

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Any politics which does not aim toward the humanization of its people and the gardening of the world is not an adequate politics.- DC.

Since we all want to live in a vital combination of nature and civilization, why do't we use our wealth to go there? Without a goal to enhance the globe and its nature we have embraced the blind path of killing it off. The goal was to develop technology so as to free people from work and to live in a beautiful world - but not to free them from income. The world we have, where technology, governance and infrastructure support the wealthy and their professional supporters, but not the majority of people, needs to be seen as a grand failure. There is a goal for the world, a mix of nature and civilization, what I am calling GardenWorld, that has a deep appeal to many and could possibly be a goal to which we can work. GardenWorld would replace the drive for growth and consumption that has benefitted the few and not led to a society we love nor can trust, that limits basic security and creates meaningless work and worse unemployment..

We can think our way to a better society rather than just being carried along like a semi out of control. Our society is not ready for autonomous driving (though the tech world is moving us there). We need a shared sense of what is happening and we need a goal to know what we are doing. "Without a vision the people are lost." We are not

using our intelligence to furthering the well being of the species but to enhance favored individual lives. Early societies had elites that took the well being of the population through the complex process of food as crucial, and managed fairly well.

A return to thinking about how the human species and the natural environment can be interrelated is essential, to our survival. We are organized to favor increasing complexity linking money, innovation and markets rather than favoring flexibility to deal with breakdowns and misjudgments. Flexibility may even help us to a more delightful life. While we need innovation, we also need, as a balance, restraint and reflection on secondary consequences of innovative proposals. Proposals need to be consistent with society, with the human life cycle, as well as technical requirements. Learning to appreciate each other and others cultures needs to be the core of a new culture for humanity.

One lesson I hope we all understand: it is very important to be better educated: philosophy, history, anthropology. We tend to believe that we already know the outlines of what is important. This is not true. In fact we have built institutions that reinforce narrow thinking by creating narrow departments and a current practice that supports careers management, not insight .

I recently attended a national forum on research trends. All eight panelists were enthralled with the forward movement of their specialty that seemed reckless. The biologist asked from the audience about what if we failed to develop antibiotics to kill off all harmful bacteria. What is our plan B, just avoided the question and reverted to how

grand the quest was. The NASA person asked about what if a life form found on another planet turns out to be intelligent and hostile. "The quest for knowledge is grand." The scientific establishment - all its institutions - has become a giant economic distribution machine with high pay off for some whose patents and business ideas strike it big. Most young scientists seem to me to be more enamored with success, career and financial, than with the quest or basic science. It appears that maybe in the detailed approach of scientific research and its funding, the basic questions no longer exist in the form of awe but in the quest for riches. I should say that when I entered Caltech as a freshman in 1955 the lower middle class background and concern for career stability were most common. Interest in the mysteries of the world far less on their minds than getting a place and getting ahead.

We have missed the obvious point - that we should have been creating an environment good for growing people in generations, communities, and families. We should be healthy and educated and in love with life. But to do this we need a vision of where we are trying to get to. Our current world situation, including people, land and all that is spread out around us, is not doing well. We need an approach which nurtures the world and its people, not just an enabler of an elite.

This should be a stimulus to rethink - but how far? We might find that Chinese civilization is better prepared to cope with the real conditions than can Western civilization, because it is more comfortable with large organization and balancing thought and feeling, the practical and the

spiritual. Perhaps the very idea of civilization - which can be directly linked to slavery and war and inequality -needs to be rethought. Remember, we need changes big enough to at least substantially affect climate warming trends and get the nuclear genie back in the bottle.

We might be looking at a transition as powerful as from feudalism to capitalism, from agriculture to Industry. Or perhaps the need is not so ominous and we need some new sense of how to get increase production and distribution with environmental safeguards, all tightly managed. Unclear. Through many conversations I am convinced that most of us are stuck, frustrated, even angry, solemn and disheartened, at just this point: we don't know what to do.

We need to rethink how to more purposefully integrate humans with nature, returning to earlier thought, from hunter-gathers through the Greeks, the monasteries and into the renaissance. We need a better sense of what we are trying to accomplish.

