

## Chapter II

### AN INVASION OF CENTAURS

In the "today," in every "today," various generations coexist and the relations which are established between them, according to the different condition of their ages, represent the dynamic system of attractions and repulsions, of agreement and controversy which at any given moment makes up the reality of historic life.<sup>1</sup>

If we agree with Ortega that the fitful transition of the generations is a significant element in historical change, we must also recognize that the young may do little more than remodel the inherited culture in minor or marginal ways. They may settle for alterations that amount to a change of superficial fashion, undertaken out of mere pique or caprice. What is special about the generational transition we are in is the scale on which it is taking place and the depth of antagonism it reveals. Indeed, it would hardly seem an exaggeration to call what we see arising among the young a "counter culture." Meaning: a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society that it scarcely looks to many as a culture at all, but takes on the alarming appearance of a barbaric intrusion.

An image comes at once to mind: the invasion of centaurs that is recorded on the pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Drunken and incensed, the centaurs burst in upon the civilized festivities that are in progress. But a stern Apollo, the guardian of the orthodox culture, steps forward to admonish the gate-crashers and drive them back. The image is

<sup>1</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, *Man and Crisis*, trans. Mildred Adams (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959), p. 45.

a potent one, for it recalls what must always be a fearful experience in the life of any civilization: the experience of radical cultural disjuncture, the clash of irreconcilable conceptions of life. And the encounter is not always won by Apollo.

Toynbee has identified such cultural disjunctures as the work of a disinherited "proletariat," using as his paradigm the role of the early Christians within the Roman Empire—a classic case of Apollo being subverted by the unruly centaurs. The Christian example is one that many of the hip young are quick to invoke, perhaps with more appropriateness than many of their critics may recognize. Hopelessly estranged by ethos and social class from the official culture, the primitive Christian community awkwardly fashioned of Judaism and the mystery cults a minority culture that could not but seem an absurdity to Greco-Roman orthodoxy. But the absurdity, far from being felt as a disgrace, became a banner of the community.

For it is written [St. Paul boasted] I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. . . . For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. . . . But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. (I Cor. 1:19, 22, 27)

It is a familiar passage from what is now an oppressively respectable source. So familiar and so respectable that we easily lose sight of how aggressively perverse a declaration it is . . . how loaded with unabashed contempt for a long-established culture rich with achievement. And whose contempt was this? That of absolute nobodies, the very scum of the earth, whose own counter culture was, at this early stage, little more than a scattering of suggestive ideas, a few crude

symbols, and a desperate longing. It was the longing that counted most, for not all the grandeur of Greco-Roman civilization could fill the desolation of spirit Christianity bred upon. Since we know now with an abundance of hindsight what the Christian *scandalum* eventually led to, the comparison with the still fledgling counter culture of our youth is bound to seem outlandish. But then, all revolutionary changes are unthinkable until they happen . . . and then they are understood to be inevitable. Who, in Paul's time, could have anticipated what would come of the brazen hostility of a handful of scruffy malcontents? And what would the nascent Christian movement have looked like under the merciless floodlights of any then-existing mass media? Would it even have survived the saturation coverage?

Perhaps the young of this generation haven't the stamina to launch the epochal transformation they seek; but there should be no mistaking the fact that they want nothing less. "Total rejection" is a phrase that comes readily to their lips, often before the mind provides even a blurred picture of the new culture that is to displace the old. If there is anything about the ethos of Black Power that proves particularly attractive even to young white disaffiliates who cannot gain access to the movement, it is the sense that Black Power somehow implies an entirely new way of life: a black culture, a black consciousness . . . a black soul which is totally incompatible with white society and aggressively proud of the fact. Black Power may build any number of barriers between white and Negro youth, but across the barriers a common language can still be heard. Here, for example, is Bobby Seale of the Oakland Black Panthers speaking to a meeting of the Center for Participative Education held at the University of California at Berkeley in September 1968. The crisis at hand stemmed from a decision of the UC regents to deny a Black Panther spokesman access to the campus. But for

Seale, as for the students, the issue had deeper cultural implications. Everything—the meaning of authority, of personal identity, of Judeo-Christian ethics, of sexual freedom—was somehow involved in this single act of administrative censorship.

Archie and Jughead never kissed Veronica and Betty. Superman never kissed Lois Lane. We are tired of relating to comic book conceptions. Adam should have defended the Garden of Eden against the omnipotent administrator. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness don't mean nothing to me if I can't go home and feel safe with my wife in bed replenishing the earth.<sup>2</sup>

At first glance, it may not be apparent what sentiments of this kind (and they were the substance of the address) have to do with an issue of academic freedom. But Seale's audience had no trouble understanding. They readily recognized that authoritarianism in our society operates overtly or subtly at every level of life, from comic strip imagery to Christian theology, from the college classroom to the privacy of the bedroom—and they were prepared to discard the culture that relied on such sleazy coercion, root and branch.

Or to take another example of these apocalyptic yearnings that beset our young. When the Antiuniversity of London, the first English version of our free universities, was opened in early 1968, its prospectus was filled with courses devoted to "anti-cultures," "anti-environments," "anti-poetry," "anti-theatre," "anti-families," and "counter institutions." Seemingly nothing the adult society had to offer any longer proved acceptable. The superheated radicalism of the school was eventually to reach such a pitch that even the age-old student-teacher relationship came under fire as an intolerable

<sup>2</sup> From a recording of the address presented over KPFA (Berkeley) on September 24, 1968.

form of authoritarianism. So it too was scrapped, on the assumption that nobody any longer had anything to teach the young; they would make up their own education from scratch. Unfortunately—but was the misfortune more comic or more tragic?—the school failed to survive this act of radical restructuring.

Such white-hot discontent always runs the risk of evaporating into a wild, amorphous steam—so that it becomes difficult to tell the chiliastic illuminations from mere inanities. The typical fare offered at the Antiuniversity can be sampled in one of the “courses,” called “From Comic Books to the Dance of Shiva: Spiritual Amnesia and the Physiology of Self-Estrangement.” (Again one notes the bizarre but cunning association of the comic strip and high religion.)

Description of course: A free-wheeling succession of open-ended situations. Ongoing vibrations highly relevant. Exploration of Inner Space, de-conditioning of human robot, significance of psycho-chemicals, and the transformation of Western European Man. Source material: Artaud, Zimmer, Gurdjieff, W. Reich, K. Marx, Gnostic, Sufi, and Tantric texts, autobiographical accounts of madness and ecstatic states of consciousness—Pop art and twentieth century prose.

Heavy weather indeed. But altogether representative of the free-university style. Often enough, such madcap brainstorming under the auspices of instructors hardly out of their teens degenerates into a semiarticulate, indiscriminate celebration of everything in sight that is new, strange, and noisy; a fondling of ideas that resembles nothing so much as an infant’s play with bright, unfamiliar objects. The appetite is healthily and daringly omnivorous, but it urgently requires mature minds to feed it. It will in large part be my purpose in the chapters that follow to examine a few of the more im-

portant figures that are now doing just that. But to make my own point of view quite clear from the outset, I believe that, despite their follies, these young centaurs deserve to win their encounter with the defending Apollos of our society. For the orthodox culture they confront is fatally and contagiously diseased. The prime symptom of that disease is the shadow of thermonuclear annihilation beneath which we cower. The counter culture takes its stand against the background of this absolute evil, an evil which is not defined by the sheer *fact* of the bomb, but by the total *ethos* of the bomb, in which our politics, our public morality, our economic life, our intellectual endeavor are now embedded with a wealth of ingenious rationalization. We are a civilization sunk in an unshakable commitment to genocide, gambling madly with the universal extermination of our species. And how viciously we ravish our sense of humanity to pretend, even for a day, that such horror can be accepted as “normal,” as “necessary”! Whenever we feel inclined to qualify, to modify, to offer a cautious “yes . . . but” to the protests of the young, let us return to this fact as the decisive measure of the technocracy’s essential criminality: the extent to which it insists, in the name of progress, in the name of reason, that the unthinkable become thinkable and the intolerable become tolerable.

