which all pay dearly every day of their lives.

Williams' grandmother, we learn, lived close to Joel Chandler Harris, making Uncle Remus an "early companion." He doesn't think such books make bigots— "paternalists, probably, but not bigots." Knowing something of the notions and the ways of the landed gentry of the South, he draws a line high above the fruited plain.

> In North Carolina I distrust anything that happens at an elevation lower than 3,000 feet. I shall *never* forget what happened in 1957 just after I had been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship. I had been making a tour of colleges all over the state, reading gratis in behalf of my press, and the poets of New Directions, Grove Press, City Lights Books, and smaller writers' presses. It was suggested to the librarian of the Ashville Public Library that I appear in its auditorium. The reaction was: "No, if you let one of these local people in, you have to let them all in." I made a vow never to read in the town of my birth under any circumstances—easy to keep since I have still not been asked.

About the folks next door:

> My country neighbor, Uncle Iv Owens, thinks I'm in the "poultry" business. No chickens and no eggs, but, also, no questions asked, for which I thank him. *Poetry* is not a word in Mr. Owens' vocabulary—and why should it be? The old gentleman only knows a few verses of Scripture by heart and how to order off for a few things in the Sears catalog.

Yet Williams has a poem about him—

> Mister Williams
> lets youn me move
> tother side of the house
> the woman
> choppin woods
> mite nigh the awkerdist thing
> I seen

—and declares he has "some symbiotic relation with a man like that." As for his sense of place:

> Each man saves himself, in the given place, as best he can; that figures. I do it as, and when, I can. North Carolina, that large abstraction with some 4,000,000 Baptists I shall try never to meet, hardly matters—except that it seems on the whole a superior abstraction to some place called South Carolina. Paul Goodman once tried to teach me: "The society I live in is mine, or I did not live in it at all." Actually, however, the society I live in is a non-Quaker society of friends. Out of the continental conglomeration, I have selected some several thousand persons and some few landscapes: the Appalachian Ridge from Springer Mountain to Katahdin, the Big Sur Coast,

the Roaring Fork Valley in Colorado. . . . The South "exists" for me because I can go to Biloxi, Mississippi, and find Lyle Bongé, the photographer, there. Or Eudora Welty up in Jackson. Or Clarence John Laughlin or Bill Russell on the job in New Orleans; or Tom Merton in his hermitage at Trappist, Kentucky; or Guy Davenport, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, and John Jacob Niles, surviving botulism and bluegrass blather in shoddy Lexington.

If there is a consistent theme in the book—along with his rollicking adventures wherever he goes—it is Williams' complaint of what has happened to the culture and even the everyday life of the country during the past fifty years or so. In general, he is so right. For example:

One of the things that makes poets like myself scream in the night and make uncouth noises is the (apparent) fact that a whole body of traditional reference is going out of currency. One constantly runs the risk of overloading the circuits and expecting "too much" from readers who have been fed vast amounts of commercial swill and venal junk, but who, for instance, have never read the Bible *for its language,* if nothing else. I am not calling for scholars, but what used to be called The Average Reader. Not just poets are being deprived of their audience; a humorist like Roark Bradford loses out as well if the listener has no childhood memory of the tale retold in "The Adulteration of Ol' King David."

Then there is what this poet understands by "tradition":

Tradition could be defined as (1) what you care to remember; or (2) what you simply cannot forget.

A *tradition* is what the making of poems is celebrating. I'll enumerate some of what goes into my own. The point about "caring" is that it is inclusive. As a poet one does not divide the world up into its innumerable factions: white, black, female, old, young, good, bad.

So one remembers fishing trips with grandad to a marvellous place called Sweetwater Creek in the country west of Atlanta. Undoubtedly, all of it is now at the bottom of a polluted reservoir, but no matter. There were summers spent playing with white and black kids on my great-grandmother's farm near Carterville, Georgia. *Everybody* was poor; the geraniums in the empty lard can and the dirt yards swept clean looked the same at the white tenants' (people named Chitwood—straight out of Tobacco Road) as they do at the black.