In the context of current major issues of climate, terrible distribution of wealth and poverty, population, threats of war, the economy and economic thinking have come to dominate the mental and anxiety landscape. One result is that the power of money has increased and the elite buys the politics. Politics ought to control economics, and politics ought to be relatively representative, and representative should be about people's real desires, not those manufactured by advertising controlled by the economic forces that are causing the problems. Being rich implies at least a big house in a neighborhood of others also

rich, lots of travel, children go to good college, and lots of discretionary time. But this has a high cost to others and near complete isolation from reality for oneself.

Yet the possibility of greening the planet and spreading a humane culture does exist. The current situation, a bit more chaotic than a year ago, cries out for a vision of where we might go. Tech futures and more economic growth, just don't do it. The Internet as alternative governance, hacker culture, share economy, grass roots are all plausible and attractive, but lack an aesthetic or an image of human development, and do not deal well with the question of who, in such a world has the power. As it is the Internet is an enabler of our better and worse tendencies, toward sharing and toward control. In a recent Silicon Valley conversation I was told "You will have to pay for everything on the Internet, Facebook and Wikipedia. Nothing will be free." We need to understand the dynamics that carries the Internet toward being a part of the everyone connected money culture in which those who can't pay can't participate.

Economics dominates our conversation and we are not good at discussing history (the stories of what happened), anthropology (observations of how others had or still live), Philosophy (thoughts about who we are and how then to live). Much is being written, driven by the expanding awareness of crisis. Most of it is stuck on diagnosis: what ails us, rather than on who we are and what we should, therefore, do.

The history of economics shows that the discussions started, with the Athenians around Plato and Aristotle, as a larger self-conscious reflection on the purpose of the use of land to feed us, and the emerging social organization to manage the whole. The Greeks called it *eco* (home)+*nomos* (law, procedure or management. I will have more to say about the even earlier history of *nomos*, as equal distribution.) and hence *eco-nomy*.

“Economics”, which is the description of economies, came much later. The Greeks of classical times, about the time of Aristotle and Plato, were able to discuss the role of elites and the meaning of community good in the same conversation. But over time generations of later thinkers about economy reduced their thinking from being about the conditions of living, a pragmatic concern for the community, to being a mechanical system of a few forces in quantifiable interactions.

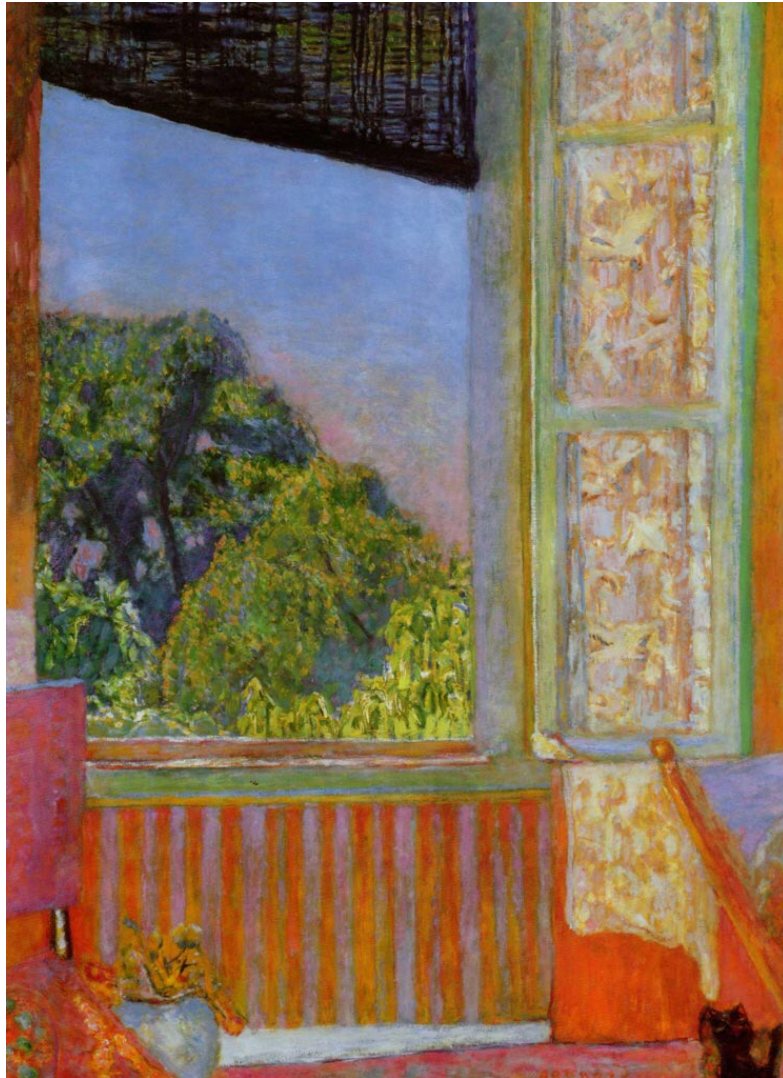
We frequently hear and read that we need some sense of what is our purpose so that we can direct our activities meaningfully. But we get bogged down in proposals for change that are not integrated into a vision with other proposals. Our population is divided:

- those who want a life, security, continuity and rewarding work.
- those who want ownership that pays interest or dividends and want to push society towards controlled change called innovation, leaving them in control and rewarded. which the rich are trying to maintain and the 99% are afraid of.
- And perhaps a third, those who are beaten and afraid,

I would like to put the emphasis in this book on the positive. The impressionist painters, for example, took the colorless world of 19th century,



And filled it with color, making the bourgeoisie life attractive and livable.



That is the quiet Bonnard. More vibrant the rascally Renoir's Boating Party.



For a deeper understanding of GardenWorld and its life I will discuss a bit further on the vision of David Hockney, a painter, Chris Alexander Architect, and Erich Fromm, psychoanalyst. But we live in darkening times and need to discuss all the trends showing the need for something like making a better world - from the earth through the society to the people. Probably only by exploring the dark side can we have the courage to search for the light.

I once taught a seminar on the psychology of creativity at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington. I worked with the students to develop a perspective on creativity that would last their life. What we came up with was that the human (humus) rises from the earth and is caught in the cross winds of culture and its symbols. The symbols current in the culture only partially map onto our experience. The artist is the one who feels the awkwardness of that misfit, and their career as an artist is struggling to make better symbols (art) while the normal person lets it alone. How far can we go in getting “normal” people to take their experience seriously and work to make their ideas a better fit? This question, how far can we go in the development of everyone, is critical for GardenWorld.

The balance we have now has led to a destructive economy hurting the environment and achieving an increasingly bad distribution of income and wealth. The people are restless and the rich are militarizing the police. We have no vision beyond this tectonic plate balance of huge social forces heaved about by population and consumerism,. GardenWorld is an attempt to articulate a vision that is plausible, attractive and already present in the minds of all the people. GardenWorld is more of an intent to make our world more green, aesthetic, pacific and supportive of individual and community environment, and maybe a coherent believable culture, but not a plan. If everyone has the intent and act on it the plans will emerge but if we start with a plan, that would be oppressive.

What would it take to improve the social and natural world nexus and get us off the path of catastrophe? A simple step, such as taking cars off the streets in downtown shopping areas, while probably enhancing, do not deal with underlying causes or the needed broad based powerful interventions..

There is a fairly wide-spread understanding that we must deal with

- Climate (global warming, sea rise and ocean death)
- Population. (Too many people).
- Debt (unpayable, a siphon from poor to rich)
- Governance weakness (representative democracy not working, can't solve problems)
- Systematic poverty (housing job discrimination, racial markers)
- Automation (robots are owned, jobs are lost)
- Food (quality not providing health)
- Education (purpose has been lost)
- Health (poorly maintained and an environment that makes us sick)

- The use of social wealth beyond the limits of allocation through capital
- Growth, what is it?

The problem is, the standard approach to each of these issues tends to make the others worse. Jobs increase pollution which increases global warming. Automation making things cheaper fails to deliver income to buy them. Preparation for war makes wars more likely.

And I want to add to the list, because they will be a major part of the focus here, philosophy, politics, economics, all from the Greeks, all part of the modern term *culture*, as where problems arise and solutions will arise if we are to get there. I imagine a parallel book written in China, moving China toward a GardenWorld Vision. As a culture they are closer than we in the West.. We need to learn from each other. The Chinese landscape was more hospitable to human nature perspectives than was the sands and rocks of the Middle East.