If the counter culture is, as I will contend here, that healthy instinct which refuses both at the personal and political level to practice such a cold-blooded rape of our human sensibilities, then it should be clear why the conflict between young and adult in our time reaches so peculiarly and painfully deep. In an historical emergency of absolutely unprecedented proportions, we are that strange, culture-bound animal whose biological drive for survival expresses itself *generationally*. It is the young, arriving with eyes that can see the ob-

vicious, who must remake the lethal culture of their elders, and who must remake it in desperate haste.

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To take the position I assume here is undeniably risky. For once a cultural disjuncture opens out in society, nothing can be guaranteed. What happens among the minority that finds itself isolated by the rift is as apt to be ugly or pathetic as it is to be noble. The primitive Christian absurdity can be credited at least with the capacity to produce mighty works of intellect and mystic insight, as well as an ideal of saintly service. On the other hand, the alienated stock clerks and wallpaper hangers of post-World War I Germany sullenly withdrew to their beer halls to talk imbecile anthropology and prepare the horrors of Buchenwald. So, too, contemporary America's isolated minorities include the Hell's Angels and the Minutemen, from whom nothing beautiful or tender can be expected.

And our alienated young: how shall we characterize the counter culture they are in the way of haphazardly assembling? Clearly one cannot answer the question by producing a manifesto unanimously endorsed by the malcontented younger generation: the counter culture is scarcely so disciplined a movement. It is something in the nature of a medieval crusade: a variegated procession constantly in flux, acquiring and losing members all along the route of march. Often enough it finds its own identity in a nebulous symbol or song that seems to proclaim little more than "we are special . . . we are different . . . we are outward-bound from the old corruptions of the world." Some join the troop only for a brief while, long enough to enter an obvious and immediate struggle: a campus rebellion, an act of war-resistance,

a demonstration against racial injustice. Some may do no more than flourish a tiny banner against the inhumanities of the technocracy; perhaps they pin on a button declaring "I am a human being: do not mutilate, spindle, or tear." Others, having cut themselves off hopelessly from social acceptance, have no option but to follow the road until they reach the Holy City. No piecemeal reforms or minor adjustments of what they leave behind would make turning back possible for them.

But where is this Holy City that lies beyond the technocracy—and what will it be like? Along the way, there is much talk about that, some of it foolish, some of it wise. Many in the procession may only be certain of what it must *not* be like. A discerning few—and among them, the figures I will be discussing in the chapters that follow—have a shrewd sense of where the technocracy leaves off and the New Jerusalem begins: not at the level of class, party, or institution, but rather at the non-intellective level of the personality from which these political and social forms issue. They see, and many who follow them find the vision attractive, that building the good society is not primarily a social, but a psychic task. What makes the youthful disaffiliation of our time a cultural phenomenon, rather than merely a political movement, is the fact that it strikes beyond ideology to the level of consciousness, seeking to transform our deepest sense of the self, the other, the environment.

The psychiatrist R. D. Laing captures the spirit of the matter when he observes: "We do not need theories so much as the experience that is the source of the theory." Such a distinction between theory and experience, challenging as it does the validity of mere analytical clarity as a basis for knowledge or conviction, cannot help but carry an anti-intellectual tone. The tone becomes even more pronounced

when Laing goes on to define the goal of "true sanity" as being

in one way or another, the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality: the emergence of the "inner" archetypal mediators of divine power, and through this death a rebirth, and the eventual re-establishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being the servant of the divine, no longer its betrayer.<sup>8</sup>

When psychiatry begins to speak this language, it moves well beyond the boundaries of conventional scientific respectability. But if the dissenting young give their attention to figures like Laing (he is one of the leading mentors of Britain's burgeoning counter culture), it is surely because they have seen too many men of indisputable intelligence and enlightened intention become the apologists of a dehumanized social order. What is it that has allowed so many of our men of science, our scholars, our most sophisticated political leaders, even our boldest would-be revolutionaries to make their peace with the technocracy—or indeed to enter its service so cheerfully? Not lack of intellect or ignorance of humane values. It is rather that technocratic assumptions about the nature of man, society, and nature have warped their experience at the source, and so have become the buried premises from which intellect and ethical judgment proceed.

In order, then, to root out those distortive assumptions, nothing less is required than the subversion of the scientific world view, with its entrenched commitment to an egocentric and cerebral mode of consciousness. In its place, there must be a new culture in which the non-intellective capacities of the personality—those capacities that take fire from

<sup>8</sup> R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 119.

visionary splendor and the experience of human communion—become the arbiters of the good, the true, and the beautiful. I think the cultural disjuncture that generational dissent is opening out between itself and the technocracy is just this great, as great in its implications (though obviously not as yet in historical import) as the cleavage that once ran between Greco-Roman rationality and Christian mystery. To be sure, Western society has, over the past two centuries, incorporated a number of minorities whose antagonism toward the scientific world view has been irreconcilable, and who have held out against the easy assimilation to which the major religious congregations have yielded in their growing desire to seem progressive. Theosophists and fundamentalists, spiritualists and flat-earthers, occultists and satanists . . . it is nothing new that there should exist anti-rationalist elements in our midst. What is new is that a radical rejection of science and technological values should appear so close to the center of our society, rather than on the negligible margins. It is the middle-class young who are conducting this politics of consciousness, and they are doing it boisterously, persistently, and aggressively—to the extent that they are invading the technocracy's citadels of academic learning and bidding fair to take them over.

The task of characterizing the non-intellective powers of the personality in which our young have become so deeply involved is far from easy. Until the advent of psychoanalysis, the vocabulary of our society was woefully impoverished when it came to discussion of the non-intellective aspects of life. The mystics and Romantics who have worked most closely to the dark side of the mind provide us with a repertory of brilliant metaphors and images to explain their experience. Similarly, the Hindu and Buddhist traditions contain a vocabulary of marvelous discrimination for speaking of the non-intellective consciousness—as well as a number of techniques

for tapping its contents. But the scientific intelligence rejects metaphor and mystical terminology the way a vending machine tosses out counterfeit coins (with a single revealing exception: the metaphor of natural "law," without which the scientific revolution might never have gotten off the ground). It leaves us devoid of language as soon as we enter that province of experience in which artists and mystics claim to have found the highest values of existence. Even psychoanalysis has been of little help in the discussion of the non-intellective, mainly because its approach has been burdened with a mechanistic vocabulary and an objective stand-offishness: a prying examination from the "outside," rather than a warm experiencing from the "inside." In reviewing the intellectual history of the generation that saw the appearance of Freud, Sorel, Weber, and Durkheim—the first generation to undertake what it hoped would be respectably scientific research into man's irrational motivations—H. Stuart Hughes observes:

The social thinkers of the 1890's were concerned with the irrational only to exorcize it. By probing into it, they sought ways to tame it, to canalize it for constructive human purposes.<sup>4</sup>

As the spell of scientific or quasi-scientific thought has spread in our culture from the physical to the so-called behavioral sciences, and finally to scholarship in the arts and letters, the marked tendency has been to consign whatever is not fully and articulately available in the waking conscious-

<sup>4</sup> H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), pp. 35–36. Only Bergson and Jung, among major thinkers of the period outside the arts, treated the non-rational side of human nature with an intuitive sympathy. But who, in the scientific community or the academy, any longer regards them as "major thinkers"?