It seems time to realize that a large part of the trouble in the present world comes from establishment (and red neck) resistance to the very idea that people ought not to be divided up. Communications and transport have made the world one in a practical sense, and little by little people are recognizing that we're pretty much the same, everywhere. That, in a way, is what the nuclear freeze movement is about. The point, here, being that the poets have always known that humanity should not be divided up. And a society which does not honor or even listen to its poets is a society on the way out. Better poets, of course, might help. On this topic Jonathan Williams writes:

But reviewing living poets (or even despising venal hacks) all too seldom brings forth charity from my breast. Mr. Auden says that loving thy neighbor and earning one's living are much more important than poetry. He could be right, though the villainously low estate of poetry has recently been improved by the news that Colonel Harland Sanders paid 7,500 smackers for the first copy of *Poems About God,* the posthumous volume of a cancer victim from Salt Lake City named Ila Hunt Crane. Anyway, what a hard time I have not relishing vile, insolent, illiterate, now-and-then-correct reviews of some of the big competition, since gents like Mr. Ferlinghetti and Mr. Dickey are so remarkably competitive themselves. Yes, Christian charity is much harder than poetry. Besides. as Adrian Mitchell points out, every poet wants all other poets to write like he or she does—except *worse.*

Well, who is preaching to whom? How, one wonders, did Sophocles get on with Aeschylus? A little more from the same essay:

We all know the thing about "without great audiences, there are no great poets" (coined by that old matinee idol, Walt Whitman), and the fact that nobody reads any more. Marshall McLuhan would like to read but hasn't the time. We ought to know that we are plunk in the middle of the new Dark Ages that Pound and many others ("The best lack all conviction, while the worst/Are full of passionate intensity"—W. B. Yeats) were predicting decades

> ago. Pejorocracy is here. Colonel Sanders and McDonalds—Much Worse—are here.

This seems a proper place to stop, but a passage quoted from Basil Bunting makes a more dignified if equally scathing conclusion:

> All the arts are plagued by charlatans seeking money, fame, or just an excuse to idle. The less the public understands the art, the easier it is for charlatans to flourish. Since poetry reading became popular, they have found a new field, and it is not easy for the outsider to distinguish the fraud from the poet. But it is a little less difficult when poetry is read aloud. Claptrap soon bores. Threadbare work sounds too thin and broken backed. . . . There were mountebanks at the famous Albert Hall meeting, as well as a poet or two; but the worst, the most insidious charlatans fill chairs and fellowships at universities, write for the weeklies or work for the BBC or the British Council or some other asylum for obsequious idlers. In the Eighteenth Century it was the Church.

Real poets have a finger on the pulse of things. But they, like many others, also have real problems in practicing their art in—it can't be for—a mass society.

COMMENTARY
SOME SORT OF "ALLIANCE"

WHAT did Chrysippus mean by "the Gods," whom he feared to offend if he counseled basely (see page one)? There might be several ways of reading him. One reading would be to give the gods the meaning assigned to Necessity by Arthur Morgan (see page two). Necessity, he said, is inescapable truth, and gods—if gods there be—must be beings who know Necessity and live by the order it establishes. Gandhi, we may think, had the same eschatological view, since he declared, over and over again, that God is Truth. Yet Chrysippus, the Stoic teacher, may have been content that those who heard him would give "the Gods" the meaning they had learned from tradition, since the Stoics, as Rolleston says, while rejecting entirely the popular mythology, never attempted to "discredit orthodoxy," but "used its myths and ceremonies with the utmost reverence as vehicles of profound religious truths." (See page seven.)

What might have been these "profound religious truths"? The expression "the gods" called to mind something said about them by Synesius, the Neoplatonist who became a Christian bishop (of Ptolemais, in North Africa), although reserving the right to philosophize as he chose. While Synesius (373-414 A.D.) lived more than five hundred years after Chrysippus (280-206 B.C.), it is not impossible that Chrysippus shared in the Platonic conception of the gods, somewhat as given by Synesius in the *Wisdom of the Egyptians.* He wrote:

> Yet you must not think that the gods are without employment, or that their descent to this earth is perpetual. For they descend according to orderly periods of time, for the purpose of imparting a beneficent impulse in the republics of mankind. But this happens when they harmonize a kingdom and send to this earth for that purpose souls who are allied with themselves. For this providence is divine and most ample, which frequently through one man pays attention to and affects countless multitudes of men.

