



life, if there is nothing d reason for the desire ul as possible.



If we know the situation, we are responsible for what we choose to do. We cannot choose not to choose: to do nothing, to accept, is to have chosen resignation or acceptance. We are involved. None goes it alone. Whatever we choose-despair or energy, acquiescence or action - it means that we choose that for the rest of our fellow men. It means that this is the way we think men ought to live.

We are all trapped in an historical situation not of our own making. We have to choose sides, and in deciding where we stand politically we have to consider not only the economic basis of our own society, but other models too. The social classes are blurred in

America, but they still exist and the class a person belongs to still affects the kind of education he receives. Working class politics here are confused by racial prejudice and an acceptance of capitalist ideology, but it would be a mistake to assume that all over the world the class-war has died a natural death of affluence and resignation. Ten million workers were activated as a result of the "student revolt" in France in 1968. Our choices are difficult ones to make, but they have to be made. It isn't a question, at this time, of barricades and red flags; it is a matter of discrimination and personal integrity.

To choose energy is not to find harmony, but it is to find life: life is a symbolic act expressing the alienation and dissent of Hartford students. If we accept the need for choice, and are aware of the restrictions placed upon our consciousness, every free and creative action we take might be interpreted as "political" in the sense that it will be in contradiction of the accepted modes of behaviour and thought of the given society. The free play of the creative imagination, the expression of self, is repressed in our society and in ourselves as the creatures of that society. We are encouraged to work hard; to use our "common sense". "Be good chaps, now. No nonsense - all pull together." Meanwhile the mass media makes human relationships trivial and debases communication to a few comfortable cliches. We are not encouraged to make choices. We are encouraged to see things in an after-dinner doze. We see a man burnt to death by napalm. We see the latest gasoline ad. Then it's time for a bite to eat.

A demand for the release of our suppressed humanity, together with an increase in active awareness, leads to the collapse of our present social relationships, to the collapse of society as it now operates. If the traditional forms of political action in Britain and America seem ineffective there are other forms of subversion - and the alienated youth of those societies are finding them out. One of the most satisfying ironies of the last few years is that the cult of the teenager which capitalist entrepreneurs did so much to promote, especially in the record industry, has contributed in part to the development of a youth subculture with an identity of its own and a disaffection which far outflanks the bubblegum complaints of love-struck teenyboppers. It might be, as

(Ed. Note)

Richard Milner is a native of Derbyshire, England who has studied at Leeds University and Chelsea College. He is in this country presently as a member of the International Work Study Program for Teachers from Abroad. Well known and well liked by many students here as a writer and reader of poetry, he also has no small degree of concrete social concern. Oriented towards and active in liberal and protest movements in England for a number of years, he is presently directing his energies towards understanding possible means of change in American society, and in maintaining a socialist vision of man in a highly organized and mass-media supported technological society.

In Britain, and I believe in America, some small groups are trying to live the life of creativity and imagination now, while remaining politically committed. The movement has its tradition in the arts. Artistic creation is often an attempt to express and perhaps resolve some of the contradictions we experience within ourselves, in society, in nature. It is often the expression of the attempt to create a pattern in existence, or an attempt to express human feeling and make it as poignantly meaningful as possible. In this sense, perhaps, all art is revolutionary in a society which endorses conformity and resignation. Camus writes that "Real despair means death, the grave or the abyss. If despair prompts...reasoning, and above all if it results in writing, fraternity is established, natural objects are justified, love is born. A literature of despair is a contradiction in terms."

The underground press often manifests a "high" romantic tendency with its interest in mysticism and flying saucers, in dragons and druids - and a similar tendency can be seen on record covers and posters, in the revival of interest in Aubrey Beardsley and witchcraft. At times one perceives connections with the radical theory of romanticism and existentialism even among these sources, however, and there are suggestions of it in, for example, the lyrics of some of the best contemporary song writers.

There is an exuberant optimism in some of the statements one reads in the underground press: "...the revolution has taken place WITHIN THE MINDS of the young...the world of the future will have no clocks," writes Tom McGrath. And on a cover of the "International Times" are the words, "When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake." There is a sense of urgency and of the revolutionary effect art can have on our minds.

We have these few years of relative freedom in which to act and create. If we can't create art, we can create our own "myths" and our own lives. Our "myths" lie in those experiences, books and people which have been central in giving us an awareness of our potential freedom from the "given" assumptions. We need to ask what we need to be taught; to ask whether the university exists for us or for the manipulators. And we can do without the strictures of the guardians of "morality". We need to create a morality of our own that is rather more sensitive to exploitation and suffering than the one we see operating at present. Nietzsche wrote of... "this delight in giving a form to oneself as a piece of difficult, refractory and suffering material..."

From here it is an easy step to say that man creates all values, and that in a sense man creates himself.

William Blake was in the tradition - at the beginning of the tradition - when he wrote with existentialist insight that "All deities reside in the human breast". He was aware of the creative dignity of man: "If thou humblest Thyself, Thou humblest Me."

Thou also dwell'st in Eternity. Thou art a Man: God is no more: Thy own Humanity learn to adore.

For that is My spirit of life." He was aware of the repressed sources of energy and creativity before Freud "located" them in the Libido...

"We can only hope that our artists will take us by the back hair and fuck the future down our throats," writes Nuttall. The choice between despair and energy has already been made by some students - in Mexico, at Berkeley, Columbia, Nanterre, the Sorbonne, Battersea, Hornsey, the L.S.E. During the last two weeks it has been made by many more. Apart from its clear indication of our opposition to injustices, brutality, the invasion of Cambodia, one of the things that has been made clear by the Strike is that the function of a university should be to expand our minds and our consciousness, and not to act as an adjunct to industry or to provide well-processed technocrats and "educators".

We owe it to ourselves to demonstrate our freedom by activity based on an awareness of our suppressed potential for moral choice; and we owe it to other people who don't have the same opportunities for expression. We might even encourage some other people in our society to assert THEIR freedom, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to make moral decisions. In an affluent society some experience of autonomy may be had. The basic contradictions remain. It might at least be possible to encourage more people to act. We can question the "fixed rules", ignore the "given" assumptions, the "polite" conventions. It's our thunder and our choice.

RICHARD MILNER

Man is being crucified on a cross of gold in more senses than one.

We have to choose between despair and energy in the making of our lives and the shaping of our society.

Jeff Nuttall says in "Bomb Culture", that there has been a change in the consciousness of people who had not yet reached puberty when the bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945: "The people who had not yet reached puberty at the time of the bomb were incapable of conceiving of life with a future. They might not have any direct preoccupation with the bomb. This depended largely on their sophistication. But they never knew a sense of future...They pretended...but they did not enter the pretence at all cheerfully. In fact they entered the pretence reluctantly, in pain and confusion, in hostility which they increasingly showed. Dad was a liar. He lied about the war and he lied about sex. He lied about the bomb and he lied about the future. He lived his life on an elaborate system of pretence that had been going on for hundreds of years. The so-called "generation-gap" started then and has been increasing ever since."

"I. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.

II. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body; and Reason is the bound and outward circumference of Energy.

III. Energy is Eternal Delight." ("The Marriage of Heaven and Hell")

Two slogans are memorable from the "student revolt" in France -

"Here, imagination rules." "Society is a carnivorous flower."

One thinks of some of the aphorisms in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell":

"Drive your cart and your plough over the bones of the dead." "He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence."

"The most sublime act is to set another before you."

"Exuberance is Beauty."



It's our thunder and our choice.