ness for empirical or mathematical manipulation, to a purely negative catch-all category (in effect, the cultural garbage can) called the "unconscious" . . . or the "irrational" . . . or the "mystical" . . . or the "purely subjective." To behave on the basis of such blurred states of consciousness is at best to be some species of amusing eccentric, at worst to be plain mad. Conversely, behavior that is normal, valuable, productive, mentally healthy, socially respectable, intellectually defensible, sane, decent, and practical is supposed to have nothing to do with subjectivity. When we tell one another to "be reasonable," to "talk sense," to "get down to brass tacks," to "keep one's feet on the ground," to "stick to the facts," to "be realistic," we mean that one should avoid talking about one's "inner" feelings and look at the world rather in the way an engineer looks at a construction project or a physicist views the behavior of atomic particles. We feel that worthwhile things come of such a state of mind—knowledge, solutions to problems, successful projects, money, power—whereas only some manner of unproductive self-indulgence comes of wallowing in "mere feelings." The more sophisticated may admit the legitimacy of allowing artists to moon and daydream. But the world, as every practical man knows, can do without poems and paintings; it can scarcely do without dams and roads and bombs and sound policy. Art is for the leisure hours: the time left over from dealing with realities and necessities.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> One might expect some softening of this compulsively utilitarian rationality to stem from the new and now lavishly subsidized field of sleep research, which tells us of the absolute necessity of non-intellective experience. For a fascinating survey of this work, see Gay G. Luce and J. Segal, *Sleep* (London: Heinemann, 1967). Whatever else the sleep researchers may prove, however, they have already revealed the pathos of a society that must have it demonstrated by way of encephalographs and computers that the relaxation of rational consciousness and the experience of dreaming are vital to healthy life. But they do so seemingly without any awareness of the part science, with its militant intellectuality, has played in obscuring

We will return in later chapters to a fuller consideration of the scientific world view and its deficiencies. What is said here is meant only to suggest the difficulty the counter culture faces in simply trying to designate its project. It has removed itself to a position so wide of our cultural mainstream that it can scarcely speak without seeming to fall into a foreign tongue. In a world which more and more thinks of society as the subordinate adjunct of a gigantic technological mechanism requiring constant and instantaneous co-ordination from the center, the young begin to speak of such impracticalities as "community," and "participative democracy." Thus they revert to a style of human relations that characterizes village and tribe, insisting that real politics can only take place in the deeply personal confrontations these now obsolete social forms allow. Where are they to find understanding for such a homely ideal in a world dominated by vast political abstractions decked out in glittering propagandistic symbols, slogans, and statistical measures: nation, party, corporation, urban area, grand alliance, common market, socio-economic system . . . ? The lively consciousness of men and women *as they are* in their vital daily reality is missing from our culture, having been displaced by these grandiose figments. To assert that the essence of human sociability is, simply and beautifully, the communal opening-up of man to man, rather than the achievement of prodigious technical and economic feats—what is this but to assert an absurdity?

Further, what is it to assert the primacy of the non-intellective powers but to call into question all that our culture

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this fact. It is this blind spot which will probably lead to their research, like all science worth its subsidies these days, being used for idiotic ends. For example, Herman Kahn and Anthony Wiener, in their book *The Year 2000* (New York: Macmillan, 1967) give us a prognosis of "programmed dreams." Another instance of the technocratic principle: never let happen naturally and enjoyably what can be counterfeited by the technicians.

values as "reason" and "reality"? To deny that the true self is this small, hard atom of intense objectivity we pilot about each day as we build bridges and careers is surely to play fast and loose with psychopathology. It is to attack men at the very core of their security by denying the validity of everything they mean when they utter the most precious word in their vocabulary: the word "I." And yet this is what the counter culture undertakes when, by way of its mystical tendencies or the drug experience, it assaults the reality of the ego as an isolable, purely cerebral unit of identity. In doing so, it once again transcends the consciousness of the dominant culture and runs the risk of appearing to be a brazen exercise in perverse nonsense.

Yet what else but such a brave (and hopefully humane) perversity can pose a radical challenge to the technocracy? If the melancholy history of revolution over the past half-century teaches us anything, it is the futility of a politics which concentrates itself single-mindedly on the overthrowing of governments, or ruling classes, or economic systems. This brand of politics finishes with merely redesigning the turrets and towers of the technocratic citadel. It is the foundations of the edifice that must be sought. And those foundations lie among the ruins of the visionary imagination and the sense of human community. Indeed, this is what Shelley recognized even in the earliest days of the Industrial Revolution, when he proclaimed that in the defense of poetry we must invoke "light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Shelley's magnificent essay "The Defence of Poetry" could still stand muster as a counter cultural manifesto. If only our technicians, our scientists, our experts of all description could be brought face to face with such statements! Surely that would do the trick.

When one first casts an eye over the varieties of youthful dissent, it may seem that there is considerably less coherence to this counter culture than I have suggested. To one side, there is the mind-blown bohemianism of the beats and hippies; to the other, the hard-headed political activism of the student New Left. Are these not in reality two separate and antithetical developments: the one (tracing back to Ginsberg, Kerouac, & Co.) seeking to "cop out" of American society, the other (tracing back to C. Wright Mills and remnants of the old socialist left) seeking to penetrate and revolutionize our political life?

The tension one senses between these two movements is real enough. But I think there exists, at a deeper level, a theme that unites these variations and which accounts for the fact that hippy and student activist continue to recognize each other as allies. Certainly there is the common enemy against whom they combine forces; but there is also a positive similarity of sensibility.

The underlying unity of these differing styles of dissent is revealed by the extraordinary personalism that has characterized New Left activism since its beginnings. New Left groups like SDS have always taken strong exception to the fashionable thesis that we have reached the "end of ideology" in the Great Society.<sup>7</sup> But there is a sense in which ideology is a thing of the past among politically involved dissenters. By and large, most New Left groups have refused to allow doctrinal logic to obscure or displace an irreducible element

<sup>7</sup> This thesis is, of course, untrue. Ideology is not absent in the technocracy; it is simply invisible, having blended into the supposedly indisputable truth of the scientific world view. Thus the technocrats deal in "rationality," "efficiency," and "progress," speak the purportedly value-neutral language of statistics, and convince themselves that they have no ideological orientation. The most effective ideologies are always those that are congruent with the limits of consciousness, for then they work subliminally.

of human tenderness in their politicking. What has distinguished SDS, at least in its early years, from old-line radical youth groups (as still represented, say, by the Progressive Labor Movement) is the unwillingness of the former to reify doctrine to the extent of granting it more importance than the flesh and blood. For most of the New Left, there has ultimately been no more worth or cogency in any ideology than a person lends it by virtue of his own action: personal commitments, not abstract ideas, are the stuff of politics. Such is the burden of the observation Staughton Lynd offered to the 1968 New University Conference when he lamented the fact that even radically inclined academics too often fail to "provide models of off-campus radical vocation." They teach Marxism or socialism; but they do not "pay their dues."

The intellectual's first responsibility is, as Noam Chomsky says, "to insist upon the truth. . . ." But what truth we discover will be affected by the lives we lead. . . . to hope that we can understandingly interpret matters of which we have no first-hand knowledge, things utterly unproved upon the pulses . . . is intellectual hubris. . . . I think the times no longer permit this indulgence, and ask us, at the very least, to venture into the arena where political parties and workingmen, and young people do their things, seeking to clarify that experience which becomes ours as well, speaking truth to power from the vantage-point of that process of struggle.<sup>8</sup>

The remarks return us to R. D. Laing's distinction between "theory" and "experience." For the radical intellectual as much as for anyone else, Lynd contends, truth must have a biographical, not merely an ideological, context.

It is this personalist style that has led the New Left to identify alienation as the central political problem of the

<sup>8</sup> Lynd's address appears in *The New University Conference Newsletter*, Chicago, May 24, 1968, pp. 5-6.



day. Not alienation, however, in the sheerly institutional sense, in which capitalism (or for that matter any advanced industrial economy) tends to alienate the worker from the means and fruits of production; but rather, alienation as the deadening of man's sensitivity to man, a deadening that can creep into even those revolutionary efforts that seek with every humanitarian intention to eliminate the external symptoms of alienation. Wherever non-human elements—whether revolutionary doctrine or material goods—assume greater importance than human life and well-being, we have the alienation of man from man, and the way is open to the self-righteous use of others as mere objects. In this respect revolutionary terrorism is only the mirror image of capitalist exploitation. As the French students put it in one of their incisive May 1968 slogans: "*Une révolution qui demande que l'on se sacrifie pour elle est une révolution à la papa.*" ("A revolution that expects you to sacrifice yourself for it is one of daddy's revolutions.")