This seems at least one of the ways in which we can understand why, at twenty-four, Morgan asked himself such searching questions. Morgan was an agnostic, although with Quakerish inclinations, and he seldom used the language of any sort of religious belief. But if you consider his life and accomplishments, he was certainly a man who did all he could to help "harmonize a kingdom."

(See in particular his little book, *The Long Road.*) On this basis we have little trouble in thinking that a man like Arthur Morgan had his own sort of "alliance" with some sort of "gods."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL

IN a currently published paper about the Jefferson County Open High School, located in Evergreen, Colorado, twenty-five miles west of Denver, and two thousand feet higher, the principal of the school, Arnold Langberg, says that the school has a structured approach for the student at the beginning, with less and less structure as he assumes responsibility for his own education. After visiting the school a few years ago, a member of an evaluation team said that this Open High School could become "the model for the reform in secondary education." Another academic visitor said, "This school comes closer to living up to its philosophy than any other school I know." By reason of this high praise and because of the content of the paper, we reproduce a portion of it below. (The complete paper is appearing in the winter issue of *Changing Schools,* published at Ball State, Muncie, Indiana.)

* * *

There are three Phases to being a student at JCOHS: Beginnings, Pre-Walkabout, and Passages. During Beginnings, which lasts ten weeks, new students are given a highly structured "disorientation" by staff members and some veteran students. The idea is to help them understand how to take responsibility for their own learning. To do this they must "unlearn" dependence on grades, credits and other external rewards, on the teacher as the sole dispenser of knowledge and on the school building as the only site for education. Activities are provided that help them to understand who they are and what powers they already possess for living productive, satisfying lives. Emphasis is put on what they do well and why doing it well is important to them. They are also encouraged to share information about themselves with others so that they can build a sense of belonging, since it was the social arrangements in the conventional school that caused many students to seek the JCOHS alternative. Whether they had been successful academically or not, they disliked being a "number" in the large, impersonal schools and they were unhappy with the "jock," "cowboy," or "freak" cliques as alternatives. As they begin to feel more comfortable socially, they also start to understand what they can learn from their fellow students and what they can offer in return.

Two week-long experiences in unusual learning environments are an important aspect of Beginnings. One week is spent camped-out in the wilderness and another is spent living in inner-city Denver. The students work in groups of twelve to fifteen for planning and cooking meals and for some of the learning exercises that are peculiar to each environment, while other times they will be on "solo," a personally challenging experience for them. At the completion of each week students are required to write an evaluation which will include specific things they have learned as well as their feelings about the activity. This is their introduction to the JCOHS evaluation system.

Attendance at the weekly Governance meetings is another requirement for Beginnings students. Every Monday morning the school community convenes for three major purposes: presentations, which may be from students describing their successfully completed Passages or from recently returned school trips or from people outside the school community; announcements; and decisions, where each person has one vote in determining the running of the school. As principal I believe my responsibility is to bring major decisions to Governance and to make the minor decisions myself rather than burden the group with trivia. The only major decision I make, and for which I must be held accountable, is whether a particular decision is major or minor. A student leadership group, open to all, takes responsibility for preparing for and running Governance. This continues the new students' "unlearning" as they see that they have as

much political power in the school as they are willing to take.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Beginnings is that every student is given the opportunity to get to know each member of the staff. There are many benefits gained from this, particularly in establishing a positive school climate, but the immediate purpose is to enable each student to make a wise choice for his or her advisor. As this choice is made, the student enters Phase Two at JCOHS and from this point until graduation the advisory relationship is at the heart of the student's educational program.

At their initial meeting, the advisor tries to create a situation of mutual trust and responsibility. The student is helped to assess himself or herself in the areas of personal, social, and academic development as well as to share expectations, apprehensions, wishes, and dreams. The advisor takes notes for two reasons: to help the advisor understand what sort of support might be needed and to give the student initial data against which he or she will be able to measure growth during the Open High School years.