Economics, because it has become the normal language of social thought, the infrastructure of thinking about daily life, a close look at economics will pervade the book. At times it seems to me we would be better off without the words “economy” and “economics”, just drop it all, all of which makes it look like the experts are in control and making sense. We could continue to discuss things more specific like interest, money, investment, class, technology, trade, but not using the awkward vocabulary of economists such as marginalists, GDP, utility. The use of these words implies that the economy is a coherent understandable entity, which might be a great illusion.

But I have come to a different view. That there is lots of good in the idea of “economy”, just that it has been coopted by those who are the supporting cast for the seriously wealthy who use

economics as a justification to legitimate their exploitation. “Economy” is suggestive of a more holistic interest and was used by Aristotle, Plato and Xenophon for estate management. The farm or estate was the major unit of social organization and the writing discusses everything: land, grain, animals, slaves, family members and relation to others - politics. It is an exploration of how to manage in order to produce the livelihood of human beings to flourish, not as mere consumers but as larger people. I will be discussing how we got from an holistic economics from estate management to a mere economics of an isolated individual, and how we need desperately to return to a framework for managing the globe with due respect for the needs of centralization and decentralization in the face of vary serious threats to the “estate” we now live on.

I am going to spend some time on the serious issue of economics, poverty acivilization and revolution.

It is too early to lay out a single specific plan but it is not too early to work toward a vision with ideas about implementation. We need a framework that doesn’t dictate but provides some criteria for what the planners and implementers do. GardenWorld is not a plan but an intent.

The stress on the material, the shift from citizen to consumer, a shift we have almost all made, avoids the deeper issues that might have to do with culture. Can a society without a shared comprehensive belief in the nature of reality survive? We might be living in a world where believe is somewhat arbitrary but essential. How to balance these legitimate concerns? Lots to discuss here.

So far looks like we are fragmenting, bringing isolated individuals to the internet, or marginalizing the people outside the networks. We are tearing apart institutions and left with a soup of isolated individuals. A few large corporations and governments remain, but without loyalty or significant leadership. Where are the leaders? Gates, Tim Cook, Besos, on the core issues? Silent, so far as I can tell. The issue is clear, we have an economy many think is the right idea, but it is leading to the destruction of the civilization we have. GardenWorld, with lots of help, I hope is a destination that can pull it all together.

Several other larger issues we have, through science, become aware of, from unaided nature: asteroids, earthquakes, and then from aided nature, the geo-politics of war and competition, plagues and fires and sea rise. We know the sun will go out in a few billion years and earth has been here for a few billion. Our human story ends badly, later or sooner. Should we even talk about these? As William Saroyan wrote, "Every man knows his true destiny, but he like his detours because they take time."

This above list of issues is too heavily weighed to the materialist thing-world side of our culture at the expense of the cultural, political, social, educated and arts side. These are primarily about relationships, self with other, self with self, self with nature - and all with all. David Brooks caught the spirit when he wrote "Market fundamentalism is an inhumane philosophy that makes economic growth society's prime value and leaves people atomized and unattached," but he doesn't go further, like what's wrong and what to do about it.

We have not created a world where dealing with human issues is easy. Parents are too anxious to be emotionally available and take pleasure in children enough. Children can, in too many places, no longer be safe to go outside, leading perhaps to hyper-activeness and behavior stuff that in a healthy society would be

taken care of through play in the park or neighborhood or “the woods.”. Families used to live and work together, then the wives brought lunch to the workers in the field, then with larger farms and factories, the home family work world was broken.

Our absence of vision as to where we might try to go is paralyzing our imagination and needs to be understood. My writing here is based on the idea that there is already in the musings of most people a viable vision which I am calling GardenWorld - a mixture of nature and civilization driven by an intent to make the world more green, more productive of what we really need, and more aesthetic. A good place to grow people.

We are all communists in our own families. No question but that we share. We could look at history as the extension or contraction of what is meant by “family”, whose fate do we care about?

Shared Culture

There is a possible shared culture in the world today: scientific attitude of honesty and comparison of ideas, open interest in how things work and respect for facts, a rising culture of compassion and concern for others, a recognition that relationships are deeply meaningful, a belief in democracy and expertise, love of nature and life.

From Princess Diana to the multi million person marches against the war in Iraq to concern for migrants and children and concern for health and parks. When Princess Diana died in a car crash, the world wide reaction was powerful and nearly universal. The shock was not because she was rich but because she was rich and socially engaged, a mix of aesthetic and ethical qualities. That something in the world’s people prepared them for that reaction did not have to be taught or shown, but evoked.