The meaning of New Left personalism is cogently expressed by the SDS Port Huron Statement of 1962:

We are aware that to avoid platitudes we must analyze the concrete conditions of social order. But to direct such an analysis we must use the guideposts of basic principles. Our own social values involve conceptions of human beings, human relationships, and social systems.

We regard *men* as infinitely precious and possessed of unfulfilled capacities for reason, freedom, and love. . . . We oppose the depersonalization that reduces human beings to the status of things. If anything, the brutalities of the twentieth century teach that means and ends are intimately related, that vague appeals to 'posterity' cannot justify the mutilations of the present. . . .

Loneliness, estrangement, isolation describe the vast distance between man and man today. These dominant tendencies cannot be overcome by better personnel management,

or by improved gadgets, but only when a love of man overcomes the idolatrous worship of things by man.<sup>9</sup>

The issue the students are addressing themselves to here, with their sentimental regard for "love," "loneliness," "depersonalization," makes for a vivid contrast to the more doctrinaire style of many of their radical predecessors. A generation ago at the time of the Spanish Civil War, Harry Pollitt, the leader of the British Communist Party, could with a clear conscience tell the poet Stephen Spender that he ought to go to Spain and get himself killed: the party needed more martyred artists to bolster its public image. *That* is ideological politics—the total subordination of the person to party and doctrine. Nor have such perversions been confined to the Stalinist Left. It was an adamant anti-Stalinist, Sidney Hook, who in his famous exchange of letters with Bertrand Russell during the early fifties, logic-chopped his way to the conclusion that thwarting the ambitions of the Harry Pollitts of the world would justify wiping out the entire human species.<sup>10</sup> Such anti-Stalinist militancy required two billion martyrs, willy-nilly: surely a political position that wins the world's record for sheer bloody-minded fanaticism. Had the H-bomb existed in the sixteenth century, we might well have expected to hear Calvin and Loyola carrying on with the same hair-raising bravado . . . and meaning it . . . and then perhaps none of us should be here today.

Now this is precisely the sort of corrupted human relations that has been largely absent from New Left politics. Instead, there has been a precociously wise fear of wielding power

<sup>9</sup> From the statement as it appears in Mitchell Cohen and Dennis Hale, eds., *The New Student Left* (Boston: Beacon Press, revised ed. 1967), pp. 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> The Russell-Hook exchange appears in Charles McClelland, ed., *Nuclear Weapons, Missiles, and Future War* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1960), pp. 140-57.

over others and of unleashing violence in behalf of any ideal, no matter how rhetorically appealing. In the New Left, you pay your *own* dues; nobody pays them for you; and you, in turn, don't enforce payment on anybody else. As Kenneth Keniston of the Yale Medical School observes in a recent study: ". . . in manner and style, these young radicals are extremely 'personalistic,' focused on face-to-face, direct and open relationships with other people; hostile to formally structured roles and traditional bureaucratic patterns of power and authority"—a characteristic Keniston traces to the child-rearing habits of the contemporary middle-class family. The trait is so well developed that Keniston wonders if "it is possible to retain an open, personalistic, unmanipulative and extremely trusting style, and yet mount an effective program on a national scale."<sup>11</sup> The worry is real enough; organizational slackness is bound to be the price one pays for pursuing the ideal of participative democracy. But then it is perhaps a measure of our corruption as a society that we should believe democracy can ever be anything other than "participative."

As I write this, however, I am bleakly aware that an ideological drift toward righteous violence is on the increase among the young, primarily under the influence of the extremist Black Powerites and a romanticized conception of guerrilla warfare. This is especially true of the European young, who rapidly fall back upon stereotyped ideas about revolution; but "confrontation politics" and cheers for the fiction of the "people's war" are becoming more prominent in the United States, too, as frustration with the brutality and sleazy deception of the establishment grows. The tragic search may be on again among radical dissenters for ways to

<sup>11</sup> See Kenneth Keniston, *Young Radicals* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968). The study is based on the National Steering Committee of the 1967 Vietnam Summer.

"make murder legitimate," as Camus phrased it—and with this tendency, the New Left runs the risk of losing its original soulfulness. For the beauty of the New Left has always lain in its eagerness to give political dignity to the tenderer emotions, in its readiness to talk openly of love, and non-violence, and pity. It is, therefore, depressing in the extreme when, in behalf of a self-congratulatory militancy, this humane spirit threatens to give way to the age-old politics of hatred, vindictiveness, and windy indignation. At this point, things do not simply become ugly; they become stupid. Suddenly the measure of conviction is the efficiency with which one can get into a fistfight with the nearest cop at hand.

It would be my own estimate that those who give way to the vice of doctrinaire violence and its manipulative ways are still a strict minority among the dissenting young—though an obstreperous minority which, for obvious reasons, attracts much attention from the press. The very inclusiveness of the New Left style—the willingness to let every man take his own stand even when this produces a hopeless muddle—makes it impossible to turn away those who come to the demonstrations with icons of "Che" and Chairman Mao, and with all the attendant bloodcurdling slogans. Nevertheless, the prevailing spirit of New Left politics remains that reflected in the SDS motto "One man, one soul." The meaning of the phrase is clear enough: at whatever cost to the cause or the doctrine, one must care for the uniqueness and the dignity of each individual and yield to what his conscience demands in the existential moment.

Colin MacInnes, discussing the difference between the youthful radicals of the thirties and the sixties, observes that the contemporary young "hold themselves more personally responsible than the young used to. Not in the sense of their 'duties' to the state or even society, but to themselves. I

think they examine themselves more closely and their motives and their own behavior."<sup>12</sup> Anyone who has put in much time with New Left students knows what MacInnes is talking about. It is that quality of sober introspection which almost amounts to what the Catholic Church calls "scrupulosity." It can become nearly intolerable to sit through the soul-searching sessions of these young people, waiting in attendance upon their lint-picking analyses of motivation, their dogged pursuit of a directness and immediacy free of organizational-hierarchical distinctions. And yet it is, at worst, the exaggeration of a virtue to insist that neither theory nor rhetoric must submerge the living reality of our actions as they affect others and ourselves, to insist that the final appeal must be to the person, never to the doctrine.

But then the question arises: what is the person? What, most essentially, is this elusive, often erratic human something which underlies social systems and ideologies, and which now must serve as the ultimate point of moral reference? No sooner does one raise the question than the politics of the social system yields to what Timothy Leary has called "the politics of the nervous system." Class consciousness gives way as a generative principle to . . . *consciousness consciousness*. And it is at this juncture that New Left and beat-hip bohemianism join hands. For even in its most hostile caricatures, the bohemian fringe of our youth culture makes its distinctive character apparent. It is grounded in an intensive examination of the self, of the buried wealth of personal consciousness. The stereotypic beatnik or hippy, dropped-out and self-absorbed, sunk in a narcotic stupor or lost in ecstatic

<sup>12</sup> Colin MacInnes, "Old Youth and Young," *Encounter*, September 1967. For another discussion of the subject, in the course of which the same point emerges, see the symposium "Confrontation: The Old Left and the New," in *The American Scholar*, Autumn 1967, pp. 567-89.

contemplation . . . what lies behind these popular images but the reality of a sometimes zany, sometimes hopelessly inadequate search for the truth of the person?