The next step in the advisory process is a meeting, arranged by the student, that includes the student, parents and advisor. This establishes the minimal connection with the school that is required of each family. Parents are given the opportunity to express the expectations they have of their child and of the school, and the advisor helps the student to answer any questions the parents might have about how the school actually functions. A system for future communication with the school is agreed upon that is appropriate for each family, but the goal is always to help the student take the major share of this responsibility.

Each student maintains a portfolio with his or her advisor. This contains documentation of the student's progress through Phases Two and Three of the Walkabout curriculum, self-evaluation of each learning activity, support statements from the leader of each activity, and anything else the student wishes to include.

With the background of Beginnings and the support of an advisor the student is prepared to pursue Phase Two, the Pre-Walkabout skills. There are fifty skills that the school has identified as necessary for survival in our society. These are clustered into eight areas: personal, lifelong learning, investigative, consumer, citizenship, career, leisure time and family. During Beginnings the students were introduced to these categories and given some assistance in how they might demonstrate competence in a particular skill. Among the educational options available to students are classes at Open High School, classes at other schools and institutions, Community Learning apprenticeships, independent study, extended school trips, skill labs, participation in the governance of the school, work in the school's solar greenhouse or recording studio, and community service. Four times a year when a new learning block begins, advisees meet with their advisors to create individual schedules from among these alternatives.

Classes at Open High School constitute approximately one third of a typical student's curriculum. With a staff of fifteen, and with staff members spending at least one third of their time advising, the number of teacher-taught courses is quite limited. One way this is dealt with is by having community volunteers and students offer classes in the school and another way is by encouraging students to take classes at other high schools, community colleges, museums, and professional institutes. Those classes that teachers do offer at JCOHS tend to be team-taught, interdisciplinary, and experiential and they cover a broad range of subject areas at all levels from basic to advanced. Such classes tend to be quite intensive, meeting for two or three hours twice a week rather than in smaller doses every day.

Community Learning, learning by watching someone engaged in his or her career, serves some students much better than reading or hearing a lecture about it. In most cases the student is able to assist the community teacher and occasionally

to perform some of the tasks alone. Students have had apprenticeships with a veterinarian, social worker, public defender, cabinet maker, pre-school teacher, photographer, architect, and in hospitals, museums, and restaurants. One community teacher, a physical therapist, was happy with her apprentice but felt that the Open High had been remiss in allowing the student to work with her without a background in the sciences. Our response was that the student was so excited about a possible career in physical therapy that she had become motivated to learn science *because* of her apprenticeship.

Participation in the governance of the school involves more than just running meetings. Candidates for teaching positions are interviewed by a committee of staff members, students, and parents, and this committee's recommendations to the personnel department have generally been accepted. Public relations about the school is another important student function. It is important to us to have a positive image in the community, but it is even more important that potential students and their parents understand our program so that all kinds of students see it is a viable alternative. We have not had trouble filling our two hundred and ten positions, but we want to be sure that we continue to attract a diverse student body. Unlike many alternative schools, we do not take students on a referral basis nor are we a dropout prevention program. Students choose to come to us with their parent's permission, they are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis, and the percentage of dropouts has generally been equalled by the percentage of what the conventional school might call "gifted" students. It is the students who help to keep our story in front of the public and they have also helped groups that were investigating the possibility of alternative schools for their communities.

Evergreen, Colorado ARNOLD LANGBERG

FRONTIERS

For More Garden-to-Market Farms

READERS of Wendell Berry, Wes Jackson, Joan Gussow, and John Jeavons are well aware of the downhill course of agriculture in the United States, and also know something of what these individuals and their collaborators are doing to get flowing currents in the opposite direction. We now have information about a new agricultural and educational enterprise that will be under way, this year, on one hundred acres near Vienna, Missouri. The American Farm Foundation is establishing there an educational and demonstration center to show the promise of a garden-to-market farm, and to provide a three-year course in this sort of agriculture, with training in food production, marketing, and farm financing. A primary objective is to "create job opportunities by enabling people to buy farms, build energy-efficient homes, and practice agriculture profitably." The Farm Foundation plans to locate other sites for similar garden-to-market teaching farms, and to help graduating students to obtain land for farms of their own. Tuition will be charged for the first three years, after which help will be given to students to complete their education and to develop new farms. One of the teachers, Alan York, presently a farm manager, who worked with Alan Chadwick in California, speaks of the need "to provide a common philosophical basis for taking responsibility for the stewardship of the earth."