What else is in us? A kind of post christian christianity in the human feeling of Christ, Buddha, Confucius, maybe even the open

heart of Islam, and many less well-known religious and spiritual achievements which lead to compassion and awareness.

It is probably much easier to achieving social goals that are already present than to try to create an alignment of society to something unthought of. Social change is much easier if it builds on ideas and desires already thought, even desired, in many minds. But the alternative need may be present in the world but still present in the minds and aspirations of a large part of the people. There may be some hidden surprises. The most recent example as I write is the world wide compassion and concern for the boys rescued from the cave in Thailand. I think we have that intensity of concern for the rest of us, but fear of competition and getting left behind or run over by change keeps us from manifesting that concern in a world wide demand for better non-authoritarian global management.

I like the more recent work of the fairly well known architect Chris Alexander. He has shown a life long interest in what modules of architectural design lead people feel they are living well. In paying attention to the tone and feel of such spaces he came to pay attention to and gather, a strong collection of, early antique rugs. He wrote that the rug makers in the 12th and 13th centuries were trying to create patterns of aliveness: what combination of colors, shapes and errors made the rugs feel most alive?

(Insert picture)

He realized that such thinking required a judgement about what felt alive. He developed a little experiment. Take two photographs of different architectural scenes and ask, which one is more alive. People make quick and near universal choices even across culture. He concluded that the ability to sense what is alive is highly developed in us - but not used by our culture as a design criteria.

(Picture)

The conclusion is that we can draw on this capacity of judging aliveness in our rethinking our economy, politics and philosophy. The fourth volume of his *The Nature of Order* contains great summaries of these ideas as a work in progress.

These limited examples raise critical issues about diversity we have to explore with better thinking. But we are not good thinkers, for example lying to ourselves when we confuse rising GDP with third world welfare for everyone. A rising income by a factor 2 when costs go up by a factor of 4 is not good. A per capita GDP driven by the rising income of the top and lowering income at the bottom is not good thinking. We are using military spending as a way to do Keynes without saying so to sustain the wrong parts of the economy, and intimidating our own populations at the same time. We lie when we think we are good and they are bad. This is just lack of interest, lack of compassion, lack of imagination.

But lets face it, we have a weak culture centered on consumerism and frustration, not of citizen, art and respect with serious interest in the world.

We create things like (I have not visited these sites so they may well be more than meets the eye. I am illustrating a point, not making claims about these particular realities).



A graveyard without elementary respect.

We are prone to stories about feel good examples without taking a deeper look. “Better ways of growing beef, sounds appealing, so we get Silvopasturealism, (rethinking the place meat is coming)



To my eye, this is attractive from the point of view of CO2 but - there are no people, and the shape of the land and trees suggests mega operations, not the work of local farmers but of agribusiness. The people are pushed off elsewhere. It may be OK outside the

frame of the camera but I would like to see this tied to a village and the trees arranged in a more aesthetic way. This is a design issue where money controls good initiatives that take on a sinister tendency to grow wealth but not people. Business wants us housed, worked and buying in small controlled areas that encapsulate the full cycle, where business controls the flow cradle to grave and we are in the hamster cage and business - and owners - live off of the activity.

Intent informs, planning constrains.

From sunsets, spring breezes, reflections of light off of water, buildings or landscapes – we all, city and country, immigrants and Native Americans, have thousands of powerful memories of nature's presence. The same sun shines on us all. The moon still stuns. Children and artists are able to take the broken glass in an abandoned lot and find beauty in it. Let the green grow in the midst of all our circumstances with renewed interest and our care, and let well developed human characters flourish! Interesting things can happen. Here is a little gem of inspiration.

From New Yorker. May 6 2013 .

..for the past twenty years archeologists have begun to realize that their assumptions about how pre-Columbian people lived in the rain forest were mostly wrong. Earlier theories held that the rain forest soils of Central and South America are too poor to support large populations, and that many areas could support only scattered hunter-gatherer tribes. increasingly, it appears that the Amazon jungle once harbored sophisticated farming civilizations that cleared huge areas and built cities, towns, and networks of roads and canals. Likewise, the Mosquitia of today looks inhospitable, but in pre-Columbian times it was probably

more like a vast, tended garden, according to Christopher Fisher, a Mesoamerican specialist at Colorado State University. Crops, flowers, and fruit and cacao trees would have been mingled together, unlike monocrop agriculture of today, and spaced around dense housing settlements, with woods, paths, and shaded parks. Even the vistas were tended, Fisher said. like pyramids and large-scale monuments were built to be seen from a distance”, something like Frederick Law Olmstead’s vision for Central Park.”