Beat-hip bohemianism may be too withdrawn from social action to suit New Left radicalism; but the withdrawal is in a direction the activist can readily understand. The "trip" is inward, toward deeper levels of self-examination. The easy transition from the one wing to the other of the counter culture shows up in the pattern that has come to govern many of the free universities. These dissenting academies usually receive their send-off from campus New Leftists and initially emphasize heavy politics. But gradually the curricula tend to get hip both in content and teaching methods: psychedelics, light shows, multi-media, total theatre, people-heaping, McLuhan, exotic religion, touch and tenderness, ecstatic laboratories. . . .<sup>13</sup> The same transition can be traced in the career of Bob Dylan, who commands respect among all segments of the dissenting youth culture. Dylan's early songs were traditional folk-protest, laying forth obvious issues of social justice; anti-boss, anti-war, anti-exploitation. Then, quite suddenly, rather as if Dylan had come to the conclusion that the conventional Woody Guthrie ballad could not reach deep enough, the songs turn surrealistic and psychedelic. All at once Dylan is somewhere beneath the rationalizing cerebrum of social discourse, probing the nightmare deeps, trying to get at the tangled roots of conduct and opinion. At this point, the project which the beats of the early fifties had taken up—the task of remodeling themselves, their way of life, their perceptions and sensitivities—rapidly takes precedence over the public task of changing institutions or policies.

<sup>13</sup> See Ralph Keyes, "The Free Universities," *The Nation*, October 2, 1967.

One can discern, then, a continuum of thought and experience among the young which links together the New Left sociology of Mills, the Freudian Marxism of Herbert Marcuse, the Gestalt-therapy anarchism of Paul Goodman, the apocalyptic body mysticism of Norman Brown, the Zen-based psychotherapy of Alan Watts, and finally Timothy Leary's impenetrably occult narcissism, wherein the world and its woes may shrink at last to the size of a mote in one's private psychedelic void. As we move along the continuum, we find sociology giving way steadily to psychology, political collectivities yielding to the person, conscious and articulate behavior falling away before the forces of the non-intellective deep.

Unrelated as the extremes of this spectrum may seem at first, one would not be surprised to discover the men we name turning up at the same teach-in. The Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation held in London during summer 1967 was pretty much that kind of affair: an effort to work out the priorities of psychic and social liberation within a group of participants that included New Left revolutionaries and existential psychiatrists, with Allen Ginsberg on hand—not to speak, but to chant the Hare Krishna. As one would expect, the priorities never did get established. Significantly, it proved impossible for the congress to maintain more than a stormy rapport with Black Power spokesmen like Stokely Carmichael, for whom, tragically if understandably, real social power, despite all that history teaches us to the contrary, once more looks like something that flows from the muzzle of a gun. And yet, the common cause was undeniably there: the same insistence on revolutionary change that must at last embrace psyche and society. Even for the Black Powerites, the root justification of the cause derives from existentialist theorists like Frantz Fanon, for whom the prime value of

the act of rebellion lies in its psychic liberation of the oppressed.<sup>14</sup>

So it is that when New Left groups organize their demonstrations, the misty-minded hippies are certain to join in, though they may tune out on the heavy political speechifying in favor of launching a yellow submarine or exorcizing the Pentagon. In Berkeley after the 1966 troubles, the New Left and local hippies had no difficulty in cosponsoring a "Human Be-In" to celebrate the students' quasi-victory over the administration. Under hip influence, the celebration rapidly took on the character of a massive "love feast"; but no one seemed to find that inappropriate. Perhaps the most important feature of the event was the fact that, of the forty thousand in attendance, a vast number were teen-agers from local high schools and junior high schools—the so-called "teeny-boppers," who currently seem to provide the bulk of the crowd along Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue. For these youngsters, the next wave of the counter culture, the neat distinctions between dissenting activism and bohemianism are growing progressively less clear. No doubt, as the local city fathers fear, these youngsters learn all sorts of bad habits on the avenue—but they probably take their corruption in-

<sup>14</sup> Black Power frequently gets drawn into the counter cultural style in other respects. In Eldridge Cleaver's book *Soul on Ice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968) there is an engaging analysis of the hidden sexual foundations of racism. See the essay "The Great Mitosis." Unhappily, however, the analysis suggests that, like some of the New Leftists, Cleaver seems to conceive of the struggle for liberation as the province of manly men who must prove themselves by "laying their balls on the line." Too often this suggests that the female of the species must content herself with keeping the home fires burning for her battle-scarred champion or joining the struggle as a camp follower. In either case, the community is being saved for her, not by her as well. I think this means that invidious sexual stereotyping lies at a deeper level of consciousness than racial prejudice. For a comment on the problem, see Betty Roszak, "Sex and Caste," in *Liberation*, December 1966, pp. 28-31.

discriminately from SDS handouts and psychedelic newspapers without much awareness of the difference between dropping out and digging in for the political fight. It all boils down to disaffiliation for them—and the distinctions are of secondary importance.

We grasp the underlying unity of the counter cultural variety, then, if we see beat-hip bohemianism as an effort to work out the personality structure and total life style that follow from New Left social criticism. At their best, these young bohemians are the would-be utopian pioneers of the world that lies beyond intellectual rejection of the Great Society. They seek to invent a cultural base for New Left politics, to discover new types of community, new family patterns, new sexual mores, new kinds of livelihood, new esthetic forms, new personal identities on the far side of power politics, the bourgeois home, and the consumer society. When the New Left calls for peace and gives us heavy analysis of what's what in Vietnam, the hippy quickly translates the word into *shantih*, the peace that passes all understanding, and fills in the psychic dimensions of the ideal. If investigating the life of *shantih* has little to do with achieving peace in Vietnam, perhaps it is the best way of preventing the next several Vietnams from happening. Perhaps the experiments we find at the hip fringe of the counter culture are still raw and often abortive. But we must remember that the experimenters have only been with us for a dozen or so years now; and they are picking their way through customs and institutions that have had more than a few centuries to entrench themselves. To criticize the experiments is legitimate and necessary; to despair of what are no more than beginnings is surely premature.

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It is precisely because New Left politics is related to an entire culture of disaffiliation that the possibility of any enduring alliance with even the most outcast elements of the adult generation is severely diminished. As long as the young in their politics emphasize the further integration of the poor and disadvantaged into technocratic affluence, they can expect to enjoy ad hoc liaisons with workers and their unions, or with the exploited minorities. But such alliances are not apt to outlast successful integration. When the lid blows off the black ghettos of our cities, the ensuing rebellion may look like the prologue to revolution. The dissenting young then give their sympathy and support to the insurrection—insofar as Black Power will permit the participation of white allies.<sup>15</sup> But soon enough, whatever the black guerrillas may intend, the main activity of the day becomes wholesale looting—which is the poor man's way of cutting himself in on the consumer society. And at that point, the angry agitation that fills the ghetto begins to sound like a clamor at the gates of the technocracy—*demanding in*.

If Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* stands as a founding document of the counter culture, we must remember what the poet had to tell the world: "I have burned all my money in a wastebasket." Will it be a victory, then, or a defeat for the counter culture when the black man has at last fought his way clear of desperate expedients and wrings from the Great Society the white man's legal equivalent of looting: a steady job, a secure income, easy credit, free access to all the local emporiums, and his own home to pile the merchandise in? The issue is critical because it reveals the bind in which the

<sup>15</sup> Here, for example, is a flyer which was distributed in Harlem in 1967 by the "Committee of Concerned Honkies": "We'll talk about screwing up the Tactical Police Force (or National Guard or Army) during any black rebellion in the New York area. We'll also talk about jamming National Guard 'riot control' training sessions this autumn and other things."

counter culture finds itself when confronted by undeniably urgent questions of social justice. What, after all, does social justice mean to the outcast and dispossessed? Most obviously, it means gaining admission to everything from which middle-class selfishness excludes them. But how does one achieve such admission without simultaneously becoming an integral and supportive element of the technocracy? How do Black Power, black culture, black consciousness stop short of becoming steppingstones to black consumption, black conformity, black affluence: finally, to a middle-class America of another color? The dilemma requires the most painstaking tact and sensitivity—qualities that are apt to be in short supply among the deprived in the heat and turmoil of political struggle.