A general statement by the American Farm Foundation says:

> New supply and demand forces have begun to surface in the food marketplace. A substantial retail trade in higher quality fresh fruit and vegetables is emerging. Consumer interest in obtaining superior produce and fears about the economy have led to a noticeable increase in gardening farmers' markets, and pick-your-own farms. Gross sales in the "health" food industry have climbed from $300 million a year to almost 43 billion in a decade. In comparison, total edible food sales have gone from $60 billion to $140 billion in the same time period. With an estimated 95 million Americans who believe their health is linked to the way they eat, there is a largely untapped market to fill. Satisfying part of that market requires expanding the available supply of fresh agricultural commodities.

The founders of the American Farm Foundation contemplate the development of land unsuitable for the use of heavy equipment in large-scale agriculture, yet capable of high levels of productivity using garden-to-market methods.

> Through local and bioregional networks, garden-to-market farmers could eventually meet at least part of the production demands for a varied marketplace such as supermarkets, hospitals, restaurants, and food co-ops, and at the same time satisfy consumer concerns about quality, quantity, and price. Such networks would also serve as vehicles for information-sharing in vital areas like seeds, plants, tools, available personnel and farm sites, marketing and financial planning.

The founding members of the AFF board of directors are Betsy Lehrfeld, an Oakland (Calif.) attorney with knowledge of land and water use; William Thompson, of the family-owned Thompson company that manufactures vitamin and nutrient supplements; and James Turner, a Washington, D.C., attorney, who wrote *The Chemical Feast* (Grossman, 1970), the Nader report on the Food and Drug Administration. The AFF literature suggests that these founders have practical as well as good intentions, and their plans, if carried out, should prove of value to young people seeking a useful livelihood on the land.

The present course of conventional agriculture gives ample reason for thinking about the possibilities pictured by the American Farm Foundation

> . . . mainstream agriculture is currently confronting several difficult management problems that have raised questions about its long-term sustainability. For example, there are mounting concerns over the unrelenting financial pressures on farmers because of their dependence on costly and scarce non-renewable resources, especially fossil fuels. The decline and loss of productive land suited to standard farming practices, and the diminishing

effectiveness of chemicals to bolster crop yields are constraining agricultural productivity. The growing concentration of ownership of prime farmland and the all but insuperable financial barriers for new entrants into conventional farming are limiting the ability of Americans to begin or continue farming as a way of life.

The American Farm Foundation will work toward greater efficiency in production by reducing costly nonfarm "inputs" and using appropriate technologies. Its program will include enhancing "soil fertility and increasing the net gain of carbon in the plant community by expanding the cultivation of perennials; and provide consumers with a broader spectrum of superior products by systematically entering the marketplace whose outlets range from farmers' markets to supermarkets." The AFF looks to the gradual development throughout the country of "locally based food production/distribution," which is "garden-centered in its management philosophy, farm-sized in its production levels, and market-integrated in its distribution methods."

The garden-to-market concept has three distinct advantages:

I. Its land-efficient, less-capital-dependent methods and local marketing of fresh products can allow more people to buy farms and enjoy a high quality agrarian lifestyle.

II. Its diversified production can reduce the producer's risks from crop failures and provide the consumer with a greater variety of fresh products.

III. Its agricultural and marketing techniques can offer considerable efficiencies such as eliminating transcontinental shipping costs, while also protecting the land.

The biodynamic and French intensive system, successful in Europe and the Far East, will be largely followed. As for getting land—

In the area of farm acquisition, the AFF believes current financial barriers which prevent people from entering agriculture can be overcome through innovative partnership arrangements that would give investors tax benefits in the early years, dividends later on, and healthy returns on investment. . . . A garden-to-market farm can be expected to achieve full production potential after ten years of development.

For further information, write to the American Farm Foundation, 236 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Suite 10, Washington, D.C. 20002.