If they can do it why can’t we?

The tragedy we are in: we have seen ourselves as alien from nature by virtue of *sapiens* rather than close to nature, even as a part of it, as mammals. This was a real struggle in social thought moving from the renaissance which saw humans as deeply animal like to the enlightenment which stressed the mechanical. The result is a series of strongly interconnected problems that need to be understood, and a path forward engaged.

I want to start with optimism, if not as to outcome at least as to a plausible path that would be attractive.

David Hockney the artist I mentioned a few pages ago, writes in his new book *A history of Pictures*,

In the end –after you got a roof food warmth– all you can buy is beauty what else can you spend money on?

This is deeply optimistic and plausible. We can do it. The implication here is that while part of our working life and the income it produces, goes to necessary consumption it then traps us

in anxious drive for necessities. much of which is really discretionary and not needed, and we can make better choices. We can do what occurs to us that makes life better - and it will not usually be consumption based on advertising as we currently have it, but on things we can do for beauty. It is unfortunate that job and class position require property to make us look appropriate for the role. (This is the origin of the idea of property.)

I have called the goal GardenWorld because it is widely shared language about a realizable and attractive goal: using the natural environment to support the growing of good humans.

The idea is that we are in a mess, and we need to look at what that mess is, how we got into this mess, and what can happen to get us out of this mess. The goal is reintegrating people and nature with the economy as the support to the well being of the society - a perspective we have lost. That means rethinking economics. GardenWorld aims to bring our sense of the small scale decisions into alignment with larger effects. We need to keep Hockney's perspective constantly in mind. To get there we need to keep renewing visions that can help us struggle harder against existing power and politics. **still in aftermath of the french revolution.**

This is really a quite simple basis for action and gives real leverage to rethink how we do things. To do this we need to rethink education and especially the opportunity and responsibility for self education. We need to think of ourselves as larger, and that much of us is hidden from ourselves and from each other, but can be activated with a new vitality.

GardenWorld is to be greener, more productive, more attractive, less hostile world, a place to grow families, children, and adults who live a profoundly meaningful, less segregated life, more democratic and with some lucky

breaks on tech such as sequestering, and with some serious rethinking of current economic institutions. The problem with populism , strong on indignation and frustration, right, left and center, is there is no proposed set of institutional changes. We must go further. Let me quote those line again from Hockney.

In the end – after you got a roof food warmth – all you can buy is beauty what else can you spend money on?

The truth is often simple. Try practicing Hockney's suggestion in your own life, and bring this to politics and into conversations. In most of the world these things, the necessities, are only acquirable through modes of work equal to or close to simple slavery. "You want to eat you gotta let me pay you for some work I need." Can we do better or are we trapped?

The rest of the book will be an exploration of

- What is GardenWorld?
- What is the current state of things? (The mess, and the hopeful)
- How we got here? (The deeper history)
- What can happen now? Multiple scenarios all plausible.

With continual use if philosophy, economics and politics as a frame within each of these.

- Philosophy is wise thinking about how we should live.
- Economics is solid common sense about the material and social arrangements to support how we should live . At its best it is about the management of nature and people integrated together
- Politics, a test of character, is the coping with difference of opinion as they arise and where harmony and balance is not possible but we need compromise rather than war.

I like to think of these few paragraphs as an Introduction, “let me introduce you two, my reader and my book,” in serious times. I tend to write as if I am in a conversation so I am expecting you to be present, not just scrolling looking for familiar thoughts or the first sentence that supports your impulse to throw the book aside, or click out of the screen. I really want your participation. It is more of a studio than a lecture room. More informal, often not complete, but providing good leads to better thinking, even if I have not been able to fully use the hints to go there yet myself.

Before moving into the main analysis I want to say a few words about China the rest of the world, since the analysis here is mostly using western or even more narrowly US examples and anxieties and a very important addendum about the history of key words.