Consider, for example, the situation which the French students faced in the May 1968 General Strike. The great ideal of the moment was "workers' control" of French industry. Very well; but is workers' control immune to the dangers of technocratic integration? Unhappily not. For it is hardly difficult to imagine the technocracy reconstituting itself atop an echelon of shop stewards and industrial soviets—and perhaps using these new, more friction-free shop-floor arrangements to its own great advantage! Surely the touchstone of the matter would be: how ready are the workers to disband whole sectors of the industrial apparatus where this proves necessary to achieve ends other than efficient productivity and high consumption? How willing are they to set aside technocratic priorities in favor of a new simplicity of life, a decelerating social pace, a vital leisure? These are questions which enthusiasts for workers' control might do well to ponder. Suppose the French workers *had* taken over the economy, an objective which seems to have lost its general appeal in the wake of the new wage agreements the de Gaulle

government has granted. Would the Renault workers have been willing to consider closing the industry down on the grounds that cars and traffic are now more the blight than the convenience of our lives? Would French aircraft workers have been willing to scrap the Concorde SST on the grounds that this marvel of aeronautical engineering will surely become a social monstrosity? Would French munitions workers have been willing to end production of the *force de frappe*, recognizing that the balance of terror is among the vilest offenses of the technocracy? I suspect that the answer to all these questions would be "no." The social composition of the technocracy would alter, but the change would amount to nothing more than broadening the base on which the technocratic imperative rests.

Once the relations of the counter cultural young and the wretched of the earth get beyond the problem of integration, a grave uneasiness is bound to set in. The long-range cultural values of the discontented young must surely seem bizarre to those whose attention is understandably riveted on sharing the glamorous good things of middle-class life.<sup>16</sup> How baffling it must seem to the long-suffering and long-deprived to discover the children of our new affluence dressing themselves

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit: "The differences between the revolutionary students and the workers spring directly from their distinct social positions. Thus few students have had real experience of grinding poverty—their struggle is about the hierarchical structure of society, about oppression in comfort. They do not so much have to contend with a lack of material goods as with unfulfilled desires and aspirations. The workers, on the other hand, suffer from direct economic oppression and misery—earning wages of less than 500 francs per month, in poorly ventilated, dirty and noisy factories, where the foreman, the chief engineer and the manager all throw their weight about and conspire to keep those under them in their place." *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative*, p. 107. Yet despite these radically different political horizons, Cohn-Bendit argues that there can be a common cause between the two groups, based on his tactic of "spontaneous resistance" in the streets.

in rags and tatters, turning their "pads" into something barely distinguishable from slum housing, and taking to the streets as panhandlers. Similarly, what can the Beatles' latest surrealist LP mean to an unemployed miner or a migrant farm laborer? What are the downs-and-outs of Nanterre to make of the latest production of Arrabal on the Left Bank? Surely they do not see these strange phenomena as a part of *their* culture, but as curious, somewhat crazy things the spoiled middle-class young amuse themselves with. Perhaps, like the Marxist guardians of social justice, they even see them as intolerable displays of "decadence"—meaning the neurotic discontent of those who cannot settle down gratefully to the responsibilities of life in an advanced industrial order.

But the bind in which the counter culture finds itself in dealing with disadvantaged social elements is doubled at another level with a painful irony. As has been mentioned, it is the cultural experimentation of the young that often runs the worst risk of commercial verminization—and so of having the force of its dissent dissipated. It is the cultural experiments that draw the giddy interest of just those middle-class swingers who are the bastion of the technocratic order. And *their* interest is all of the wrong kind. Visiting bohemia to peer at the "flower children," dropping by the rock clubs, laying out the \$5.00 minimum it costs to play voyeur at *Le Cimetière des Voitures*, has become the contemporary version of "slumming" for our big spenders: a breezy flirtation with the off-beat that inevitably distorts the genuineness of the phenomenon.

There is no diminishing the tendency of counter cultural dissent to fall prey to the neutralization that can come of such false attention. Those who dissent have to be supremely resourceful to avoid getting exhibited in somebody's commercial showcase—rather like bizarre fauna brought back alive from the jungle wilds . . . by *Time*, by *Esquire*, by David

Susskind. On such treacherous terrain, the chances of miscalculation are immense. Bob Dylan, who laments the nightmarish corruptions of the age, nevertheless wears his material thin grinding out a million-dollar album a year for Columbia—which is more apt to find its way to the shelf beside a polished mahogany stereophonic radio-phono console in suburbia than to any bohemian garret. Vanessa Redgrave, a veteran of Committee of 100 sit-downs in Whitehall who will don *fidelista* fatigues to sing Cuban revolutionary ballads in Trafalgar Square, also lends her talents to the glossy *Playboy* pornography of films like *Blow-Up*. Even Herbert Marcuse, much to his chagrin, has of late become hot feature material throughout Europe and America in the wake of the 1968 student rebellions in Germany and France. "I'm very much worried about this," Marcuse has commented on the situation. "At the same time it is a beautiful verification of my philosophy, which is that in this society everything can be co-opted, everything can be digested."<sup>17</sup>

From such obfuscation of genuine dissenting talent, it isn't far to go before the counter culture finds itself swamped with cynical or self-deceived opportunists who become, or conveniently let themselves be turned into, spokesmen for youthful disaffiliation. Accordingly, we now have clothing designers, hairdressers, fashion magazine editors, and a veritable phalanx of pop stars who, without a thought in their heads their PR man did not put there, are suddenly expounding "the philosophy of today's rebellious youth" for the benefit

<sup>17</sup> Marcuse, "Varieties of Humanism," in *Center Magazine* (Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara), June 1968, p. 14. On the other hand, at another social level, Marcuse has acquired more urgent worries. A threat of assassination from the local Ku Klux Klan drove him from his San Diego home in July 1968. The incident reminds us that there are dark corners of the technocracy (like southern California) where the troglodytes still hold out.

of the Sunday supplements . . . the feature to be sandwiched between a report on luxury underwear and a full-color spread on the latest undiscovered skin-diving paradise at which to spend that summer of a lifetime. And then, for good reason, the counter culture begins to look like nothing so much as a world-wide publicity stunt. One can easily despair of the possibility that it will survive these twin perils: on the one hand, the weakness of its cultural rapport with the disadvantaged; on the other, its vulnerability to exploitation as an amusing side show of the swinging society.

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Picking its way through this socio-political obstacle course is an undeniably demanding task for the counter culture, one which may take the better part of another generation. To overcome the commercializing and trivializing tactics of the technocratic society will require outlasting the atmosphere of novelty that now surrounds our youth culture and which easily assigns it the character of a transient fad. In the process, there will have to be a maturation of what are often for the young no more than shrewd insights and bright instincts, so that these can become the thoughtful stuff of an adult life. If the counter culture should bog down in a colorful morass of unexamined symbols, gestures, fashions of dress, and slogans, then it will provide little that can be turned into a lifelong commitment—except, and then pathetically, for those who can reconcile themselves to becoming superannuated hangers-on of the campus, the love-in, the rock club. It will finish as a temporary style, continually sloughed off and left behind for the next wave of adolescents: a hopeful beginning that never becomes more than a beginning. As for the task of introducing the oppressed minorities into the counter culture: I suspect that this may have to wait until the black

revolution has run its course in America. At which point the new black middle class will produce its own ungrateful young, who, as the heirs of everything their parents thought worth struggling for, will begin, like their white counterparts, to fight their way free of technocratic entrapment.

But beyond the problems raised by such social maneuvering, there lies an even more critical project: that of defining the ethical dignity of a cultural movement which takes radical issue with the scientific world view. The project is vitally important because there must be a reply to the challenge raised by the many uneasy intellectuals who fear that the counter culture arrives, not trailing clouds of glory, but bearing the mark of the beast. No sooner does one speak of liberating the non-intellective powers of the personality than, for many, a prospect of the starkest character arises: a vision of rampant, antinomian mania, which in the name of permissiveness threatens to plunge us into a dark and savage age. It is not without justification that concerned men should then hasten to mount the barricades in the defense of reason. Here, for example, is Philip Toynbee reminding us of "the old nihilistic yearning for madness, despair, and total denial" which was a mainstay of fascist ideology:

. . . it is important to remember that Himmler was the truest nihilist of them all. It is important to remember that the most effective guardians against a resurgence of fascism in Europe are hope, decency, and rationality. This should be brought home, if it can be, to all those young people who consider that they belong to the Left but who love to play with nihilistic toys in art and argument. The ultimate fascist cry is Millan Astray's "Viva, viva la Muerte!"<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Toynbee reviewing some recent studies of fascism in *The Observer* (London), July 28, 1968. In a similar vein, the British playwright Arnold Wesker has referred to the hippies as "pretty little fascists" and the social critic Henry Anderson has renamed the Sex-



To a disconcerting extent, such criticism is outrageously unfair. "Make Love Not War" is still the banner most of the dissenting young are rallying to, and those who cannot see the difference between that sentiment and any motto the Hitler *Jugend* voiced are being almost perversely blind. So, too, one of the most remarkable aspects of the counter culture is its cultivation of a feminine softness among its males. It is the occasion of endless satire on the part of critics, but the style is clearly a deliberate effort on the part of the young to undercut the crude and compulsive he-manliness of American political life. While this generous and gentle eroticism is available to us, we would do well to respect it, instead of ridiculing it.

And yet . . . there are manifestations around the fringe of the counter culture that one cannot but regard as worryingly unhealthy. Elements of pornographic grotesquery and blood-curdling sadomasochism emerge again and again in the art and theater of our youth culture and intrude themselves constantly into the underground press. Many of the underground newspapers seem to work on the assumption that talking about anything frankly means talking about it as crudely and as savagely as possible. The supposedly libertarian eroticism of this style betrays a total failure to realize that professional pornography does not challenge, but rather battens off the essential prurience of middle-class sexuality and has a vested

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ual Freedom League the Sexual Fascism League. For a heavier presentation of such fears, see David Holbrook's essay "R. D. Laing and the Death Circuit" in *Encounter*, August 1968. Peter Viereck's *Metapolitics: The Roots of the Nazi Mind* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1941), is a thorough attempt to spell out the connections between Nazism and Romanticism—a line of argument that is relevant to such criticisms, since the relationship of the counter culture to the Romantic tradition in our society is readily apparent. Finally, for an absolutely vicious denunciation of "the Nazi hoodlums of the new freedom," see G. Legman's intemperate little tract *The Fake Revolt* (New York: Breaking-Point Press, 1967).

interest in maintaining the notion that sex is a dirty thing. What prohibition was to the bootlegger, the puritanical ethos is to the pornographer: both are the entrepreneurs of an oppressive prudishness.<sup>19</sup> Even where such crudity is meant to satirize or reply in kind to the corruptions of the dominant culture, there is bound to come a point where sardonic imitation destroys the sensibilities and produces simple callousness. I find it little short of disheartening to come across items like the following: a rave review of an acid-rock group called The Doors (after Huxley, after Blake, apparently) taken from the underground Seattle newspaper *Helix* (July 1967):

The Doors. Their style is early cunnilingual with overtones of the Massacre of the Innocents. An electrified sex slaughter. A musical blood-bath. . . . The Doors are carnivores in a land of musical vegetarians. . . . their talons, fangs, and folded wings are seldom out of view, but if they leave us crotch-raw and exhausted, at least they leave us aware of our aliveness. And of our destiny. The Doors scream into the darkened auditorium what all of us in the underground are whispering more softly in our hearts: we want the world and we want it . . . NOW!

In the face of such mock-Dionysian frenzy, it is no wonder that a fretful cry for "rationality" should be raised. How is one to make certain that the exploration of the non-intellective powers will not degenerate into a maniacal nihilism? The matter needs sorting out, and I am uncertain

<sup>19</sup> *The Berkeley Barb* has become a particularly grim example of what happens when one ignores such seemingly obvious facts. The *Barb* now regularly carries about three pages of advertising for blue movies, along with a vast amount of "velvet underground" classified ads. Such obscenity merchandisers make about as much of a contribution to sexual freedom as the Strategic Air Command—whose motto is "peace is our profession"—makes to healthy international relations.

that many of the young have reflected sufficiently upon it. Let me close this chapter, then, by offering some thoughts that may help contribute a less forbidding, but I think no less radical meaning to the central project of the counter culture.

The problem at hand confronts us with a familiar, but much misunderstood, dichotomy: the opposition of reason and passion, intellect and feeling, the head and the heart. . . . Again and again in moral discourse this troublesome polarity intrudes itself upon us, pretending to be a real ethical choice. But what is that choice? None of the terms of the dichotomy is by any means unambiguously related to some well-defined faculty of the personality. Rather, at the ethical level of discussion, the choice comes down most often to one between two styles of conduct. One pursues a rational style of life, we say, if one's behavior is characterized by dispassionate restraint, unfailing deliberateness, and an articulate logicity. Conversely, one is irrational if one's conduct forsakes dispassion in favor of an intense and overt emotionalism, deliberation in favor of impulsiveness, articulation and logic in favor of rhapsodic declamation or some manner of non-verbal expression. Once these extremes have been marked out, the discussion usually settles down to an interminable listing of examples and counter-examples meant to prove the virtues and dangers of any tendency to one or the other pole of the continuum.

Those who opt for rationality darkly warn us against the terrors that have come of submerging the intellect beneath a flood tide of feeling. They remind us of the lynch mobs and pogroms, the unreasoning mass movements and witch-hunts to which impassioned men have given themselves. They remind us that Hitler was but echoing the words of D. H. Lawrence when he commanded his followers: "Think with your blood!" Against such barbaric upheavals, the cause of

reason invokes the example of great humanitarian personalities: Socrates, Montaigne, Voltaire, Galileo, John Stuart Mill . . . and all the many more who pled for the dignity of intellect against the savagery and superstition of their day.

But if we think again, we see at once that the same line of argument is open to those who opt for the life of feeling. Can they not match every hot-blooded brutality in human history with an example of cold-blooded criminality just as dire? If thirteenth-century Christendom had been dominated by the impulsive compassion of the simple-minded St. Francis, rather than by the frigid intellectuality of Innocent III, would there ever have been an Inquisition? By what manner of men was St. Joan, an illiterate visionary, martyred if not by heartless schemers whose intellectual capacities can scarcely be questioned? How many men of surpassing rationality can equal the record that the Quakers, guided by moral passion and the Inner Light, have compiled in resisting war, slavery, and social injustice?

When we turn to the case most frequently cited as evidence of the dangers of unrestrained passion—that of the Nazis—I think the same sort of argument can be used. Perhaps the Nazis did assume the mantle of a vulgarized Romanticism. But if we ask with what manner of men its cadres were staffed, we get a rather different picture of the regime. Without utterly dispassionate, utterly rational technicians and administrative automatons like Adolf Eichmann, it is impossible to imagine the Nazi state lasting a year. Those who blame Nazism on the corrupting influence of the Romantic movement surely mistake the propagandistic surface for the underlying political reality. The New Order was hardly the creature of moon-struck poets and Dionysian revelers. It was, instead, as thorough a technocracy as any that survives today: a carefully wrought bureaucratic-military apparatus based on relentless regimentation and precisely managed ter-

rorism. If the movement dealt in the hot passions of the masses, its success lay in *organizing* those passions into a disciplined machinery of state with all the cunning that our market researchers employ in manipulating the irrationalities of the consuming public. Hitler may have postured like a Siegfried, but his henchmen were such children of the forest as knew how to make the trains run on time. Behind the Wagnerian facade, the Nazi death camp stands as a masterpiece of social engineering in which the cry of the heart was systematically drowned out by the demands of genocidal efficiency.<sup>20</sup>

And simply to bring the catalogue up to date: what are we to identify as the basic deficiency of all the technical experts who now administer the world-wide balance of terror? Is it intellect our scientists and strategists and operations analysts lack? These men who preside with an impersonal eye over a system of mass murder capable of greater destruction than all the lynch mobs and witch-hunters in history: is it their capacity to *reason* that is flawed? Surely Lewis Mumford goes to the heart of the matter when he insists that the situation confronts us with something that can only be called "mad rationality"; and he reminds us of Captain Ahab's chilling confession: "All my means are sane: my motives and object mad."<sup>21</sup>

We are correct in feeling that serious ethical discussion must get beyond ad hoc evaluations of specific actions—which is essentially the area of life we leave to the law. But we are mistaken, I think, in believing that the dichotomy

<sup>20</sup> For a moving example of how one simple, compassionate soul held out to the point of martyrdom against the practical accommodation with which his intellectual superiors greeted the Nazis, see Gordon Zahn's study of the Austrian peasant Franz Jägerstätter, *In Solitary Witness* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

<sup>21</sup> Lewis Mumford, *The Transformations of Man* (New York: Collier Books, 1956), p. 122.

between rational and impulsive, deliberate and passionate styles of action is a more meaningful level of discourse. Indeed, I would contend that this dichotomy confronts us with inherently non-moral considerations. Neither rationality nor passionate impulse, as they characterize styles of behavior, guarantees anything about the ethical quality of action. Instead, these styles comprise a vocabulary of conduct which can be used to express many different things. To arbitrate between them at this level, therefore, would be as pointless as trying to decide whether prose or poetry is the proper province of noble sentiments. Nor do I think we advance the discussion by trying to work out some fifty-fifty compromise on the issue, on the assumption that there is some golden mean between reason and feeling that assures good conduct. We have too many examples of utterly rational and utterly impassioned human decency to reject either as a style of action. Neither our impulsive saints nor our humanitarian intellectuals can be denied their ethical beauty.

We enter a searching discussion of moral action only when we press beyond the surface style of conduct in which men express their ethical sensibilities and seek the hidden source from which their action flows. If, again, we think of conduct as a vocabulary, then we can see that our use of that vocabulary will depend wholly upon what we try to "say" through what we do. Our action gives voice to our total vision of life—of the self and its proper place in the nature of things—as we experience it most movingly. For many men this vision may be pathetically narrow, bounded on all sides by socially prescribed rules and sanctions; they may have only the dimmest awareness of a good or evil which is not the product of social inculcation and enforcement. In that case, a man behaves as he does out of fear or ingrained subordination and with little personal authority. Perhaps the conduct of most men is shaped in this way—and too often it is just such

automatized dutifulness that we take to be rational and responsible. Yet, even so, there lurks behind our socially certified morality some primordial world view which dictates what reality is, and what, within that reality, is to be held sacred.

For most of us, this world view may elude the grasp of words; it may be something we never directly attend to. It may remain the purely subliminal sense of our condition that spontaneously forms our perceptions and our motivations. Even before our world view guides us to discriminate between good and evil, it disposes us to discriminate between real and unreal, true and false, meaningful and meaningless. Before we act in the world, we must conceive of a world; it must be *there* before us, a sensible pattern to which we adapt our conduct. If, like the Jainist holy man, we regard all life as divine, then it will seem perfectly sensible to inconvenience ourselves endlessly with avoiding every act that might injure even the most minute insect. If, on the other hand, we regard all non-human beings as lower and less sentient forms of existence, we will regard the Jainist as highly superstitious and his activities as morally meaningless. Indeed, we will not bother to think twice before slaughtering whole herds of animals for pleasure or need. The impulsiveness or deliberation with which men do these things will be beside the point. As long as any man's moral sensibility squares with our world view, we are inclined to accept his conduct as quite sane and reasonable. But all the elegant rationalizing in the world will not convince us that someone who rejects our vision of reality is anything but mad or superstitiously irrational—though, to be sure, we may be willing to practice a pluralistic tolerance toward him within certain prescribed legal limits.

We have no serviceable language in our culture to talk about the level of the personality at which this underlying

vision of reality resides. But it seems indisputable that it exerts its influence at a point that lies deeper than our intellectual consciousness. The world view we hold is nothing we learn in the same conscious way in which we learn an intellectual subject matter. It is, rather, something we absorb from the spirit of the times or are converted into, or seduced into by unaccountable experiences. It is, indeed, this guiding vision that determines what we finally regard as sanity itself. We can, therefore, see why two men like Bertrand Russell and Herman Kahn—neither of whom can be fairly accused of despising reason, logic, or intellectual precision—can emerge as such implacable antagonists on so many great issues. Russell himself, in grasping the primacy of vision over the superficial style of thought, speech, and conduct, has said, "I would rather be mad with the truth than sane with lies." "Mad," to be sure, from the viewpoint of others; for what brings a man close to the truth will become his own standard of sanity.

When I say that the counter culture delves into the non-intellective aspects of the personality, it is with respect to its interest at this level—at the level of vision—that I believe its project is significant. Undeniably, this project often gets obscured, especially among the more desperate young who quickly conclude that the antidote to our society's "mad rationality" lies in flinging oneself into an assortment of mad passions. Like too many of our severely self-disciplined solid citizens and "responsible" leaders, they allow their understanding to stop at the level of surface conduct, accepting as final the dichotomy between "spontaneous" and "deliberate" styles of behavior. They also believe

. . . that the unsought and inspired belongs to special individuals in peculiar emotional states; or again to people at parties under the influence of alcohol or hasheesh; rather than being a quality of all experience. And correspondingly, calculated behavior aims at goods that are not uniquely

appropriated according to one's fancy, but are in turn only good for something else (so that pleasure itself is endured as a means to health and efficiency). "Being oneself" means acting imprudently, as if desire could not make sense; and "acting sensibly" means holding back and being bored.<sup>22</sup>

But while a good deal of our contemporary youth culture takes off in the direction of strenuous frenzy and simulated mindlessness, there also moves through the scene a very different and much more mature conception of what it means to investigate the non-intellective consciousness. This emerges primarily from the strong influence upon the young of Eastern religion, with its heritage of gentle, tranquil, and thoroughly civilized contemplativeness. Here we have a tradition that calls radically into question the validity of the scientific world view, the supremacy of cerebral cognition, the value of technological prowess; but does so in the most quiet and measured of tones, with humor, with tenderness, even with a deal of cunning argumentation. If there is anything off-putting to the scientific mind about this tradition, it does not result from any unwillingness on the part of the Eastern religions to indulge in analysis and debate. It results, rather, from their assertion of the intellectual value of paradox and from their conviction that analysis and debate must finally yield to the claims of ineffable experience. Oriental mysticism comprehends argumentation; but it also provides a generous place for silence, out of wise recognition of the fact that it is with silence that men confront the great moments of life. Unhappily, the Western intellect is inclined to treat silence as if it were a mere zero: a loss for words indicating the absence of meaning.

However sternly one may wish to reject the world view of

<sup>22</sup> From Paul Goodman's contribution to Frederick Perls, Ralph Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, *Gestalt Therapy* (New York: Delta, 1965), p. 242.

Lao-tzu, of the Buddha, of the Zen masters, one cannot fairly accuse such figures of lacking intellect, wit, or humane cultivation. Though their minds lay at the service of a vision that is incompatible with our conventional science, such men are the prospective participants of neither a lynch mob nor a group-grope party. Fortunately, their example has not been lost on our dissenting young; indeed, it has become one of the strongest strains of the counter culture.

We will return to this line of thought in later chapters. It will be sufficient to say at this point that the exploration of the non-intellective powers assumes its greatest importance, not when the project becomes a free-for-all of pixilated dynamism, but when it becomes a critique of the scientific world view upon which the technocracy builds its citadel and in the shadow of which too many of the brightest splendors of our experience lie hidden.